

JUNE 5-8

Greetings

from



HOST:

**The Miami Herald
and El Nuevo Herald**

*The best in the business will gather for panels
workshops and special presentations about
covering public safety, courts, national
security, the military, business, education,
local government and much more.*

Visit www.ire.org/training/miami08
for more information and updates.

IRE offers several programs to help women, members of minority groups, college students and journalists from small news organizations attend the conference. Fellowships typically provide a one-year membership, registration fees, and reimbursement for hotel and travel costs. See details at www.ire.org/training/fellowships.html. Apply by April 7 for the Miami conference.

If you have hotel or general conference questions contact conference coordinator Stephanie Sinn, stephanie@ire.org, 573-882-8969. If you have registration questions, please contact John Green, membership coordinator, jgreen@ire.org or 573-882-2772

REGISTRATION

You can register for this conference online at www.ire.org/training/miami08.

To attend this conference, you must be an IRE member through July 1, 2008. Memberships are nonrefundable. Early-bird registration closes May 19.

REGISTRATION FEE:

(main conference days)

\$165 Professional/Academic/
Associate/Retiree

\$100 Student

CAR DAY – optional:

Thursday, June 5
(requires additional fee)

\$50 Professional/Academic/
Associate/Retiree

\$35 Student

BLUES BASH

Thursday, June 5 at 7 p.m.
Advance tickets are \$20.
Ticket prices on site,
if available, will be higher.
Limit of 2 tickets per registrant.

Conference Hotel

InterContinental Miami
www.ichmiami.com
100 Chopin Plaza
Miami, FL 33131



Miami

2008 IRE CONFERENCE


THE IRE JOURNAL

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THE IRE JOURNAL

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The IRE Journal (ISSN0164-7016) is published six times a year by Investigative Reporters and Editors, Inc. 138 Neff Annex, Missouri School of Journalism, Columbia, MO 65211, 573-882-2042. E-mail: journal@ire.org. U.S. subscriptions are \$70 for individuals, \$85 for libraries and \$125 for institutions/businesses. International subscriptions are \$90 for individuals and \$150 for all others. Periodical postage paid at Jefferson City, Mo. Postmaster: Please send address changes to IRE. USPS #451-670

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FROM THE IRE OFFICES

Project renews pledge to keep murdered journalist's story alive



JAMES GRIMALDI
THE WASHINGTON POST,
IRE BOARD PRESIDENT

By now you probably know the story of Chauncey Bailey, the editor of the *Oakland Post*, who was gunned down as he walked to work in August. Police believe he was murdered because of his investigation into a business called Your Black Muslim Bakery.

The parallels to the slaying of Don Bolles are chilling. Bolles was a founding member of IRE, and his murder by a car bomb in 1976 led to the Arizona Project, in which a team of IRE members from across the country continued and expanded his investigation into public corruption and organized crime.

Bob Greene, the *Newsday* investigative editor who led the team, called the Arizona Project an insurance policy: No journalist's work could be stopped by a bullet or a bomb.

Every insurance policy has a premium. On Aug. 2, 2007, that premium came due.

Two prominent Bay Area nonprofit organizations, New America Media and the Maynard Institute, sent out a clarion call for an array of journalists to continue Bailey's work. The effort was borne out of a shock at the lack of coverage by national mainstream news outlets and calls for an investigation modeled after the Arizona Project.

The Chauncey Bailey Project is a clearinghouse for information and home for more than two dozen editors, reporters, students and news organizations. It is an unusual collaboration of journalists who are picking up where Bailey left off on the investigation of Your Black Muslim Bakery. (A handyman for the bakery was ordered to stand trial on a murder charge in the Bailey slaying.) They expect the investigation to go much further.

IRE and our Bay Area members are contributing too. One leading member is Mary Fricker, who modestly says she is heeding the lesson of Bob Greene. She has long been one of my IRE heroes. Retired last year after 20 years as an award-winning business reporter at *The Santa Rosa (Calif.) Press Democrat*, Fricker is working on the Bailey Project four days a week while living in a room above a friend's garage. A member since 1985 and a frequent speaker, she is one of the people whose knowledge, expertise and skill inspired me as a young journalist.

Now she's part of the team led by Robert "Rosey" Rosenthal, the new director of the Center for Investigative Reporting and former managing editor of *The San Francisco Chronicle*. The center, too, is part of the project, along with the Society for Professional Journalists's Northern California Chapter, the Knight Foundation, which has donated \$125,000, the National Association of Black Journalists and the Bay Area Association of Black Journalists, and many others. (See story on p. 32-33)

Spurred on by calls from members, former IRE executive director Brant Houston, contacted Dori Maynard of the Maynard Institute and Sandy Close, leader of New America Media. IRE and New America Media have collaborated on IRE's new training initiative for ethnic media newsrooms. That effort takes on greater significance after the murder of Bailey, a prominent voice in Oakland's African-American media.

Print, electronic and broadcast journalists in the project have pored through hundreds of real estate records, civil and criminal files and government documents in numerous counties. IRE is providing data analysis and computer services, particularly a cyber place where the team can compile and share information.

IRE is proud to help. But the real work is the shoe leather and data work by committed journalists and IRE members such as Mary Fricker. "Our goal is to send this message far and wide," Mary says. "You can't kill a story by killing a journalist."

Contact James Grimaldi at irepresident@ire.org.

Morning News takes first in Meyer Awards

The *Dallas Morning News* took top honors in the 2006 Philip Meyer Journalism Awards for its “Faking the Grade” investigation. Analyzing standardized test scores from around the state, reporters Holly Hacker and Joshua Benton found patterns in students’ answers that pointed to widespread cheating on high-stakes exams.

In second place, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* showed that Georgia has failed to correct “arbitrary and capricious” application of the death penalty, despite a warning more than 30 years ago.

The Kansas City Star took third place for showing how much insurance claims and responses vary on a national scale, with an investigation that covered more than 35 million records.

The Philip Meyer Journalism Awards, which recognize the best journalism done using social science research methods, are sponsored by the National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting, a joint program of IRE, the Missouri School of Journalism, and the Knight Chair in Journalism at Arizona State University.

The awards will be presented Feb. 29 at IRE’s Computer-Assisted Reporting Conference in Houston. The first-place winner will receive \$500; second and third will receive \$300 and \$200, respectively. The contest, for work published or broadcast between October 2006 and October 2007, attracted nearly two dozen entries from across the country.

First place: *The Dallas Morning News*, “Faking the Grade,” a three-day series that uncovered strong evidence of cheating on standardized tests by more than 50,000 students in Texas public and charter schools. Reporters Joshua Benton and Holly Hacker followed up on the paper’s groundbreaking 2004 investigation of cheating at the district and school level by analyzing a huge public records database of the scores and answers of hundreds of thousands of students taking the tests over a two-year period. The series prompted the state to announce stricter controls over test-taking conditions in Texas schools and to adopt the cheat-detection statistical methods used by the paper.

Second place: *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, “A Matter of Life and Death,” a four-day package of stories that documented how Georgia has failed to follow through on capital punishment reforms promised after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1972 that the state’s application of the death penalty was “arbitrary and capricious.” Reporters Bill Rankin, Heather Vogell, Sonji Jacobs and database specialist Megan Clarke led a team that hand-built a database of more than 2,300 murder convictions since 1995 by traveling to more than 100 of the state’s 159 county courthouses, and researcher Alice Wertheim created a database of all Georgia Supreme Court death penalty decisions since 1982. They analyzed this data with multiple regression analyses to demonstrate wide variations in application of the death penalty by demographics and geography, prompting the state Legislature to consider changes in the capital punishment laws and the state’s chief justice to take steps to improve its review of such cases.

Third place: *The Kansas City Star*, “Insurance: Service or Shenanigans,” a three-day series of stories and follow-ups that used a national consumer complaints database of nearly 35 million records to rate more than 2,400 insurance companies by complaint ratios. Reporters Mike Casey, Mark Morris and David Klepper spent nearly a year gathering and analyzing the national data along with more than 10,000 pages of records to demonstrate how responsiveness to consumer concerns varied widely by company, geography and type of coverage. Since the project ran, state and national legislators have called for a number of measures to address problems documented in the paper’s analysis.

Stories and contest entries detailing the reporting behind the investigation are available to IRE members through the IRE and NICAR Resource Center, 573-882-3364 or rescntr@ire.org.

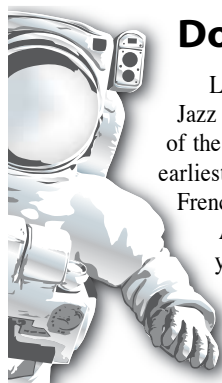
Two of the three winners have written about their projects for *The IRE Journal*. See Hacker and Benton’s story, “Against the Odds,” in the Sept./Oct. 2007 issue and “Irked Consumers” by the *Kansas City Star* team in Mar./Apr. 2007.

MEMBER NEWS

Gilbert Bailon, the president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, is the new editorial-page editor at the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. He was the publisher of *Al Día*, a Spanish-language newspaper in Texas. ■ **Carole Bass**, freelance writer, won an Alicia Patterson Foundation grant to research stories about toxic chemicals poisoning American workers. ■ **Cecil Bothwell**, who was recently appointed news editor of the *Asheville (N.C.) City Paper*, has a new book, “The Prince of War: Billy Graham’s Crusade for a Wholly Christian Empire” (Brave Ulysses Books). ■ **Debbie Cenziper**, formerly of *The Miami Herald* and now with *The Washington Post*, won a 2007 Excellence in Urban Journalism Award for her series “House of Lies.” The awards recognize reporting on social and racial inequalities leading to inner-city poverty. ■ **Tim Darragh** of *The (Allentown, Pa.) Morning Call*, whose reporting on Pennsylvania’s puppy mills led to the state’s putting inspection records online, accepted the G. Richard Dew prize from the Pennsylvania Newspaper Association on behalf of *The Morning Call*. **Chris Schnaars**, now at *The (Hackensack, N.J.) Record*, did the analysis of the state’s kennel inspection records. ■ **John Drescher** is the executive editor of *The (Raleigh, N.C.) News & Observer*. He was previously the paper’s managing editor. ■ **Deborah Gage** has joined the *San Francisco Chronicle* as senior technology reporter. She previously worked as a senior writer for *Baseline* magazine. ■ **Ronnie Greene**, an investigative journalist with *The Miami Herald*, has been named urban affairs editor overseeing government reporting. His first book, “Night Fire: Big Oil, Poison Air, and One Woman’s Fight to Save Her Town,” will be published in May by HarperCollins/Amistad. ■ **Matthew Kauffman** of *The Hartford (Conn.) Courant* won the 2007 Master Reporter Award for daily publications from the New England

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35 >

E-mail Member News items to Megan Means, meganm@ire.org. Please include contact information for verification.



Don't miss first CAR Jazz Bash

Let your investigative spirit slip out for some night life at Houston’s famed Red Cat Jazz Café on Friday, Feb. 29. It’s an evening of great jazz and networking with some of the best reporters in the nation. In a narrow brick building dating back to Houston’s earliest days, the Red Cat Jazz Café combines sophistication and good times with a French Quarter-like atmosphere and some of the best Cajun and Creole cuisine in town.

A \$15 ticket gets you in and covers your first two drinks. And, if that’s not enough, you’ll be helping IRE and NICAR raise money. Advance tickets for this event are now on sale for \$15 and will be available until Friday, Feb. 15. Any remaining tickets will be sold at the conference for \$20. Join us Friday, Feb. 29, at 8 p.m.; live music starts at 9. Details at www.ire.org/training/houston08.

INVESTIGATIVE BOOKS OF 2007

Every year, Steve Weinberg does his best to compile this exclusive list for *The IRE Journal*. It consists of books of investigative or explanatory journalism, broadly defined, published for the first time during 2007, in the United States, in English. The list is limited to authors who work as journalists for American media outlets, and who are trying to reach general audiences through retail bookstore sales. If you know of a book unintentionally omitted from this list, please send an e-mail to weinbergs@missouri.edu.

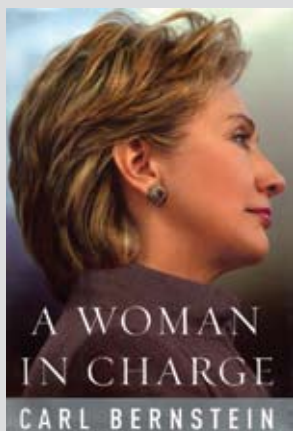
A

- Abramsky, Sasha
American Furies: Crime, Punishment and Vengeance in the Age of Mass Imprisonment (Beacon)
- Adams, Sam
Precious Blood (Pinnacle/Kensington)
- Allen, Arthur
Vaccine: The Controversial Story of Medicine's Greatest Lifesaver (Norton)
- Altman, Daniel
Connected: 24 Hours in the Global Economy (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)
- Anderson, John
Follow the Money: How George Bush and the Texas Republicans Hog-tied America (Scribner)
- Armstrong, David, and Joseph Trento
America and the Islamic Bomb (Steerforth)
- Asquith, Christina
The Emergency Teacher: The Inspirational Story of a New Teacher in an Inner-City School (Skyhorse)

B

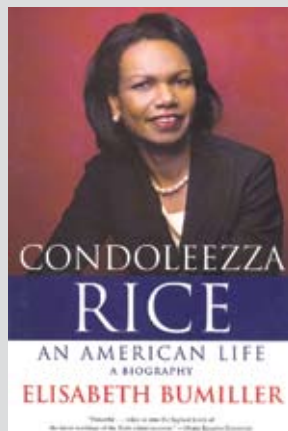
- Bai, Matt
The Argument: Billionaires, Bloggers and the Battle to Remake Democratic Politics (Penguin Press)
- Barbree, Jay
Live From Cape Canaveral: Covering the Space Race, From Sputnik to Today (Smithsonian/Collins)
- Barrett, Paul M.
American Islam: The Struggle for the Soul of a Religion (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)
- Bendavid, Naftali
The Thumpin': How Rahm Emanuel and the Democrats Learned to Be Ruthless and Ended the Republican Revolution (Doubleday)

- Bennetts, Leslie
The Feminine Mistake: Are We Giving Up Too Much? (Hyperion)
- Berger, Joseph
The World in a City: Traveling the Globe Through the Neighborhoods of the New New York (Ballantine)



- Bernstein, Carl
A Woman in Charge: The Life of Hillary Rodham Clinton (Knopf)
- Blake, Rich
The Day Donny Herbert Woke Up (Harmony)
- Blakeslee, Sandra, and Matthew Blakeslee
The Body Has a Mind of Its Own: How Body Maps in Your Brain Help You Do (Almost) Everything Better (Random House)
- Block, Jennifer
Pushed: The Painful Truth About Childbirth and Modern Maternity Care (Da Capo)
- Blumenthal, Karen
Grande Expectations: A Year in the Life of the Starbucks' Stock (Crown)

- Bowe, John
Nobodies: Modern American Slave Labor and the Dark Side of the New Global Economy (Random House)
- Boyles, Denis
Superior, Nebraska: The Common Sense Values of America's Heartland (Doubleday)
- Brook, Daniel
The Trap: Selling Out to Stay Afloat in Winner-Take-All America (Times Books)
- Brownlee, Shannon
Overtreated: Why Too Much Medicine Is Making Us Sicker and Poorer (Bloomsbury)
- Brownstein, Ronald
The Second Civil War: How Extreme Partisanship Has Paralyzed Washington and Polarized America (Penguin Press)



- Bumiller, Elisabeth
Condoleezza Rice: An American Life (Random House)
- Cafferty, Jack
It's Getting Ugly Out There: The Frauds, Bunglers, Liars and Losers Who Are Hurting America (Wiley)
- Callahan, Tom
The GM: The Inside Story of a Dream Job and the Nightmares That Go With It (Crown)
- Capparell, Stephanie
The Real Pepsi Challenge: The Inspirational Story of Breaking the Color Barrier in America (Free Press)

- Casey, Kathryn
Die, My Love (Harper)
- Cashill, Jack
What's the Matter With California? (Threshold/Simon & Schuster)
- Center for Public Integrity, Jenni Bergal, et al.
City Adrift: New Orleans Before and After Katrina (Louisiana State University Press)
- Cepuch, Randy
A Weekend With Warren Buffett and Other Shareholder Meeting Adventures (Thunder's Mouth)
- Chait, Jonathan
The Big Con: The True Story of How Washington Got Hoodwinked and Hijacked by Crackpot Economists (Houghton Mifflin)
- Clark, Eric
The Real Toy Story: Inside the Ruthless Battle for America's Youngest Consumers (Free Press)
- Clark, Joshua
Heart Like Water: Surviving Katrina and Life in Its Disaster Zone (Free Press)
- Clark, Taylor
Starbucked: A Double Tall Tale of Caffeine, Commerce and Culture (Little, Brown)
- Cockburn, Andrew
Rumsfeld: His Rise, Fall and Catastrophic Legacy (Scribner)
- Cohn, Jonathan
Sick: The Untold Story of America's Health Care Crisis and the People Who Pay the Price (HarperCollins)
- Collins, Marion
Black Widow (St. Martin's)
- Conason, Joe
It Can Happen Here: Authoritarian Peril in the Age of Bush (St. Martin's)
- Conaway, James
Vanishing America: In Pursuit of Our Elusive Landscapes (Shoemaker & Hoard/Avalon)
- Copeland, Dave
Blood and Volume: Inside New York's Israeli Mafia (Barricade Books)

INVESTIGATIVE BOOKS OF 2007

• Cosby, Rita
Blonde Ambition: The Untold Story Behind Anna Nicole Smith's Death (Grand Central)

• Cravens, Gwyneth
Power to Save the World: The Truth About Nuclear Energy (Knopf)

D

• Daniels, Cora
Ghettonation: A Journey Into the Land of Bling and Home of the Shameless (Doubleday)

• Darling, Lynn
Necessary Sins (journalism memoir) (Dial)

• Date, S.V.
Jeb: America's Next Bush—His Florida Years and What They Mean to the Nation (Tarcher)

• Davis, Kevin
Defending the Damned: Inside Chicago's Cook County Public Defender's Office (Atria)

• Davis, Mike
Buda's Wagon: A Brief History of the Car Bomb (Verso)

• Denfeld, Rene
All God's Children: Inside the Dark and Violent World of Street Families (PublicAffairs)

• Diehl, Matt
My So-Called Punk: Green Day, Fall Out Boy, the Distillers, Bad Religion—How Neo-Punk Stage-Dived Into the Mainstream (St. Martin's)

• Doherty, Brian
Radicals for Capitalism: A Freewheeling History of the Modern American Libertarian Movement (PublicAffairs)

• Draper, Robert
Dead Certain: The Presidency of George W. Bush (Free Press)

• Drogin, Bob
Curveball: Spies, Lies and the Con Man Who Caused a War (Random House)

• Druckerman, Pamela
Lust in Translation: The Rules of Infidelity From Tokyo to Tennessee (Penguin Press)

• Duggins, Pat
Final Countdown: NASA and the End of the Space Shuttle Program (University Press of Florida)

E

• Earley, Pete
Comrade J: The Untold Secrets of Russia's Master Spy in America After the End of the Cold War (Putnam)

• Eaton, Susan
The Children in Room E4: American Education on Trial (Algonquin)

• Eisner, Peter, and Knut Royce
The Italian Letter: How the Bush Administration Used a Fake Letter to Build the Case for War in Iraq (Rodale)

• Esposito, Richard, and Ted Gerstein
Bomb Squad: A Year Inside The Nation's Most Exclusive Police Unit (Hyperion)

F

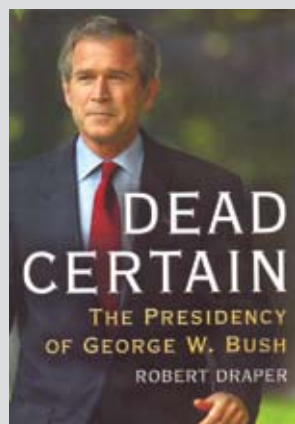
• Faludi, Susan
The Terror Dream: Fear and Fantasy in Post-9/11 America (Metropolitan Books)

• Farah, Douglas, and Stephen Braun
Merchant of Death: Money, Guns, Planes and the Man Who Makes War Possible (Wiley)

• Flanders, Laura
Blue Grit: True Democrats Take Back Politics From the Politicians (Penguin Press)

• Fox, Margalit
Talking Hands (Simon & Schuster)

• Francis, Monte
By Their Father's Hand: The True Story of The Wesson Family Massacre (Harper)



• Frank, Robert
Richistan: A Journey Through the American Wealth Boom and the Lives of the New Rich (Crown)

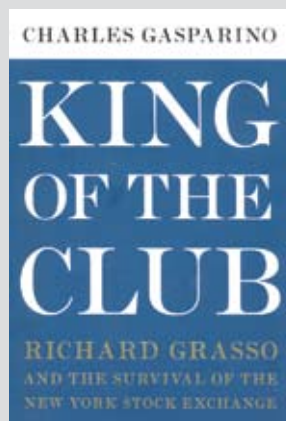
• Franscell, Ron
Fall: The Rape and Murder of Innocence in a Small Town (New Horizon)

• Frantz, Douglas, and Catherine Collins
The Nuclear Jihadist: The True Story of the Man Who Sold the World's Most Dangerous Secrets and How We Could Have Stopped Him (Twelve)

• Freinkel, Susan
American Chestnut: The Life, Death and Rebirth of a Perfect Tree (University of California Press)

G

• Gammage, Jeff
China Ghosts: My Daughter's Journey to America, My Passage to Fatherhood (Morrow/HarperCollins)



• Gasparino, Charles
King of the Club: Richard Grasso and the Survival of the New York Stock Exchange (Collins Business)

• Gerth, Jeff, and Don Van Natta Jr.
Her Way: The Hopes and Ambitions of Hillary Rodham Clinton (Little, Brown)

• Gibbs, Nancy, and Michael Duffy
The Preacher and the Presidents: Billy Graham in the White House (Center Street)

• Gifford, Rob
China Road: A Journey Into the Future of a Rising Power (Random House)

• Gilgoff, Dan
The Jesus Machine: How James Dobson, Focus on the Family and Evangelical America Are Winning the Culture War (St. Martin's)

• Gitlin, Todd
The Bulldozer and the Big Tent: Blind Republicans, Lame Democrats and the Recovery of American Ideals (Wiley)

• Glatt, John
The Doctor's Wife: A True Story of Marriage, Deception and Two Gruesome Murders (St. Martin's)

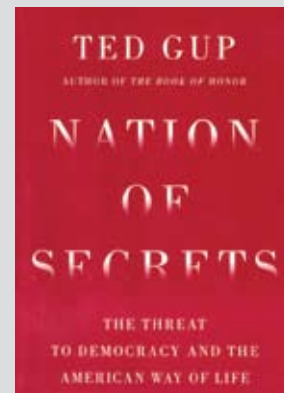
• Goldberg, Jonah
Liberal Fascism: The Secret History of the American Left, From Mussolini to the Politics of Meaning (Doubleday)

• Graff, Garrett M.
The First Campaign: Globalization, the Web and the Race for the White House (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)

• Greenberg, Daniel S.
Science for Sale: The Perils, Rewards and Delusions of Campus Capitalism (University of Chicago Press)

• Greenburg, Jan Crawford
Supreme Conflict: The Inside Story of the Struggle for Control of the United States Supreme Court (Penguin Press)

• Guernsey, Lisa
Into the Minds of Babes: How Screen Time Affects Children From Birth to Age Five (Basic Books)



• Gup, Ted
Nation of Secrets: The Threat to Democracy and the American Way of Life (Doubleday)

INVESTIGATIVE BOOKS OF 2007

• Gutkind, Lee
Almost Human: Making Robots Think
(Norton)

H

• Halpern, Jake
Fame Junkies: The Hidden Truths Behind America's Favorite Addiction
(Houghton Mifflin)

• Hansen, Chris
To Catch a Predator: Protecting Your Kids from Online Enemies Already in Your Home
(Dutton)

• Harris, Mark
Grave Matters: A Journey Through the Modern Funeral Industry to a Natural Way of Burial
(Scribner)

• Harsanyi, David
Nanny State: How Food Fascists, Teetotaling Do-Gooders, Priggish Moralists and Other Boneheaded Bureaucrats Are Turning America Into a Nation of Children
(Broadway)

• Hartmann, Thom
Screwed: The Undeclared War Against the Middle Class—and What We Can Do About It
(Berrett-Koehler)

• Hayes, Stephen F.
Cheney: The Untold Story of America's Most Powerful and Controversial Vice President
(HarperCollins)

• Helferich, Gerard
High Cotton: Four Seasons in the Mississippi Delta
(Counterpoint)

• Heller, Peter
The Whale Warriors: The Battle at the Bottom of the World to Save the World's Largest Animals
(Free Press)

• Henry, Neil
American Carnival: Journalism Under Siege in an Age of New Media
(University of California Press)

• Hettena, Seth
Feasting on the Spoils: The Life and Times of Randy "Duke" Cunningham, History's Most Corrupt Congressman
(St. Martin's)

• Horowitz, Jay
Parts Per Million: The Poisoning of Beverly Hills High School
(Viking)

• Humes, Edward
Monkey Girl: Evolution, Education, Religion and the Battle for America's Soul
(Ecco)

I

• Issenberg, Sasha
The Sushi Economy: Globalization and the Making of a Modern Delicacy
(Gotham)

• Ivins, Molly, and Lou DuBose
Bill of Wrongs: The Executive Branch's Assault Against America's Fundamental Rights
(Random House)

J

• Jamail, Dahr
Beyond the Green Zone: Dispatches From an Unembedded Journalist in Occupied Iraq
(Haymarket)

• Jones, Bart
Hugo!: The Hugo Chavez Story, From Mud Hut to Perpetual Revolution
(Steerforth)

• Jones, Chris
Too Far From Home: A Story of Life and Death in Space
(Doubleday)

K

• Kaplan, Robert D.
Hog Pilots, Blue Water Grunts: The American Military in the Air, at Sea and on the Ground
(Random House)

• Karmin, Craig
The Biography of a Dollar: How Mr. Greenback Greases the Skids of America and the World
(Crown Business)



• Kaylin, Lucy
The Perfect Stranger: The Truth About Mothers and Nannies
(Bloomsbury)

• Keller, Jon
The Bluest State: How Democrats Created the Massachusetts Blueprint for American Political Disaster
(St. Martin's)

• Kennedy, George, and Daryl Moen, editors
What Good Is Journalism?: How Reporters and Editors Are Saving America's Way of Life
(University of Missouri Press)

• Kenney, Charles
Rescue Men
(PublicAffairs)

• Kessler, Glenn
The Confidante: Condoleezza Rice and the Creation of the Bush Legacy
(St. Martin's)

• Kessler, Lauren
Dancing With Rose: Finding Life in the Land of Alzheimer's
(Viking)



• Kessler, Ronald
The Terrorist Watch: Inside the Desperate Race to Stop the Next Attack
(Crown Forum)

• King, Gary C.
Stolen in the Night
(St. Martin's)

• Kinsella, Bridget
Visiting Life: Women Doing Time on the Outside
(Harmony)

• Kitman, Marvin
The Man Who Would Not Shut Up: The Rise of Bill O'Reilly
(St. Martin's)

• Klaidman, Stephen
Coronary: A True Story of Medicine Gone Awry
(Scribner)

• Klein, Alec
A Class Apart: Prodigies, Pressure and Passion Inside One of America's Best High Schools
(Simon & Schuster)

• Klein, Edward
Katie [Couric]: The Real Story
(Crown)

• Klein, Naomi
The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism
(Metropolitan)

• Kolata, Gina
Rethinking Thin: The New Science of Weight Loss, and the Myths and Realities of Dieting
(Farrar, Straus and Giroux)

• Kreidler, Mark
Four Days to Glory: Wrestling With the Soul of the American Heartland
(HarperCollins)

• Kurlantzick, Joshua
Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power Is Transforming the World
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• Kurson, Robert
Crashing Through: A Story of Risk, Adventure and the Man Who Dared to See
(Random House)

• Kurtz, Howard
Reality Show: Inside the Last Great Television News War
(Free Press)

• Kuttner, Robert
The Squandering of America: How the Failure of Our Politics Endangers Our Prosperity
(Knopf)

L

• Laine, Kristen
American Band: Music, Dreams and Coming of Age in the Heartland
(Gotham)

• Lando, Barry M.
Web of Deceit: The History of Western Complicity in Iraq, From Churchill to Kennedy to George W. Bush
(Other Press)

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The Atomic Bazaar: The Rise of the Nuclear Poor
(Farrar, Straus and Giroux)

• LaRosa, Paul
Nightmare in Napa
(Pocket Star Books)

INVESTIGATIVE BOOKS OF 2007

- Lattin, Don
Jesus Freaks: A True Story of Murder and Madness on the Evangelical Edge
(HarperOne)
 - Latus, Janine
If I Am Missing or Dead: A Sister's Story of Love, Murder, and Liberation
(Simon & Schuster)
 - LeDuff, Charlie
US Guys: The True and Twisted Mind of the American Man
(Penguin Press)
 - LeVine, Steve
The Oil and the Glory: The Pursuit of Empire and Fortune on the Caspian Sea
(Random House)
 - Loeb, Penny
Moving Mountains: How One Woman and Her Community Won Justice From Big Coal
(University Press of Kentucky)
 - London, Mark, and Brian Kelly
The Last Forest: The Amazon in the Age of Globalization
(Random House)
 - Longman, Phillip
Best Care Anywhere: Why VA Health Care Is Better Than Yours
(PoliPoint Press)
- M**
- Mabry, Marcus
Twice as Good: Condoleezza Rice and Her Path to Power
(Modern Times/Rodale)
 - Maclean, John N
The Thirtymile Fire: A Chronicle of Bravery and Betrayal
(Holt)
 - Magee, David
How Toyota Became #1: Leadership Lessons From the World's Greatest Car Company
(Portfolio)
 - Malone, Michael S.
Bill and Dave: How Hewlett and Packard Built the World's Greatest Company
(Portfolio)
 - Mann, James
The China Fantasy: How Our Leaders Explain Away Chinese Repression
(Viking)
 - Marcus, Aliza
Blood and Belief: The PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence
(New York University Press)
- Margonelli, Lisa
Oil on the Brain: Adventures From the Pump to the Pipeline
(Doubleday)
 - Martin, Courtney E.
Perfect Girls, Starving Daughters: The Frightening New Normalcy of Hating Your Body
(Free Press)
 - Maske, Mark
War Without Death: A Year of Extreme Competition in Pro Football's NFC East
(Penguin Press)
 - Mathis, Nancy
Storm Warning: The Story of a Killer Tornado
(Touchstone)
 - Matthews, Mark
The Lost Years: Bush, Sharon and Failure in the Middle East
(Nation Books)
 - Mayer, Martin
The Judges
(St. Martin's)
 - McCarthy, Michael
The Sun Farmer: The Story of a Shocking Accident, a Medical Miracle, and a Family's Life-and-Death Decision
(Ivan R. Dee)
 - McCredie, Scott
Balance: In Search of the Lost Sense
(Little, Brown)
 - McDougal, Dennis
Five Easy Decades: How Jack Nicholson Became the Biggest Movie Star in Modern Times
(Wiley)
- 
- McGinn, Daniel
House Lust: America's Obsession With Our Homes
(Currency/Doubleday)
 - McGinniss, Joe
Never Enough
(Simon & Schuster)
 - McKelvey, Tara
Monstering: Inside America's Policy of Secret Interrogations and Torture in the Terror War
(Carroll and Graf/Avalon)
 - McKibben, Bill
Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future
(Holt)
 - Mead, Rebecca
One Perfect Day: The Selling of the American Wedding
(Penguin Press)
 - Meisler, Stanley
Kofi Annan: A Man of Peace in a World of War
(Wiley)
 - Mendell, David
Obama: From Promise to Power
(Amistad/HarperCollins)
 - Meredith, Robyn
The Elephant and the Dragon: The Rise of India and China, and What It Means for All of Us
(Norton)
- 
- Merida, Kevin, and Michael A. Fletcher
Supreme Discomfort: The Divided Soul of Clarence Thomas
(Doubleday)
 - Michaud, Stephen G., and Debbie M. Price
The Devil's Right-Hand Man: The True Story of Serial Killer Robert Charles Browne
(Berkley)
- Mills, Nick B.
Karzai: The Failing American Intervention and the Struggle for Afghanistan
(Wiley)
 - Molyneux, Paul
Swimming in Circles: Aquaculture and the Death of Wild Oceans
(Thunder's Mouth)
 - Mooney, Chris
Storm World: Hurricanes, Politics and the Battle Over Global Warming
(Harcourt)
 - Morrissey, Michael
The Pride and the Pressure: A Season Inside the New York Yankee Fishbowl
(Doubleday)
 - Muchnick, Irvin
Wrestling Babylon: Piledriving Tales of Drugs, Sex, Death and Scandal
(ECW Press)
 - Mundy, Liza
Everything Conceivable: How Assisted Reproduction Is Changing Men, Women and the World
(Knopf)
 - Murdoch, Stephen
IQ: A Smart History of a Failed Idea
(Wiley)
 - Murphy, Austin
Saturday Rules: A Season With Trojans and Domers (and Gators and Buckeyes and Wolverines)
(HarperCollins)
 - Murray, Alan
Revolt in the Boardroom: The New Rules of Power in Corporate America
(HarperCollins)
- N**
- Newhouse, John
Boeing Versus Airbus: The Inside Story of the Greatest International Competition in Business
(Knopf)
 - Novak, Robert D.
The Prince of Darkness: 50 Years Reporting in Washington
(Crown Forum)
- O**
- O'Brien, Matthew
Beneath the Neon: Life and Death in the Tunnels of Las Vegas
(Huntington Press)

INVESTIGATIVE BOOKS OF 2007

• O'Keefe, Michael, and Teri Thompson
The Card: Collectors, Con Men and the True Story of History's Most Desired Baseball Card
(Morrow)

• Oliphant, Tom
Utter Incompetents: Ego and Ideology in the Age of Bush
(St. Martin's)

• Owen, Frank
No Speed Limit: The Highs and Lows of Meth
(St. Martin's)

P

• Parker-Pope, Tara
The Hormone Decision
(Rodale)

• Parsons, Russ
How to Pick a Peach: The Search for Flavor From Farm to Table
(Houghton Mifflin)

• Paternostro, Silvana
My Colombian War: A Journey Through the Country I Left Behind
(Holt)

• Pearce, Fred
With Speed and Violence: Why Scientists Fear Tipping Points in Climate Change
(Beacon)

• Pearlstine, Norman
Off the Record: The Press, the Government, and the War Over Anonymous Sources
(Farrar, Straus and Giroux)

• Perlstein, Linda
Tested: One American School Struggles to Make the Grade
(Holt)

• Pfeiffer, Mary Beth
Crazy in America: The Hidden Tragedy of Our Criminalized Mentally Ill
(Carroll & Graf)

• Pogash, Carol
Seduced by Madness: The True Story of the Susan Polk Murder Case
(Morrow)

• Pollan, Michael
In Defense of Food: The Myth of Nutrition and the Pleasures of Eating
(Penguin Press)

• Powell, Shaun
Souled Out?: How Blacks Are Winning and Losing in Sports
(Human Kinetics)

• Preston, Richard
The Wild Trees: A Story of Passion and Daring
(Random House)

• Price, Christopher
The Blueprint: How the New England Patriots Beat the System to Create the Last Great National Football League Superpower
(St. Martin's)

• Puit, Glenn
Fire in the Desert: The True Story of the Craig Titus-Kelly Ryan Murder Mystery
(Stephens Press)

Q

• Quigley, Joan
The Day the Earth Caved In: An American Mining Tragedy
(Random House)

R

• Raddatz, Martha
The Long Road Home: A Story of War and Family
(Putnam)

• Rafael, Tony
The Mexican Mafia
(Encounter)

• Reavill, Gil
Aftermath Inc.: Cleaning Up After CSI Goes Home
(Gotham)

• Rhodes, Richard
Arsenals of Folly: The Making of the Nuclear Arms Race
(Knopf)

• Richmond, Clint
The Good Wife: The Shocking Betrayal and Brutal Murder of a Godly Woman in Texas
(Harper)

• Rodriguez, Gregory
Mongrels, Bastards, Orphans and Vagabonds: Mexican Immigration and the Future of Race in America
(Pantheon)

• Rodriguez, Teresa, and Diana Montane with Lisa Pulitzer
The Daughters of Juarez: A True Story of Serial Murder South of the Border
(Atria)

• Rose, David
The Big Eddy Club: The Stocking Stranglings and Southern Justice
(New Press)

• Rosenberg, Scott
Dreaming in Code: Two Dozen Programmers, Three Years, 4732 Bugs and One Quest for Transcendent Software
(Crown)

• Rosenblum, Mort
Escaping Plato's Cave: How America's Blindness to the Rest of the World Threatens Our Survival
(St. Martin's)

• Rosin, Hanna
God's Harvard: A Christian College on a Mission to Save America
(Harcourt)

• Rothbaum, Noah
The Business of Spirits: How Savvy Marketers, Innovative Distillers and Entrepreneurs Changed How We Drink
(Kaplan)

• Rothfeder, Jeffrey
McIlhenny's Gold: How a Louisiana Family Built the Tobacco Empire
(Collins)

• Rule, Ann
Too Late to Say Goodbye: A True Story of Murder and Betrayal
(Free Press)

S

• Sachs, Jessica Snyder
Good Germs, Bad Germs: Health and Survival in a Bacterial World
(Hill and Wang)

• Sacks, Peter
Tearing Down the Gates: Confronting the Class Divide in American Education
(University of California Press)

• Samuels, Allison
Off the Record: A Reporter Unveils the Celebrity Worlds of Hollywood, Hip-Hop and Sports
(Amistad)

• Sands, Stella
Baby-faced Butchers
(Pinnacle/Kensington)

• Savage, Charlie
Takeover: The Return of the Imperial Presidency and the Subversion of American Democracy
(Little, Brown)

• Scarborough, Rowan
Sabotage: America's Enemies Within the CIA
(Regnery)

• Schahill, Jeremy
Blackwater: The Rise and Fall of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army
(Nation Books)

• Schapiro, Mark
Exposed: The Toxic Chemistry of Everyday Products and What's at Stake for American Power
(Chelsea Green)

• Schell, Jonathan
The Seventh Decade: The New Shape of Nuclear Danger
(Metropolitan/Holt)

• Schmidt, Peter
Color and Money: How Rich White Kids Are Winning the War Over College Affirmative Action
(Palgrave Macmillan)

• Schwartz-Nobel, Loretta
Poisoned Nation: Pollution, Greed, and the Rise of Deadly Epidemics
(St. Martin's)

• Scott, Aurelia C.
Otherwise Normal People: Inside the Thorny World of Competitive Rose Gardening
(Algonquin)

• Scott, Robert
Killer Dad
(Pinnacle/Kensington)

• Scurlock, James D.
Maxed Out: Hard Times in the Age of Easy Credit
(Scribner)

• Sheff, David
Beautiful Boy: A Father's Journey Through His Son's Meth Addiction
(Houghton Mifflin)

• Shook, Robert L.
Miracle Medicines: Seven Lifesaving Drugs and the People Who Created Them
(Portfolio)

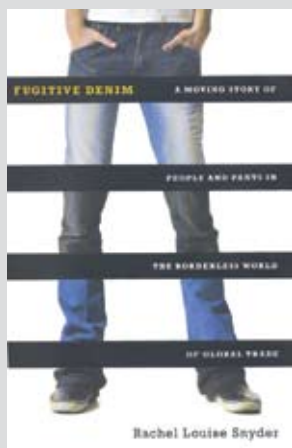
• Shorris, Earl
The Politics of Heaven: America in Fearful Times
(Norton)

• Shulman, Seth
Undermining Science: Suppression and Distortion in the Bush Administration
(University of California Press)

• Siler, Julia Flynn
The House of Mondavi: The Rise and Fall of an American Wine Dynasty
(Gotham Books)

INVESTIGATIVE BOOKS OF 2007

- Sites, Kevin
In the Hot Zone: One Man, One Year, Twenty Wars
(Perennial/HarperCollins)
- Slack, Gordy
The Battle Over the Meaning of Everything: Evolution, Intelligent Design and a School Board in Dover, PA
(Wiley)
- Slavín, Barbara
Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: Iran, the U.S. and the Twisted Path to Confrontation
(St. Martin's)
- Smith, Carlton
Mind Games: The True Story of a Psychologist, His Wife, and a Brutal Murder
(St. Martin's)
- Smith, Sally Bedell
For Love of Politics: Bill and Hillary Clinton, the White House Years
(Random House)
- Snyder, Rachel Louise
Fugitive Denim: A Moving Story of People and Pants in the Borderless World of Global Trade
(Norton)



- Stepp, Laura Sessions
Unhooked: How Young Women Pursue Sex, Delay Love, and Lose at Both
(Riverhead)
- Stern, Marcus, Jerry Kammer, Dean Calbreath, and George E. Condon Jr.
The Wrong Stuff: The Extraordinary Saga of Randy "Duke" Cunningham, the Most Corrupt Congressman Ever Caught
(PublicAffairs)
- Stodghill, Ron
Redbone: Money, Malice and Murder in Atlanta
(Amistad)

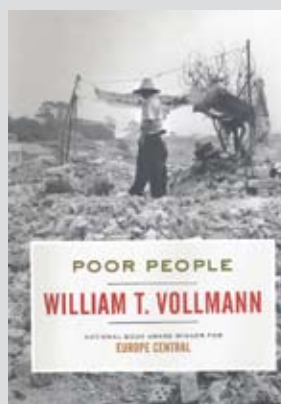
- Symmes, Patrick
The Boys From Dolores: Fidel Castro's Classmates From Revolution to Exile
(Pantheon)
- T**
- Taibbi, Matt
Smells Like Dead Elephants: Dispatches From a Rotting Empire
(Black Cat)
- Tanz, Jason
Other People's Property: A Shadow History of Hip-Hop in White America
(Bloomsbury)
- Taubes, Gary
Good Calories, Bad Calories: Challenging the Conventional Wisdom on Diet, Weight Control and Disease
(Knopf)
- Temple-Raston, Dina
The Jihad Next Door: The Lackawanna Six and Rough Justice in an Age of Terror
(PublicAffairs)

- Thomas, Dana
Deluxe: How Luxury Lost Its Luster
(Penguin Press)
- Thomas, Susan Gregory
Buy, Buy Baby: How Consumer Culture Manipulates Parents and Harms Young Minds
(Houghton Mifflin)
- Thompson, Neal
Hurricane Season: A Coach, His Team and Their Triumph in the Time of Katrina
(Free Press)
- Timmerman, Kenneth R.
Shadow Warriors: The Untold Story of Traitors, Saboteurs, and the Party of Surrender
(Crown Forum)

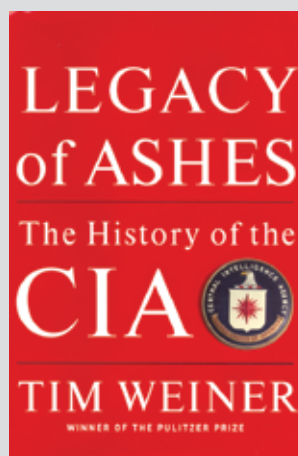
- Toobin, Jeffrey
The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court
(Doubleday)
- Trofimov, Yaroslav
The Siege of Mecca: The Forgotten Uprising in Islam's Holiest Shrine and the Birth of Al Qaeda
(Doubleday)

- U**
- Unger, Craig
The Fall of the House of Bush: The Untold Story of How a Band of True Believers Seized the Executive Branch, Started the Iraq War, and Still Imperils America's Future
(Scribner)

- V**
- Van Sant, Peter, and Jenna Jackson
Perfectly Executed
(Pocket Books)
- Velez-Mitchell, Jane
Secrets Can Be Murder: What America's Most Sensational Crimes Tell Us About Ourselves
(Touchstone/Simon & Schuster)
- Ventner, Al J.
Allah's Bomb: The Islamic Quest for Nuclear Weapons
(Lyons)
- Vogel, Steve
The Pentagon: A History
(Random House)
- Vollmann, William T.
Poor People
(Ecco)



- W**
- Weiner, Tim
Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA
(Doubleday)



- Weinreb, Michael
The Kings of New York: A Year Among the Geeks, Oddballs and Geniuses Who Make Up America's Top High School Chess Team
(Gotham Books)
- Weisman, Alan
Prince of Darkness: Richard Perle, the Kingdom, the Power, and the End of Empire in America
(Sterling/Union Square)
- Weisman, Alan
The World Without Us
(St. Martin's)
- Wenzl, Roy, Tim Potter, L. Kelly, Hurst Lavinia
Bind, Torture, Kill
(HarperCollins)
- Wertheim, L. Jon
Running the Table: The Legend of Kid Delicious, the Last Great American Pool Hustler
(Houghton Mifflin)
- West, Diana
The Death of the Grown-Up: How America's Arrested Development Is Bringing Down Western Civilization
(St. Martin's)

- White, Emily
You Will Make Money in Your Sleep: The Story of Dana Giacchetto, Financial Adviser to the Stars
(Scribner)
- Wilkinson, Tracy
The Vatican's Exorcists: Driving Out the Devil in the 21st Century
(Grand Central)

- Williams, Wendy, and Robert Whitcomb
Cape Wind: Money, Celebrity, Class, Politics and the Battle for America's Energy Future on Nantucket Sound
(PublicAffairs)
- Wright, Robin
Dreams and Shadows: The Future of the Middle East
(Penguin Press)

- Y**
- Yost, Mark
The 200-mph Billboard: The Inside Story of How Big Money Changed NASCAR
(MBI/Motorbooks)

- Z**
- Zirin, Dave
Welcome to the Terrordome: The Pain, Politics and Promise of Sports
(Haymarket)

REMEMBERING IDA TARBELL

Standard Oil investigation set out to capture an era—and readers

BY KATHLEEN BRADY

Publishers, editors and reporters struggling to keep journalism forceful and print itself vital might take heart in the story behind *The History of the Standard Oil Company*, the classic exposé published in *McClure's Magazine* a century ago. The story hit with the force that the Enron scandal would have a century later, but coming up with the idea took more than a year.

At the dawn of the 20th century, the age of what Teddy Roosevelt dismissed as “muckraking,” *McClure's* was the incubator of investigative journalism with crusading series on municipal corruption by Lincoln Steffens and on the labor movement by Ray Stannard Baker. Its most famous and enduring work, of course, was *The History of the Standard Oil Company* by Ida M. Tarbell, the first installment of which appeared in November 1902 and ultimately led the Supreme Court to dissolve the company in 1911.

Her work was historic, but her original intention was not high-minded. She and her editors simply wanted more readers to buy their magazine. “Anyone who thought we sat around with our brow screwed together trying to reform the world was far from the truth,” Tarbell wrote to author Alice Hegan Rice in 1933. “We were after . . . interesting reading material and if it contributed to the general good, so much the better.”

In the closing years of the 19th century, McClure put his staff under relentless pressure to come up with a new series that the public would crave. The writer Finley Peter Dunne, who created Mr. Dooley, a literary character who was the Stephen Colbert of his day, proposed “the trust,” the monopoly that was overtaking major industries, transforming American business from ownership by many people to control by a few.

McClure liked Dunne’s idea. He said, “It seems

to me that he has found the great feature, and the great feature is trusts. . . . That will be the great red-hot event. The magazine that puts [together] the various phases of the subject that people want to be informed about will be bound to have a good circulation.”

Tarbell and her colleagues wanted to select one trust that would represent the pattern that was common to all of them and one living man who had consolidated that power and reigned over an industry and everyone who participated in it.

Tarbell proposed the Sugar Trust, led by Henry O. Havemeyer. She wanted to show how the Sugar Trust pressured and cajoled legislators to keep protective tariffs high and then show how that affected the prices paid by housewives.

But McClure thought that too trivial.

Her suggestion did focus the editors’ attention on how corporate endeavors affected the American dinner table. As a result, they selected the Beef Trust and Philip Armour, who had turned meat-packing into a national industry centered in Chicago by developing in-plant slaughtering and refrigerated railroad cars that distributed meat across the country. However, Armour had the good fortune to die in January 1901, thus eliminating himself as a candidate for an in-depth investigation.

Ray Stannard Baker then suggested that the discovery ten years earlier of large oil fields in California, particularly Los Angeles, could be interesting. Tarbell thought not. She was interested in the boardroom strategies and planning that went into the making of monopolies that crushed and swept up local businesses as central offices assumed every aspect of production and sales.

She wrote Baker, “Unquestionably we ought to do something in the coming year on the great industrial developments of the country, but it seems clear to me that we must *not* attempt to do this by describing the discovery and opening of great natural resources such as in the case of the oil.

“We have got to find a new plan of attacking [industrial development]. Something that will show clearly not only the magnitude of the industries and commercial developments, and the changes they have brought in various parts of the country, but something which will make clear the great principles by which industrial leaders are combining and controlling these resources.”

This inspired Baker’s relatively quick study of the steel industry. The result was his article “What the U.S. Steel Corp. Really Is,” which described J. Pierpont Morgan’s company as a government unto itself. It appeared in the November 1901 issue of *McClure's* six months after Tarbell wrote him.

But there was more to a trust than the fact that it functioned virtually unchecked. There was the story of its great efficiencies and organization and the story of its human cost. *McClure's* series on the trust had to explain all that in narrative form. To give *McClure's* editor John Phillips an example, Tarbell told him how her father had prospered in the oil business. Franklin Tarbell had made a small fortune by developing an



Tarbell, pictured in her library in 1905, and her editors at *McClure's Magazine* wanted to captivate American readers by exposing how trusts operate.

innovative oil tank, then struck oil himself in the wild oil fields of Pithole, Pa. He prospered until John D. Rockefeller took over the oil business, pipelines and railroads, thus strangling the ability of independent oil men to get their product to market and reducing the value of Franklin's oil leases.

Tarbell began to see that the story of the oil regions could be told as a historical narrative. She doubted, however, that anyone would want to read it. John Phillips disagreed. He urged her to produce an outline and take it to McClure in Europe where he was recovering from one of his frequent bouts of exhaustion.

As she finished, William McKinley was assassinated and Teddy Roosevelt was sworn in as president. Tarbell soon sailed to Europe expecting to stay with McClure, who was in Vevey, Switzerland, on Lake Geneva, only one week. She expected to have

serious discussions about whether the magazine should commit its resources to investigating Standard Oil and its founder John D. Rockefeller. But McClure was in one of his frequent festive moods. He whisked Tarbell and his wife to Lucerne, then to the Italian lake country and Milan before he would think of discussing business. At the spa of Salsomaggiore Terme in Italy, a location ringed by oil refineries, they discussed the project while baking in healing mud, basking in cleansing steam and chatting with Cecil Rhodes, the British imperialist and diamond magnate who founded Rhodesia. Finally, McClure approved her proposal, which called for a series of three articles amounting to 25,000 words or about 100 pages.

As Tarbell uncovered details of the illegal rebates and drawbacks (a cut of competitors' shipping costs) that created Rockefeller's wealth, the story

so captured the public that the series was stretched to a dozen articles and ultimately was published in two volumes, complete with 64 appendices of documentation.

The U.S. Justice Department took note of her findings, verified them and sued Standard Oil. In May 1911, the Supreme Court dissolved the company after finding it guilty of illegally restraining trade. The once-powerful trust was broken down into Standard Oil of California, Ohio, Indiana, New Jersey and New York.

Quite an impact for a complicated story that Tarbell thought no one would read.

Kathleen Brady is the author of "Ida Tarbell: Portrait of a Muckraker." This article is excerpted from a speech she gave in Titusville, Pa., in November, commemorating the 150th birthday of Ida Tarbell.

Did Tarbell invent investigative journalism?

By Steve Weinberg

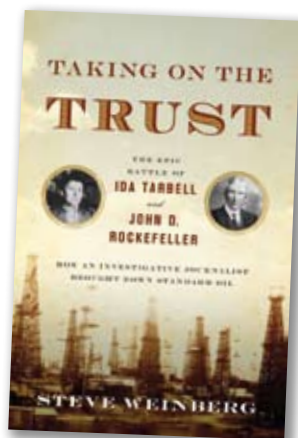
Delving into the methods Ida Tarbell used to expose the world's most powerful corporation and most influential businessman during the first five years of the 20th century led me to a conclusion I never expected: Ida Tarbell invented what today we call investigative reporting.

Before 1900, newspaper reporters, magazine writers and book authors wrote exposés, to be sure. But those exposés tended to be carelessly or superficially researched, compared to the standards IRE upholds in the 21st century.

What Tarbell accomplished slightly more than 100 years ago would be akin to a contemporary journalist finding information that led to the breakup of Microsoft and the destruction of Bill Gates' sterling reputation. Whether read as a magazine serialization or in its book form, Tarbell's exposé of the Standard Oil Company and John D. Rockefeller resonates as if it had been written just last week.

Nobody had combined paper trails and people trails as Tarbell did for *McClure's Magazine*. To tell the story of the Standard Oil Company, Tarbell located lawsuits, court opinions, legislative hearings, executive branch agency studies, correspondence among business executives, seemingly insignificant clippings in obscure local newspapers, magazine articles and relevant books. She interviewed past and current sources from within Standard Oil, despite the resistance of founder John D. Rockefeller. She also found hundreds of outside sources who had viewed the behemoth from every angle.

Steve Weinberg, senior contributing editor of The IRE Journal, revisits Ida Tarbell's investigation of Standard Oil in his latest book, "Taking on the Trust: The Epic Battle of Ida Tarbell and John D. Rockefeller/How an Investigative Journalist Brought Down Standard Oil" (March 2008, W.W. Norton).



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Testing mercury levels in people who catch and eat fish helped connect mercury pollution from industrial sources, like this coal-burning power plant, to everyday life.

MERCURY CONNECTION:

State tests water and fish but not people who eat the catch

BY TONY BARTELME AND DOUG PARDUE
 THE (CHARLESTON, S.C.) POST AND COURIER

Mercury in rivers, in lakes, in fish. We've been writing about these issues at the *Post and Courier* for decades, but isn't something missing in these stories?

This was the question that nagged at us for years as we wrote time after time about mercury-related issues.

Then in late autumn of 2006, representatives from two environmental groups invited us to their offices. They wanted us to take a hard look at recent federal proposals to set up a cap-and-trade plan for mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants.

Sure, it's an important story, we said, our eyes glazing over a bit as they went through the numbers. But where's the drama? Mercury is a deadly poison, but it's not like the lead story, with the images of toddlers at risk for brain damage from flaking lead paint in rundown homes.

"Where are the victims?" we asked, half-joking. "What we need is 'Catfish Boy.'"

The environmental groups' representatives said that, as far as they knew, no public agency in South Carolina had ever bothered to measure mercury levels in people. So we decided to look for ourselves.

Our first stop was the state Department of Health and Environmental Control, which measures mercury levels in locally caught fish. Despite limited resources, biologists catch as many as 1,800 fish a year at certain locations and then test them for mercury—resulting in a gold mine of data showing types of fish, locations and mercury levels.

We submitted several Freedom of Information Act requests for three years of sampling data and eventually received Excel spreadsheets documenting the capture and measurement of 4,783 fish. Fortunately for us, state officials go to the same 150 fishing holes every year. With this raw data, we were quickly able to calculate average mercury levels in fish at each spot and then sort them. This revealed several hotspots where average mercury levels in the fish would trigger a national recall if it were sold in stores.

With this information, we decided to test people who eat fish from two of the worst locations. Either way, we thought we had a good story. If mercury levels were low in these frequent fish-eaters, then we could show our readers that fears about mercury contamination may be overblown. If levels were high, then we could show that mercury is a serious public health threat.



Kristie Williamson, holding her one-year-old daughter, says she would like to have more children but is concerned about mercury in her body. *The Post and Courier* investigation found that the state did little to prevent human exposure.

Hair-raising hot spots

But there was one problem. To test people, we would need a sample of their hair, and a fair-sized clump at that. (Hair tests are considered one of the best ways to determine chronic exposure to mercury.)

Before we tested anyone, we talked to nationally recognized doctors and toxicologists who said that researchers routinely use blood and hair samples to measure mercury. Since neither one of us had any experience drawing blood, we knew we had to go with hair. That was fine because mercury tends to build up in hair over time, making it a better test for long-term exposure to mercury.

Asking people to let us cut their hair made for some interesting conversations.

"I thought you were bringing some pizza, and now you want some hair," joked one man along the Edisto River, drinking beers with his buddies.

Others half-joked that they thought we were police looking to do some drug testing.

One young man on the Little Pee Dee River warned others not to give us hair samples because we were trying to get their DNA for some nefarious reason.

Most politely declined or said they didn't eat much fish. But a surprising number agreed. Most were simply curious about their mercury levels. Many were skeptical about the state's fish advisories. Some said that even if the samples came back high, they would keep eating fish.

With scissors in hand, we gave people some bad haircuts. A few strands wouldn't do. The lab required enough hair to tip a small paper scale they had sent us. Getting enough hair from some men was particularly challenging. One of our volunteers used clippings from his daily shaves to get enough.

In addition to collecting hair, we also asked people

how much fish they eat and what kinds, and whether they had any health problems.

The results gave us several "catfish boys," or more accurately, catfish men and women. Of the 41 people we tested, 17 had mercury levels higher than the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency considers safe. And six had mercury levels that would have placed them in the top one percent of those measured in a recent nationwide study.

A report that hits home

We presented our findings in a three-day series called "The Mercury Connection." Using downloadable data from the Environmental Protection Agency's Toxics Release Inventory (www.epa.gov/tri), we looked for the top mercury emitters. We also obtained emissions data from the state, which keeps its own inventory. The state's data was similar to the EPA's TRI, with an important exception: The EPA's roster didn't include numbers on a municipal incinerator in Charleston, one of the worst mercury polluters in the state. (For more information on using TRI data, see p. 16)

Through interviews, we learned that for three years South Carolina has had state-of-the-art equipment to test people for mercury, but it had only tested one member of the public—a doctor on upscale Hilton Head Island who was concerned about his sushi intake.

After all of our interviews and trips to get hair samples, the temptation to test our own hair was too strong, so we sent off our own samples. (We didn't include these in our overall results.)

We reasoned that it would be an interesting experiment in itself. That's because Tony is allergic to fish and breaks out in hives if he has more than

Perhaps the most important effect of the series was that it exposed how the state and federal governments do little to prevent people from being contaminated with mercury ...

a few bites. His result came back at 0.2 parts per million, way below the EPA's safety benchmark of 1 part per million.

Doug, on the other hand, eats seafood nearly every other day. He loves tuna steaks and grouper. His hair sample came back with nearly four times the mercury level considered safe. Fortunately, the body can rid itself of mercury over time, but Doug is now in tuna withdrawal.

For people with high mercury levels, the message is to heed the state's mercury warnings. The good news is that mercury can be flushed from a person's body; the bad news is that it may be too late to prevent brain damage and other health disorders.

Perhaps the most important effect of the series was that it exposed how the state and federal governments do little to prevent people from being contaminated with mercury—other than warn them to avoid it. It would be kind of like the government warning people to avoid exposure to flu, but not actively coming up with vaccines to prevent people from getting it.

Tony Bartelme is projects reporter for The Post and Courier in Charleston, S.C. Doug Pardue is the Post and Courier's special assignments editor.

COVERING POLLUTION

This primer gives an overview of useful resources for local investigations into pollution. It shows how to get to the heart of an investigation quickly and is filled with examples and references to stories, tipsheets and other resources available from IRE and SEJ.



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MEASURING MERCURY

EPA pollution data worth a look, flaws and all

BY PAUL OVERBERG
USA TODAY

Last summer, *USA Today* and Gannett News Service joined forces to analyze the Toxics Release Inventory data from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The TRI database details how many pounds of more than 600 chemicals are released into the air, water, and various waste and recycling streams each year from tens of thousands of facilities. Those include manufacturers, mines, oil and chemical terminals and even federal facilities. Small firms and those that only use small amounts of listed chemicals are exempt.

We approached this as a test for collaboration in data collection, analysis and publication. The project culminated in a three-part series called “Toxic Legacy,” which included a close look at mercury pollution, along with other known and emerging environmental threats. Our coverage included a Google Maps mashup of five years of TRI data for

2,400 facilities and a state-by-state digest of fish consumption advisories and links to each state’s fish advisory program Web site.

An over-under bet

This was the second time *USA Today* had collaborated on a TRI investigation. In 1992, when the EPA released the first year of TRI data, it arrived on 9-track computer tapes the size of dinner plates. We shipped custom reports to Gannett papers on greenbar computer paper. (Current and archival TRI data is available from the IRE and NICAR Database Library, www.ire.org/datalibrary.)

News technology and the TRI itself have changed dramatically, but some things haven’t. There are still challenges in using TRI data, but it remains a priceless and underused tool.

The TRI was launched through the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986 (EPCRA) and expanded by the Pollution Prevention Act of 1990. The data represents self-reported estimates from private industry and government-run facilities.

There’s definitely underreporting—and overreporting. The TRI is like an election where the polls never close. Facilities can revise their data years later, and sometimes are forced to do so after inspections. Extensive information about the reporting rules and industry guidelines are online at www.epa.gov/tri.

Environmental groups point out that the TRI understates emissions because smaller facilities are exempt, and the EPA allows some facilities to simply estimate emissions. The EPA has exempted some facilities from filing a detailed report if they don’t use or release much of a chemical. (California quickly re-imposed the old requirement. Twelve states are suing the EPA to overturn the new rule.)

And to the dismay of many journalists, the TRI can’t say anything about human exposure levels, or what culprit released the mercury found, for example, in a given lake. Similarly, there’s debate about just how significant U.S. industrial emissions of mercury are in the global scheme of things. Other sources—volcanoes and industrial emissions from Asia, Mexico and Canada—also affect U.S. mercury levels.

The mercury example

We chose mercury in part because the TRI made the biggest source of mercury emissions easy to analyze. Other reasons had more to do with storytelling:

Mercury’s toxicity is well-known and well-documented. In humans, mercury acts as a nerve toxin and affects fetal development.

It has many industrial uses, and traces remain in enough household products that it’s familiar to many consumers.

Industrial sources are widely scattered, although many of the biggest lie in the Ohio River Valley. And it’s mostly released into the air, where it is then widely dispersed.

Regulation varies. The EPA advises consumers to recycle fluorescent light bulbs to prevent traces of mercury from escaping. And if you spill more than two tablespoons, you’re required to call the EPA’s National Response Center immediately. But in the TRI, big mercury sources don’t even have to measure emissions directly. Some have found that their estimates are hundreds of pounds shy of what they actually pour into the air each year.

Finally, everyone’s hands are dirty. Americans use more and more electricity every year. Coal-fired power plants exist in most states and their output is directed throughout the grid.

In the environment, airborne mercury poses the biggest problem once it falls to the ground with rain and reaches bottom sediments. There, bacteria convert it so it can be taken up in the food chain, accumulating along the way. Almost every state has issued advisories to limit consumption of certain fish from certain bodies of water because of mercury contamination.

Our series showed how overall airborne emissions of mercury have dropped since 2000 but those from utilities have actually risen slightly. This is due to the growth in electricity generated from coal and the slow pace of additional controls. After years of planning, an EPA cap-and-trade plan to cut mercury emissions has begun, but it’s under attack in federal court as doing too little too slowly.

We compared airborne mercury data reported for 2001 when it was first estimated and as it’s now reported on the EPA’s online system (www.epa.gov/tri). The difference: Among 839 facilities, 20 reported underestimating by a collective 3,474 pounds of emissions; 21 reported overestimating by a collective 1,274 pounds. The difference made up an extra ton of mercury, or 1.6% of the national total.

That was just for facilities that filed a 2001 report when it was required. Inspections and audits have since turned up another 284 facilities that should have done so. They have reported another seven tons of mercury that wasn’t counted in the initial tally for 2001.

For our story, we used the updated totals and showcased issues in controlling airborne mercury from coal-fired power plants, the largest single source. We included video interviews of members of the Red



The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press is seeking an experienced reporter/editor to serve as its **Journalism Fellow**.

Description: The recipient of the one-year fellowship will have the opportunity to learn about free press issues first hand. The fellow will write, edit and design for the Committee’s publications and Web site.

Minimum requirements: Three years journalism experience and a strong interest in free press issues.

Benefits: \$40,000 plus full health benefits for a one-year fellowship beginning in September 2008. The fellow also will audit a course on First Amendment /media law.

Application deadline: March 1, 2008

See <http://www.rcfp.org/fellowships> for more information

Cliff (Wis.) Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, who must carefully monitor what kind and size of game fish are consumed by various tribal members.

Meaningful numbers

We listened to the misgivings about the TRI but were surprised to see how little it gets used by the media. In recent years, most coverage has been limited to spot stories tied to the EPA's annual data release in the spring, and even that is mostly confined to reporting the annual trend and a state's top 10 polluters.

Some reasons why, and ways to counter them:

- The data can be overwhelming. Each facility submits a form each year for each chemical, so a coal-fired power plant might submit 30 forms a year. Each includes a couple hundred data items, including dozens for how much of a chemical was released, recycled in various ways or shipped offsite as waste. Counter: Simplify. Just look at one facility or one chemical.
- We don't know much about chemistry. Counter: Learn some. Or get help from a local environmental toxicologist.
- An editor's typical first question—"What's the trend?"—isn't easy to answer. Over the years, the TRI has added chemicals and types of facilities. The EPA's new exemption from detailed reporting will create another break in time comparisons, starting with the 2006 data due out next spring. Counter: Narrow your focus. Database software can focus on a single facility or a group with consistent reporting rules.
- "How many people died or were poisoned?" is another editor's question the TRI can't answer. So is "Is this much pollution illegal?" And when the plant spokesman says, "We obey all rules and regulations," an overworked reporter with no expertise can be tempted to file a quick story and move on. Counter: Look up the facility's permits and other government reports. Also remember that the TRI shows emissions dropping year after year for most chemicals, places and industries. With a spreadsheet it's simple to find industries, facilities or companies where that's not happening. Then just ask, "Why aren't emissions going down?" The answers will open interesting new lines of questioning. The same approach can work where emissions are decreasing, but not as fast as averages for the industry or region.

If nothing else excites your editor, look at federal facilities that report emissions in the TRI, including military bases, national labs and power plants. Some report significant totals.

It's worth remembering that the TRI was not created for any specific purpose. Its authors put their faith in sunshine. The rest is up to each community—and its journalists.

Paul Overberg is a database editor at USA Today and helps train its 500 journalists. He previously worked as a science and environmental reporter and editor at Gannett News Service.

POLLUTION DATA RESOURCES:

Reports

Two *USA Today*-Gannett News Service reports on power plants as a major source of mercury can be found at www.usatoday.com/news/health/2007-10-29-mercury-cover_N.htm and <http://gns.gannettonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=TOXIC01>.

The Environmental Integrity Project (www.environmentalintegrity.org) reported in July of 2007 on the 50 dirtiest coal-burning plants, pulling in data on generating capacity to create pollution rates per kilowatt-hour. In another report in November, it focused on increases in emissions of a handful of hazardous air pollutants from some Gulf Coast refineries.

OMB Watch runs a TRI advocacy center and clearinghouse (www.ombwatch.org/article/archive/241), including a list of local groups that have used the TRI to affect policy.

The IRE Beat Book "Covering Pollution," produced in collaboration with the Society of Environmental Journalists, compiles resources reporters can use for local investigations into environmental pollution.

Web searching

The EPA offers a searchable online version of the TRI (www.epa.gov/triexplorer). So does RTKNet, which is run by OMBWatch, a nonprofit group (<http://data.rtknet.org/tri>). Both tools can be useful, but they offer so many search options that they can be confusing.

The National Library of Medicine's ToxNet search (www.toxnet.nlm.nih.gov/cgi-bin/sis/htmlgen?TRI) is somewhat easier to use. Its ToxMap offers a powerful but complicated mapping interface at <http://toxmap.nlm.nih.gov/toxmap/main/index.jsp>.

A joint Dartmouth-Harvard research project recently used a collaborative mapping platform called MapMundi and Google Maps to create a mashup of TRI data on airborne emissions. Its Web site also offers other emissions data, corporate policies and other supplemental data (www.mapecos.org).

The North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation publishes a harmonized report for the United States, Mexico and Canada each year. In October it released its 2004 report, complete with a searchable data and a Google Earth layer (www.cec.org/takingstock). Canada's version of the TRI is the National Pollutant Release Inventory (www.ec.gc.ca/pdb/npri/npri_home_e.cfm) and Mexico's is the Registro de Emisiones y Transferencia de Contaminantes (<http://app1.semarnat.gob.mx/retc/index.php>).

Downloadable data

TRI data can be downloaded in annual "frozen" files that represent the data as it was released and summarized by the EPA each year (www.epa.gov/tri/tridata/index.htm). Updates are not included, however. For those, use the EPA's TRI Explorer to select and download extracts of the data (www.epa.gov/triexplorer).

IRE and NICAR's Database Library offers TRI data (www.ire.org/datalibrary) from 1987 to 2005, the most recent available year. It can be purchased by year or by state; custom data analysis is also available for a fee. (These are an example of the frozen files mentioned above.)

Almost all states issue advisories based on mercury contamination. Advisories vary widely in format. The EPA compiles them into a searchable database (http://oaspub.epa.gov/nlfa/nlfa.bld_qry?p_type=advrpt&p_loc=on). It's available in hard copy upon request.

MONEY IN
2008
POLITICS



BIG SPENDERS

Follow the fundraising trends
up and down the ballot

By Derek Willis
The New York Times

The 2000 presidential election was the most expensive in history. No, wait, it was the 2004 election. Actually, it'll be the 2008 election—at least until 2012. Campaign finance reporting can be a fairly predictable genre, but it doesn't have to be. This is even more true for the vast majority of journalists who won't be covering the presidential contest itself.

Other than the consistent growth in the cost of campaigns, the other truism of campaign finance is that new techniques developed at the federal level eventually find their way to state and local elections. So the ideas that have dominated recent federal campaign finance coverage—bundling and lobbyist donations among them—also can and will affect down-ballot races in 2008. And money may not grow on trees, but for candidates, developing a network of financial supporters is enough like tending a garden that reporters should make sure not to neglect the “soil” that yields millions for candidates and parties.



From local office to Oval Office

Local and state elections sometimes get less data scrutiny than federal races do, but it shouldn't be that way. After all, local news organizations are closer to their local officials than anyone, and reporters are best positioned to connect the dots between contributors and recipients. Local lawmakers, in particular, sometimes operate as if their campaign finance reports receive only the most cursory examination; witness recent stories in the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* and *Louisville Courier-Journal* that seem to indicate candidates' carelessness or lack of compliance in completing campaign reports.

The best reason to gather data on local candidates is for the stories. The second-best reason is that local candidates become statewide and sometimes national candidates. In this way smaller, local news organizations can produce stories beyond the immediate reach of larger media outlets because the local journalists have built up their database of campaign finance activity over time. And when these local candidates run, even for president, you'll be ready.

The nature of the current White House race, with no incumbent president or vice president running, makes it possible to look at campaign finance

data in some new ways. For example, the "top-tier" candidates in both parties are running quite different campaigns than the other hopefuls in the race. Few things make the differences clearer than how and where these front-runners raise and spend money. The geographic spread of presidential campaign fundraising and spending is a telling collection of data.

Reporters have access to other types of data that can help flesh out the story, too. These include presidential campaign stops, which both the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, among others, have been tracking and publishing. In-state groups in New Hampshire and Iowa do the same.

Campaign finance reporting doesn't have to exist on an island—it can play a part in a broader story alongside other types of data. On bundling, *The Wall Street Journal* has done extensive reporting on the people who serve as network fundraisers for campaigns, building on the innovations of the Bush-Cheney campaign in 2000. Reporters can investigate whether these fundraising ideas have surfaced in the campaigns of congressional candidates and people running statewide campaigns. In all cases, we recommend compiling a donor history that covers federal and non-federal elections. This can prove valuable when you're trying to figure out who should be supporting a candidate but isn't.

House and Senate races provide another interesting historical twist: After 12 years of Republican majorities in the House and a tightly contested Senate, next year's election offers Democrats the chance to expand upon their slim majorities, while the GOP looks to regain its former perch. Races that involve freshmen lawmakers or those in competitive presidential states will provide excellent opportunities to use campaign finance data (except in most Senate races, where electronic filing is still not required). In the case of new House members, the data already filed with the Federal Election Commission (FEC) can be used to show how their situations (and backers) have changed—or whether they are vulnerable to a well-financed candidate. In addition, expenditure data can be used to measure how their campaign tactics have changed now that they are no longer challengers but incumbents. In this, voting

records and other data can help tell the story.

New sources

If you haven't been focusing on politics 24/7, be thankful, but you may have missed some new organizations working with data in ways that can benefit reporters (see sidebar for details). One is the Sunlight Foundation, which in addition to conducting its own research on disclosure and corruption also has a Labs page that features several Web tools. Among them is LOUIS, a searchable index of executive and legislative branch documents, and a congressional API that can provide basic biographical information and geographic data for members of Congress. Another is the National Institute on Money in State Politics, which has expanded its offerings to include visualization tools.

As with all outside organizations that offer data and assistance to journalists, it's important to know the funding behind the groups. The Sunlight Foundation is notable in that it is both an advocacy organization and a grantee for other groups.

Nonprofit groups, be they the 527 committees that played a large role in the 2004 campaign or 501(c)(4) organizations advocating on behalf of issues, will once again be a factor in state and federal elections, mostly through television and radio advertising. The degree to which these groups will be scrutinized by federal and state regulators is one of the larger questions of the campaign, but the FEC has signaled its interest in regulating nonprofit activity that previously was solely the domain of the Internal Revenue Service. The FEC also has fined several 527 committees active in the 2004 elections. For journalists, such an expansion of FEC scrutiny could mean more public documentation of investigations—mostly after the fact, but some may be timely and useful in campaign reporting.

The FEC also adopted a rule in November 2007 that governs the requirements for "electioneering communications" by grassroots organizations such as membership groups. The rule keeps in place reporting requirements for such advertisements but also allows a "safe harbor" for certain advertisements that do not mention a candidate and his or her fitness for office.

Nonprofit changes aside, the 2008 campaign cycle will be one of the first times in the past 10 years that the laws should be substantially the same throughout the election. The state of campaign finance law, which is of abiding interest to a handful of election lawyers, does not rank very high with voters. The more we as journalists stick to using campaign finance data as a tool to explain campaigns and elections, the better informed we and our readers and viewers will be.

Derek Willis recently joined the staff of nytimes.com. He has covered campaign finance issues as database editor at Washingtonpost.com and at The Center for Public Integrity. He is a co-author of "Unstacking the Deck," an IRE beat book about covering campaign finance. He lives online at www.thescoop.org.

RESOURCES

Stories

From the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*:

"Donor information unreported"

(Davd Umhoefer and Greg J. Borowski, Oct. 24, 2007).

www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=678679

From the *Wall Street Journal*:

"Bundling emerges as major campaign funding ill in '08 race"

(Brody Mullins, Oct. 18, 2007)

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB119267248520862997.html>

Resources

The Washington Post's Campaign Tracker

<http://projects.washingtonpost.com/2008-presidential-candidates/tracker>

The New York Times: Presidential Candidate Schedules

<http://politics.nytimes.com/election-guide/2008/schedules/pastevents.html#candidate99>

The Sunlight Foundation

www.sunlightlabs.org

LOUIS, the Library Of Unified Information Sources, a project of the Sunlight Foundation

www.louisdb.org

Sunlights Labs API

www.sunlightlabs.com/api

The National Institute on Money in State Politics

www.followthemoney.org

The Lenhard Amendment on Electioneering Communications

www.moresoftmoneyhardlaw.com/clientfiles/EC-RL-amend.pdf

For more campaign finance resources, including IRE and NICAR data, Beat Books and more, see p. 26.

FAVORS IN FINE PRINT

Defense spending bill packed
with \$11.8B in earmarks

By David Heath
The Seattle Times

You'd think it'd be easy to track down an 85-foot boat, especially one that Congress ordered the Navy to buy. But call after call to a high-level Navy spokesman led to a lot of promises to check on it and get back to me. Then, finally, this: They knew nothing about the boat.

It was baffling because I'd already found the vessel on my own and told the Navy where to look—next to a University of Washington pier right in the heart of Seattle.

"Yes, that boat is here at the UW," Russell McDuff, director of the School of Oceanography, told me. Turns out the Navy had no use for the \$4.5 million boat and had "loaned" it to the university without bothering to take delivery first. The school could never find a use for it either, so McDuff had asked the Navy months earlier to come take it back.

The useless boat was just one of thousands of purchases in recent years that Congress forced the military to make. This micromanagement of military spending is done through earmarks buried in appropriation bills, a legislative trick invented by lobbyists, usually to funnel tax dollars directly to one of their clients.

Guardian Marine International, the company that sold the Navy the \$4.5 million boat, was a floundering business run out of the CEO's house in Edmonds, Wash. But shortly after the company's founder started giving money to the campaign of Rep. Norm Dicks, the Congressman got the company their first earmark. That was followed by more donations and three more earmarks, including a boat the Coast Guard gave away to a county sheriff and the boat the Navy loaned to the University of Washington.

In all, taxpayers spent more than \$17 million on Guardian Marine boats, while the company's three executives gave more than \$50,000 to the campaigns of a select few in Congress.

It's a pattern one critic calls "circular fundraising." It may be legal, says Arizona Congressman Jeff Flake, but it has the smell of kickbacks.

At *The Seattle Times*, we wanted to know how widespread this practice was. Could it be that earmarks were a fundraising tool? Answering that question proved to be the most daunting challenge of my career.

Buried details

Earmarks are shrouded in secrecy, which is amazing given their explosive growth and sheer volume. When Ronald Reagan took office in 1981, earmarks didn't exist. Yet by 2005, the Congressional Research Service estimated the taxpayers spent \$52 billion to pay for more than 16,000 earmarks.

Still, an obvious question—"Where's all that money going?"—is nearly impossible to answer. For starters, if you carefully read all 12 appropriations bills passed last year, you won't find many earmarks. Congress hides them in a separate document called the conference committee report.

And I mean it when I say they hide them. While the bill is all text—usually simple to capture electronically and throw into a database—Congress tinkers with the format of the earmarks to make them difficult to gather. Staffers convert the text to an image and then shrink the type down so that it is 1/20th of an inch, much smaller than newspaper agate type. This makes scanning the pages and converting the material back to text an onerous chore.

QUICK LOOK

Name of the series and when it was published:

"The Favor Factory," Oct. 14, 2007

How the story got started:

Acted on a hunch and inspired by coverage of Congressional scandals involving lobbyist Jack Abramoff and Congressman Randall "Duke" Cunningham

Length of time taken to report, write and edit the series:

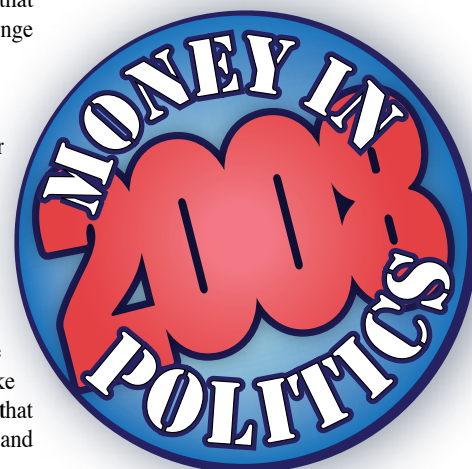
The story took about a year, largely because our data collection was so extensive.

Major types of documents used:

We gathered data from defense appropriation bills, Congressional Web sites, the Federal Election Commission and lobbyist reports. We got thousands of e-mails and documents from the University of Washington about one Navy boat. And we made numerous FOI requests to the military. Some of those documents will be used in future stories.

Major types of human sources used:

We interviewed people both inside and outside the military who had first-hand knowledge of the earmarked products, executives at each of the companies that received earmarks and members of Congress who sponsored the earmarks.



After spending several mind-numbing days doing this on my own, two interns came to my rescue. Liz Burlingame and Chanel Merritt from the University of Washington were not only willing to help but seemed bent on a mission.

We zeroed in on the 2007 defense bill, one of only two spending bills that passed Congress last year, and found 2,700 earmarks costing a total of \$11.8 billion.

But cataloging earmarks reveals little by itself. They read like a secret code, cryptic phrases with dollar amounts attached. Now came the hard part: figuring out who got the money.

The only decent source for that information were press releases from members of Congress boasting about the bacon they'd brought home. We went to the Web site of each member of Congress and carefully searched for any release about the defense bill. We knew we weren't going to find all earmarks this way, but we hoped to get a large enough sample to do meaningful analysis of campaign contributions. We found statements from 277 of the 535 members of Congress and put all of them into a database.

The quality of press releases ran the gamut. Sens. Hillary Rodham Clinton and Charles Schumer of New York issued joint releases that meticulously identified each of their 60 earmarks exactly as they appeared in the defense bill. Pennsylvania Congressman John Murtha, on the other hand, reworded a lot of his earmarks, often combining them and offering little explanation.

I also sent out scores of e-mails and made dozens of calls to military bases asking them to identify the recipients of earmarks. Though the bases initially seemed willing to help, they almost uniformly told me they either couldn't track the earmark or that a vendor hadn't been chosen yet.

Burlingame and Merritt devoted about four months to helping me gather this data. We succeeded in tracking more than 40 percent of the earmarks to a specific member of Congress and a recipient of the money.

Finding the donors

I was naive enough to think we might almost be done, but we still had major obstacles to overcome. One was building a database of the companies that got the money. This was more difficult than it sounds because the details in the press releases were often sketchy or even inaccurate.

But the most daunting challenge turned out to be matching those company names to campaign donations. The Federal Election Commission has maintained electronic records of campaign contributions since 1979. But decades later, those records remain a near disaster for doing analysis.

Candidates for Congress are supposed to report the name, occupation and title of any donor giving more than \$250. But the field for the donor's occupation is often left blank. Or a company name is abbreviated or misspelled. In its downloadable data, the FEC strangely mashes the occupation and title together, not even leaving enough room for both. Then there are the issues of spouses, consultants or company directors.

Thomas James Hurst | The Seattle Times



The Navy had no use for this boat, but a Congressional earmark secured \$4.5 million to pay for it. *The Seattle Times* found multiple examples of defense bill earmarks that benefitted political donors, while providing products that the military couldn't use or didn't want.

They are often identified only as “homemaker” or “self-employed” or “retired.”

Several outside groups have made valiant efforts to clean up campaign finance records, and we talked to one of them about using their data. But I concluded that because I had a discreet set of about 500 company names, I'd have more success and control working with the raw FEC data.

During three or four weeks of round-the-clock computer work, I inspected more than 40,000 records to make sure they matched. Burlingame and Merritt, meanwhile, spent the time typing in information about the companies' lobbying activities.

Here's what we found, as reported in our project titled “The Favor Factory”:

People who benefit from earmarks generally give money to those who deliver them. Of the nearly 500 companies identified as getting 2007 defense earmarks, 78 percent had individual employees or political action committees making campaign contributions to Congress in the past six years. And though individual contributions are limited by law, people at companies that received defense earmarks collectively gave lawmakers more than \$47 million.

Bill of goods

We also wanted to get a sense of what happened to the items Congress forced the military to buy. Hal Bernton, who covers the military for *The Times*, joined the project, and we began focusing on earmarks to companies in the Pacific Northwest.

Microvision Inc., for example, had received \$55 million in earmarks over the years, and its executives were big campaign donors. On May 10, 2004, five Microvision executives each gave \$1,000 to Washington Sen. Patty Murray's campaign. A month later, Murray announced that she had gotten a \$5.5 million earmark for the company.

Investigating where that money had gone, Bernton tracked down soldiers in the Army's Stryker Brigade, based out of Fort Lewis, Wash., who served in Iraq. They told us that hundreds of Microvision's helmet-mounted computer monitors—mostly bought with

earmarks—had been stored away in unopened boxes. Soldiers didn't like them, especially ones that interfered with their vision, in battle.

In August 2005, Microvision had lost a competition set up by the Army to test various helmet-mounted monitors. Yet four months later, apparently acting on an earlier lobbying effort by Microvision, Sen. Murray managed to get the company another \$6 million earmark to sell 1,599 of the rejected devices to the Stryker Brigade.

Bernton also tracked down the story of a polyester T-shirt earmarked for Marines in Iraq. In late 2005, Congressman David Wu of Oregon got a \$2 million earmark for InSport, a small athletic clothing company. Wu said Marines would be more comfortable in InSport's polyester shirts than in their standard-issue cotton ones.

But polyester melts when exposed to heat and was banned in early 2006 after a Marine caught in an explosion suffered burns over 70 percent of his body. His melted polyester shirt had to be cut from his body.

Despite the ban, the Marines went ahead and bought the InSport shirts, saying they could only be used in training. InSport later made a shirt with fire-resistant sleeves, but the Marines wouldn't approve it for use in battle because most of the shirt still was made of polyester. Even so, Congressman Wu got InSport another \$1 million earmark last year to sell the shirts to the Marines.

InSport executives gave Wu's campaign \$6,100 on a single day in the spring of 2006. The day after the defense bill with the earmark passed in September 2006, one executive gave another \$750 to Wu. Two others followed with identical donations within three weeks.

We posted our database online at www.seattletimes.com/favorfactory, allowing readers to search for any member of Congress or any recipient of earmarks.

David Heath is an investigative reporter at The Seattle Times, where he has written investigative pieces on corporate deception, terrorism and medical research.

BUNDLE OF TROUBLE

Journalists untangle the story of Norman Hsu

By Kate Rainey
The IRE Journal

When *The Wall Street Journal* first printed an article in late August of 2007 about the unusual connection between a relatively unknown political fundraiser named Norman Hsu and the Paw family of Daly City, Calif., no one at the paper had any idea how big the story would become. All they knew was that members of the Paw family, who lived in a working-class neighborhood under the flight path of the San Francisco International Airport, had donated more than \$200,000 to Democratic political candidates beginning in 2004, and their donations almost matched Hsu's.

The next day, the *Los Angeles Times* broke the story that Hsu was in fact a fugitive with an outstanding warrant in California that dated back to his failure to appear for sentencing in a 1991 grand theft case. As more information about Hsu's past came to light in the next few weeks, Hsu ended up in jail, politicians returned hundreds of thousands of dollars of campaign contributions and the spotlight was put on "bundling" as a fundraising practice in America's political campaigns.

Bundling isn't new, but it's become crucial to a successful campaign. The price of running for office is high, and the 2002 reforms to campaign finance laws set limits on individual donations. Bundlers raise money themselves and combine the donations they've collected before presenting the funds to the candidate. The practice is legal but because there are no disclosure laws, bundling creates opportunities for abuse. For example, bundlers may recruit donors, then reimburse them, which is illegal.

Although the two newspapers ultimately followed different paths in their reporting, both the *Journal* and the *Times* began their investigations of Hsu following tips about suspicions surrounding his campaign contributions.

During the summer, the *Wall Street Journal* received a tip to look at Norman Hsu's activities. Investigative reporter Brody Mullins began examining records of political donations by using the Center for Responsive Politics and its Web site (www.opensecrets.org) and discovered the connection between Hsu's and donations from one family with the surname Paw. Hsu and the Paws had made donations on the same days to the same candidates for similar amounts of money. A member of the Paw family said he worked for a company owned by Hsu, and an AutoTrac search found that Hsu had once used the Paws' Daly City address as his own.

Mullins said it was clear from the beginning that something wasn't right.

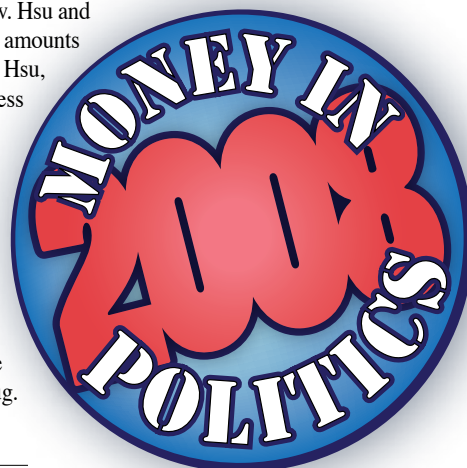
"I went to my editor, Monica Langley, who's a great investigative journalist, and within 45 seconds, she said, 'You have to go there,'" Mullins said. "It was a no-brainer. All you had to do was take a look at the house, and there was a story there even if there wasn't anything illegal going on."

Working off the tip, *Journal* staff compiled a list with the help of the Federal Election Commission of the top addresses with donations to Hillary Clinton since 2005. Although they had never donated before the 2004 presidential election, the Paw family was third on the list, according to the *Journal's* first article on Hsu on Aug.



San Mateo County Sheriff's Office

Norman Hsu surrendered in San Mateo County, Calif., after journalists traced his history of mixing political fundraising with his own questionable business ventures. Public records, including an outstanding arrest warrant and bankruptcy cases were essential tools. The reporting led to new charges of fraud and campaign finance violations.



28. They topped longtime backers of the Clintons and some of the wealthiest people in the country, and additional data eventually moved the Paws to the top of the list.

However, the links between Hsu and the Paw family was entirely circumstantial, and the first published article was restricted to detailing the strange relationship between the Paw family and Hsu.

"We never accused him of wrongdoing," Mullins said. "We just pointed out that it was odd."

The next day, the *Los Angeles Times* published its first story revealing Hsu's criminal history. *Times* reporters Robin Fields and Chuck Neubauer, also working off a tip on Hsu, had found the same connection between Hsu and the Paws regarding campaign contributions.

Who is this man?

Although the Paws lived in California, Fields and Neubauer used records from the city of New York to learn more about Hsu. Federal records of campaign contributions don't include fundraisers who bundle donations, but New York City is one of the few places in the country that identifies them. The city's Campaign Finance Board keeps records of all donations to candidates in city elections, and if an individual donated money through a bundler, the bundler is listed as an intermediary on the donation record.

The *Times* reporters also searched for lawsuits and

criminal records. Early in their investigation of Hsu, they discovered an outstanding warrant stemming from grand theft charges in the 1990s, and records from two previous bankruptcies in California.

"It took us awhile to actually excavate those files because nothing was electronic in those days," Fields said. "But they proved to be very worthwhile once we did and led us to the sources that ultimately made us realize that the criminal hit that we got off of his background check was something more than, let's say, a DUI."

"We did the basics, and it was like a crapshoot to ask for the 1990 bankruptcy [record] and pay for it and wait the two weeks to get it, but it was good because it led us to people who had done business with him," Neubauer said.

After the *Times* revealed his criminal background, politicians to whom Hsu had donated, including Hillary Clinton, began to sever ties with him and eventually returned most or all of the money he had donated or bundled. Clinton's campaign ultimately gave back or donated to charity more than \$850,000—the largest amount a candidate has ever returned because of dubious fundraising methods.

By the time Hsu had turned himself in to authorities in San Mateo County, Calif., skipped bail and been rearrested in Colorado, reporters had uncovered additional information, including his involvement in a Ponzi scheme that was tied to his political fundraising.



Hsu pushed investors to donate to his political causes if they wanted to be involved in what Hsu said would be a high-profit business venture.

An obstacle both the *Times* and the *Journal* encountered during their investigations was that, beyond stating that they had done nothing wrong, both Hsu and the Paw family declined to talk. The reporters relied on public records, as well as interviews with those around Hsu.

"Whenever you have the opportunity to talk to somebody, it helps you get at that sort of elusive central question of why," Fields said. "Why, for example, a man like Norman, who has so much to lose by being exposed, would put himself in a position where eventually he seemed almost certain to be exposed."

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Even though he kept a relatively low profile, Hsu had made himself into a public figure through his fundraising. He hosted or co-hosted events for candidates, and Fields said he also had his photo taken at a number of black-tie events. His close ties to politicians were meant to encourage the wealthy to get involved in his investment schemes, but when his questionable fundraising brought media scrutiny, they were able to connect Hsu's new incarnation to his previous crimes in California.

A widespread practice

Hsu's rise and fall has brought attention to the amount of money political campaigns take in and how the money is raised. Since campaign finance laws changed in 2002, the Justice Department has seen an increase in the number of people prosecuted for trying to reimburse donors, according to *The Wall Street Journal*. In addition, the statistics emphasize just how important bundling has become in U.S. politics; the *Journal* reported that bundled donations have accounted for more than 25 percent of presidential campaign contributions this year.

Two of the biggest questions raised by the Hsu story are whether campaigns should be required to disclose bundlers, and why they failed to notice anything suspicious about Hsu in the first place. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that both Clinton's and John Edwards' campaigns have subsequently said they will start conducting criminal background checks on major donors.

"Although [Hsu] was an unusually prolific bundler, there are tons of others, so your attention is kind of fractured all the time by that," Fields said of the media's and the campaigns' oversight. "The kind of dollar amounts that you're dealing with are just so enormous, and so many people are churning out so many checks that it doesn't necessarily pop."

Since Hsu's arrest, investigations into bundling have continued, and other cases of potential fraud have been discovered, including that of William Danielczyk, another of Clinton's major bundlers, whose employees said they were reimbursed for donations to the senator's campaign. Both the *Journal* and the *Times* said they will continue to follow these types of stories as they develop.

"It's kind of a crapshoot because you can find people who look guilty, but it's not illegal to give a lot of money on the same day as your boss," Mullins said. "Because there's not any way of really proving it, you need people to admit to it."

As for Hsu himself, as of December he remained in prison in San Mateo County, and had been indicted by a federal grand jury in New York for fraud. Lawsuits had also been filed on behalf of investors around the country who had given money to Hsu's Ponzi scheme.

"The irony of the whole thing is he started getting political money to start building up his own name, and by doing that, he took himself down," Mullins said. "The reason that no one caught him in the beginning was that no one cared about him."

THE LATEST INVESTIGATIONS

Looking for the latest investigations on campaign finance? Check out these stories that have been posted on Extra! Extra!, www.ire.org/extraextra.

"Giuliani and Schumer: An odd couple connection," Tom Brune, *Newsday*. This investigation delves into the history between Rudy Giuliani and Democratic Sen. Chuck Schumer, including Schumer's receiving donations from powerful Republicans in New York. (Nov. 19, 2007)

"As campaigns chafe at limits, donors might be in diapers," Matthew Mosk, *The Washington Post*. Campaign finance laws limit the amount of money an individual can donate, but they don't set explicit age laws, and some bundlers have been skirting the laws by making contributions in their children's names. (Oct. 24, 2007)

"Campaign cash buys candy, gifts and airfare," Ryan Kost, *The Oregonian*. State lawmakers elected not to pass laws limiting how campaign money could be spent in spite of promised campaign finance reforms, and it has remained legal to spend campaign money on other things, such as candy and airline tickets. (July 23, 2007)

"Boeing, banks give to Democratic candidates after election wins," Jonathan D. Salant, *Bloomberg News*. Corporate campaign contributions shifted after Democratic victories in the 2006 elections, and money flowed to the winners. For instance, Boeing donated \$10,000 to Missouri Sen. Jim Talent, a Republican, but 17 days after Talent lost the election, Boeing wrote a \$5,000 check to the Democrat who beat him, Claire McCaskill. (Dec. 15, 2006)

"Many former Pataki donors gave to Spitzer this time," Mike McIntire and Griff Palmer, *The New York Times*. Many of Republican Gov. George Pataki's biggest contributors donated to Attorney General Eliot Spitzer, a Democrat. (Nov. 5, 2006)

"Donors with stake in toll roads give Perry \$1.2 million," Lisa Sandberg, Julie Domel and Kelly Guckian, *San Antonio Express-News*. Texas Gov. Rick Perry received at least seven and a half times as much money from transportation interests than any other candidate, and much of that cash came from donors with a stake in Perry's controversial Trans-Texas Corridor. (Nov. 4, 2006)

"Campaign gifts from big insurer elude the limit," Mike McIntire, *The New York Times*. State campaign finance data showed that AIG, one of the world's largest insurance companies, bypassed state limits by using obscure subsidiaries to distribute donations to candidates from a common AIG bank account. (Sept. 19, 2006)

"The battle for the buck," Gregory Korte, *The Cincinnati Enquirer*. Campaign finance reports showed more than half the contributions in Cincinnati's mayoral race came from outside the city, such as from fundraising events in San Francisco and New York City. Maps show where the contributions came from. (Sept. 29, 2005)

CAMPAIGN RESOURCES

By Kate Rainey
The IRE Journal

Covering campaigns can be a daunting task, but there are plenty of reporters who have already blazed the campaign trail. Check out these stories and tipsheets on campaign and election coverage. Copies are available from the IRE Resource Center. E-mail rescntr@ire.org or call 573-882-3364.

Stories

• **Story No. 22583:** This series chronicles election fraud in two small communities. In one case, the registrar's office was managed by a candidate's mother. The second fraud occurred in Gate City,

Va., where the mayor manipulated the absentee voting system and sometimes filled out forms of elderly absentee voters himself. Laurence Hammack, *The Roanoke (Va.) Times* (2005)

- **Story No. 22556:** Negligent oversight and fraud occurring in Detroit elections included cases of city employees coaxing nursing home residents to vote, ballots being sent to juvenile detention homes, voting rolls with 300,000 registrants who had moved or died, and people voting from abandoned homes and vacant lots. Brad Heath, David Josar, Lisa M. Collins, *The Detroit News* (2005)
- **Story No. 22275:** Because of problems in the



state election system, Wisconsin has a high risk of recounts in future presidential elections based on the inaccuracy of election data and voter registration. Reporters found thousands of voters with invalid addresses, ineligible voters who had been allowed to cast ballots and polling place log books that listed hundreds of people as having voted twice. This series prompted local, state and federal investigations into the system. Greg J. Borowski, Mark Maley, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (2005)

• **Story No. 21966:** An eighteen-month investigation revealed that employees of the New York City Department of Corrections had been forced to work on Republican political campaigns. In the 1990s, corrections officials who supported Republicans

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were rewarded with promotions and preferred assignments, while those who supported Democrats could be sent to dangerous jobs or forced to retire. Andrea Bernstein, Karen Frillman, John Keefe, WNYC-New York (2004)

- **Story No. 21880:** James J. Chavez ran for a seat on the board of the Maricopa County Special Health Care District, but he actually lived outside the district and had provided a fake address. In addition, both his bachelor's degree and MBA were invalid, and he mismanaged funds for a nonprofit organization that he worked for. Chris Hayes, Jeremy Voas, Gilbert Zermeno, KPHO-Phoenix (2004)
- **Story No. 21850:** The highly contested presidential election in 2000 brought about legislation requiring updating voting equipment by 2006, but the federally funded mandate puts billions of taxpayers' dollars toward complicated technology that few election officials understand, which has led to concerns about the integrity of future elections. Loni Smith McKown, Rick Dawson, Karen Hensel, Kevin Stinson, Ron Nakasone, Doug Garrison, WISH-Indianapolis (2004)
- **Story No. 21805:** This computer-assisted reporting investigation of voting records and death records showed that deceased residents had voted in the 2003 primary elections and that thousands of dead people are still registered on voter rolls. State and local officials say this creates an "opportunity for ghostly corruption." Brendan O'Shaughnessy, *The (Munster, Ind.) Times* (2004)
- **Story No. 20640:** This profile of Alex Sanders, a Democratic candidate who sought to replace Strom Thurmond following Thurmond's 2002 retirement, includes a behind-the-scenes look at his campaign, along with painting a vivid profile of Sanders himself, a former chief judge of the South Carolina Court of Appeals and former president of the College of Charleston. Joe Klein, *The New Yorker* (2002)

Campaign Finance Stories

- **Story No. 22480:** Al Sharpton set up a meeting between two fundraisers and a New York City official to arrange investments, but he was caught on tape by the FBI for soliciting \$25,000 from the fundraisers. The story found that Sharpton ended up on one of the men's corporate payroll with a salary of \$25,000 and that reported donations seemed to never have occurred. Jarrett Murphy, *The (New York) Village Voice* (2005)
- **Story No. 22349:** Florida State Senator Gary Siplin used 40 percent of his campaign contributions on a consultant called Success Campaigns, but the company hadn't existed for more than 10 years. An investigation revealed additional inaccuracies in Siplin's finances as well as other misconduct. Josh Wilson, Jeff Harwood, WFTV-Orlando (2005)
- **Story No. 22139:** Computer-assisted reporting on campaign donations for the 2005 mayoral election in St. Paul showed that the largest proportion of contributions came from people in the suburbs

rather than city residents. Tim Nelson, MaryJo Sylwester, *St. Paul (Minn.) Pioneer Press* (2005)

- **Story No. 22088:** An analysis of the Federal Elections Commission database determined the 100 largest individual campaign donors in California. Together, these 100 donors contributed more than \$150 million during the 2003-04 election cycle, which greatly affected the state's politics and policies in areas such as stem cell research and workers' compensation. Ron Campbell, *The Orange County (Calif.) Register* (2005)
- **Story No. 21747:** A year-long investigation into the role of campaign contributions in state politics found that candidates filed inaccurate disclosure reports and there was little or no examination of the documents. The reporters also found that local races were not competitive, and Republicans in particular were funneling contributions to out-of-state candidates in federal elections. Chris Joyner, Edward Lee Pitts, Andy Sher, Gary Tanner, Dorie Turner, Michael A. Weber, *Chattanooga (Tenn.) Times Free Press* (2004)
- **Story No. 21378:** A series of stories examined the pay-to-play system in which politicians reward campaign contributors with government contracts. The story focuses on individuals playing different roles in the process: the governor, a government attorney, a state department employee and campaign fundraiser, a banker and a nominee to the Port Authority. Clint Riley, Jeff Pillets, Shannon D. Harrington, Herb Jackson, John Dyer, *The (Hackensack, N.J.) Record* (2004)

Tipsheets

- **No. 2779:** "Follow the Money Trail in Politics," James Grimaldi, *The Washington Post*. This tipsheet offers a list of online resources for campaign finance and lobbying stories, as well as strategic and tactical advice for money trail stories, such as how best to utilize FOIA.
- **No. 2745:** "Campaign Finance," Kelly Guckian, *San Antonio Express-News*. This tipsheet has guidelines for reporting on elections and campaigns, along with useful information on filing periods and deadlines, federal laws limiting campaign gifts, Texas laws on the subject, where to find the data and how to solve common problems that arise. Disponible en español: No. 2888.
- **No. 2566:** "Covering Campaign Finance and Money in Politics," James Grimaldi, *The Washington Post*, Anne Mulkern, *The Denver Post*, Steven Weiss, The Center for Responsive Politics. This tipsheet provides definitions and clear examples of terms associated with campaign finance, such as 527 groups, issue ads and reporting schedules.
- **No. 2564:** "PACs and 527s: Hard Money, Soft Money," Griff Palmer, *San Jose Mercury News*. Palmer, now with *The New York Times*, discusses the nuances of federal election laws, including how they pertain to political action committees, the difference between hard money and soft money, and how to investigate both categories.

- **No. 2139:** "Getting Started on Electronic Voting Issues," Paul Walsmley, IRE and NICAR. This tipsheet provides a list of sources about problems involved with electronic voting. Documented problems with systems are discussed alongside their proposed solutions.
- **No. 2138:** "Campaign Finance Today: Shock and Ahhhhhh!" Aron Pilhofer, The Center for Public Integrity. This tipsheet explains the changes at both federal and state levels brought by the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act. It also includes a list of resources for covering campaign finance.
- **No. 2018:** "Downloading and Analyzing Campaign Finance Data," Wendell Cochran, American University. This tipsheet examines the three Web sites that provide Federal Election Commission data: the Federal Election Commission, Politicalmoneyonline.com and the American University campaign finance site.
- **No. 1728:** "Elections: Before and After," Lawrence Messina, The Associated Press. This tipsheet offers tips on how to background candidates and avoid horse-race coverage of elections, and it also has links to election Web sites.

Both *The IRE Journal* and *Uplink* have published articles on elections and campaign coverage.

The IRE Journal

"Campaign Coffers Fill with Money Gained Through Gambling," Brent D. Wistrom, *The Wichita Eagle*. The reporter discusses the influence of gambling and gambling money on the political process in Kansas. (Nov./Dec. 2006)

"Political Tithes: Easily Overlooked Political Donations Reveal Churches Making Campaign Contributions," John Fritze, *The (Baltimore) Sun*. Fritze explains how campaign finance data available online showed that Maryland churches had given more than \$30,000 in campaign donations since 2000, as well as how he found and checked the information and wrote the story. (July/Aug. 2006)

"Pay to Play: Money Managers for Public Fund Contribute to Political Campaign Coffers to Gain Favors," Mark Naymik, Joseph Wagner, *The (Cleveland) Plain Dealer*. An investigation began after it became known that the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation invested money with a coin dealer who was also a Republican fundraiser. The authors found a pattern of government contracts going to companies that make political donations to Republicans. (Nov./Dec. 2005)

"Plenty of Election Year Left for Pursuing Campaign Stories," Aron Pilhofer, Derek Willis, The Center for Public Integrity. The authors identify trends in campaign financing that might produce good stories, such as networked campaigns pooling individual donors, PACs, Internet fundraising and advertising to nonprofit organizations known as 527 groups. (July/Aug. 2004)

"Silence Broken," Dee J. Hall, (Madison) *Wisconsin State Journal*. Hall used computer-assisted

reporting to demonstrate that employees of partisan offices recruited candidates, solicited contributions, designed campaign brochures, distributed literature and ultimately run the show for many of the state's legislative hopefuls. (Nov./Dec. 2002)

Uplink

"Data Lifts Lid on DeLay Money," Jonathan D. Salant, Bloomberg News. Campaign finance data were used to show that Tom DeLay had given more than \$3 million to U.S. congressional candidates since 1995. Salant suggests that DeLay's financial support for candidates could be behind their loyalty to DeLay in the face of ethical problems. (March/April 2006)

"Covering Congress, States Getting Trickier," Derek Willis, *The Washington Post*. Willis, now with nytimes.com, explains how 527 political committees, state PACs and the new campaign-finance law can make it difficult to use computer-assisted reporting for comprehensive investigations of campaign finance. He discusses what data are available, where they can be found and what reporters can do with them. (March/April 2006)

"Elections: Post-vote Politics, Payoffs," Andrea Lorenz, IRE and NICAR. Election data still can be useful for stories even after the votes are in. For instance, campaign contribution data can help determine top donors, and policy decisions can be examined to see if they correspond to the donors' political preferences. (Jan./Feb. 2005)

"Spotlight: Elections: Using CAR to Cover Elections," Megan Clarke, IRE and NICAR. In addition to

campaign finance stories, election data can generate a number of other investigations, including grouping voter registration rolls and demographics by precinct with election results, mapping election winners by precinct and comparing voter turnout precinct maps with Census demographic data. (May/June 2004)

Spotlight: City Government: Showing Contributions from Strip-Club Workers," David Washburn, Caitlin Rother, *The San Diego Union-Tribune*. An FBI raid on three city councilmen's offices revealed that the councilmen had solicited bribes from members of the adult entertainment industry. But the connection between city officials and adult entertainers was difficult to nail down, so the *Union-Tribune* reporters built their own database of local campaign contributions to assist with the reporting. (Nov./Dec. 2003)

Spotlight: City Government: Spreadsheet, Good Eye Help Find Missing Money," Paul Egan. Egan, a freelance reporter who had previously been with *The Detroit News*, discusses the difficulty of tracking campaign contributions that candidates fail to report. The exceptions are those that come from political action committees, whose contributions must be publicly reported. Most PACs file their contributions only on paper, so Egan created his own Excel database and found that the Detroit mayor had failed to report nearly \$17,000 in campaign contributions. (Nov./Dec. 2003)

Data and Online Sources

Computer databases and Web sites can also be helpful in reporting on campaigns and elections.

Between NICAR's Database Library and the Internet, there are several options for sources.

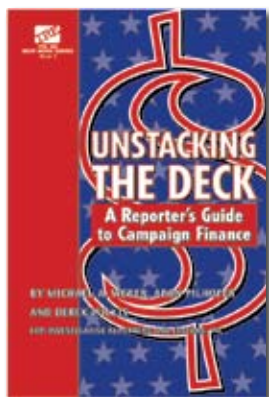
Federal Campaign Contributions database: The FEC data have campaign contributions for all candidates seeking federal office and for all federal PACs. The database has four tables, which include information about candidates and committees, along with individual contributor information and PACs' campaign contributions. For more information or to order the database, call 573-884-7711 or go to www.nicar.org.

Federal Election Commission (www.fec.gov): The FEC Web site has links to campaign finance reports and data, as well as information about commission staff and meetings, laws and regulations. The site also has links to forms and deadlines that are used when reporting federal election data.

Common Cause (www.commoncause.org): This is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization founded as a way for citizens to get involved in politics. The Web site has sections on money in politics and government accountability, and links to their press and research centers.

The National Institute on Money in State Politics (www.followthemoney.org): This nonpartisan group is dedicated to campaign finance research at the state level. Searchable databases are available online, and the institute also analyzes data to determine the role of the money. The Web site also publishes studies and provides training and assistance to reporters and researchers.

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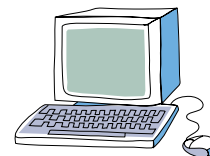
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FOI Files

HIDDEN VIOLATIONS

One reporter tackles national comparison of teacher misconduct cases

BY SCOTT REEDER

SMALL NEWSPAPER GROUP, SPRINGFIELD, ILL., BUREAU

While in college I was asked to ponder the question, which is worse, a sin of omission or commission?

At age 42, I still don't know the answer.

But after 20 years of reporting I know which is harder to investigate.

It is difficult to quantify when government ignores its responsibilities.

A case in point is an investigation I recently completed looking at how the state of Illinois fails to address issues of teacher misconduct.

First, I filed an Illinois Freedom of Information Act request with the Illinois State Board of Education asking for the names and offenses of every Illinois teacher whose teaching certificate was suspended or revoked during the last decade.

The list seemed short. For example, in 2006 only six teachers had actions taken against their licenses. At first blush it appeared either that Illinois had really well-behaved teachers or many cases of educator misconduct that were falling through the cracks.

But how does one quantify the absence of action?

The first approach I took was to see how Illinois compared to other states.

So I filed FOI requests with every state department of education asking for lists of teachers who had their licenses suspended or revoked. It was a continuous battle to get states to turn over this information.

But after six months of negotiating with state attorneys general, arguing with countless flaks and badgering state education officials, I received information for every state. (A Maine official turned over data for two years but then discovered state law prohibited its release and refused to turn over four additional years requested.)

I built Excel spreadsheets for individual states to examine disciplinary actions and used the results

to create a national spreadsheet. I then adjusted for population differences by creating ratios of disciplining actions per licensed educator in each state.

The results were startling.

Illinois ranked 49th in the nation in its rate of disciplining teachers. To put this in perspective, California and Georgia educators were 25 times more likely to have their licenses suspended or revoked than their counterparts in Illinois.

Only Virginia was less aggressive in dealing with errant educators.

The next step was to find examples of cases that had fallen through the cracks.

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) turned over data on substantiated sexual and physical abuse complaints against educators over the last eight years. DCFS had found 323 cases containing credible evidence of abuse by school personnel.

By cross-referencing this data with the list of Illinois educators who had lost their teaching certificates, I was able to determine that none of these abusers had their teaching licenses suspended or revoked.

In a prior investigation I conducted two years ago, I looked at teacher tenure in Illinois. During that investigation I built a database of every tenured teacher fired over the last 18 years.

In Illinois, it is nearly impossible to fire a tenured teacher. In fact, on average only seven teachers a year are fired in the entire state, and school districts spend an average of \$219,000 in attorney fees alone to litigate each of these cases.

Perhaps it goes without saying that those tenured teachers who lose their jobs are among the worst in the profession. By comparing this list of educators who had lost their jobs to the list of educators who had lost their licenses, I found that none of the tenured teachers fired in the last decade also lost their teaching certificate. And significant numbers had been hired

by other school districts.

So why isn't the Illinois Teacher Certification Board doing more?

During the course of my investigation I found:

- No investigators are employed by the Illinois State Board of Education, so reports of teacher misconduct are often not investigated or acted upon. In fact, Illinois is one of only seven states that does not employ investigators.
- State officials often don't learn of serious misconduct issues because, unlike many states, Illinois school districts are not required to tell state officials when they discipline a teacher.

After learning that school districts often do not share information with state licensing officials, I began to look into what kind of information they might be withholding.

I received a tip that Chicago Public Schools maintained secret files on criminals working as teachers. I filed a FOI request for the files and engaged in a four-month battle to obtain them.

Upon my request, the Illinois Attorney General's Office intervened and successfully pressured the school district to give me the documents.

The files read more like a tawdry novel than bureaucratic memos.

The documents reveal that drug-dealing, prostitution, attempted murder, criminal sexual assault, embezzlement, theft, reckless homicide and stalking are among the crimes committed by those hired to educate Chicago's children.

The state's largest school district routinely failed to warn state education officials or other school districts of problem teachers.

For example, the school district conducted an internal investigation revealing that a Chicago high school teacher allegedly twice had sexual encounters with a 15-year-old girl, a Chicago Public Schools inspector general report said. The teacher was not charged with a crime but did resign from the Chicago school district after an internal investigation. According to the CPS documents, the unidentified teacher remains certified to teach in Illinois and is now teaching in Rockford Public Schools.

Chicago Public Schools officials did nothing to warn their colleagues of this man's alleged history.

But the problem of moving teachers accused of sexual abuse is not confined to urban districts. I found a teacher in a rural Illinois school district who was accused of sexually abusing a former student and agreed to resign in exchange for a job referral.

The teacher ended up in a Florida classroom.

Unlike Illinois, teacher personnel records in Florida are public record, so I was able to obtain copies of the job referral he had received from the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31 >

Scott Reeder is a statehouse reporter for the Small Newspaper Group in Springfield, Ill. He has won numerous national journalism awards including the 2005 IRE Freedom of Information medal. He can be reached at (217) 525-8201 or sng@springnet1.com.

Michael Brandy | The Deseret Morning News



Scouting has a high profile in Utah because its a designated youth activity in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. The story about executive pay sparked reader responses.

SCOUTING SALARIES

Utah Boy Scouts execs earn high pay

BY LEE DAVIDSON
THE (SALT LAKE CITY) DESERET MORNING NEWS

The Boy Scout law teaches that Scouts are thrifty. Indeed, the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) stretches its dollars by using millions of unpaid volunteers who sacrifice money, time and even their precious vacation weeks to staff Scout camps.

But we found that scores of professional, full-time Boy Scout executives make six-figure salaries or more—up to \$1 million in compensation a year for the top executives nationally. And they are paid far more than officers at other youth-serving nonprofit groups across the country.

My jaw dropped when I saw that the top executive there made more than \$200,000 a year (the median income in Utah is \$37,700). My jaw dropped further when we pulled up the 990 for the national council and saw its top executive made nearly \$1 million a year.

At the same time, Scout councils in Utah use some strong-armed tactics, generally not duplicated elsewhere, to raise funds that help pay those salaries.

Here, Scout executives assign congregations of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which uses scouting as its activity arm for young males, to visit all homes within their boundaries to solicit funds for Scout councils. Quotas are often set, and if congregations fail to meet them, their Scouts may not receive the discounts for camps and supplies that others enjoy. Local church leaders are sometimes sent to re-solicit money if not enough was initially raised.

When the story based on our investigation of BSA salaries was published in November 2007, it hit a nerve. Hundreds of readers posted online responses on our Web page. A look at how the story was researched may help others interested in evaluating major tax-exempt nonprofit groups in their own area.

Inspired by a 990

The story started when I was teaching a class at a local university. I was showing students some useful Web sites for research, and introduced them to GuideStar.org. After registering for free, users

can view IRS Form 990 for myriad nonprofit groups nationwide. To demonstrate, I asked students for some favorite nonprofits, and we pulled up their 990s. One student suggested the local council of the Boy Scouts. My jaw dropped when I saw that the top executive there made more than \$200,000 a year (the median income in Utah is \$37,700). My jaw dropped further when we pulled up the 990 for the national council and saw its top executive made nearly \$1 million a year.

I decided to pursue that further and to compare pay for Utah Scout execs to other councils nationally and to other groups serving youth. I ended up looking at 990s for about 300 local Scout councils, and for dozens of other youth groups around the nation. I extracted information from 990s and entered it into spreadsheets I designed myself.

In your own investigation, the first step is to figure out how to find the Form 990s for the groups you seek. Using GuideStar is likely the easiest way, especially when investigating groups scattered nationwide, but you can also request to see the forms at a nonprofit's office.

At GuideStar.org, the "advanced search" option offers more refined results. For example, if you use the site's main-page search engine and type in "Boy Scouts," GuideStar will find 1,347 different groups with that name nationally—and will display information for only 500 of them. The advanced search allows narrowing by state or even a city, and by keywords or names of a group. One state at a time, I looked for the keywords "Boy Scout" and "council" and arranged results alphabetically. I found Form 990s for 293 of the 304 Scout councils nationwide. (When I started the project, I did not have a list of all councils. I obtained that later. GuideStar did not have 990s for some smaller councils.)

I found that the most current 990s available for most Scout councils were for 2005. The filings are often a couple of years out of date, in part because groups can seek automatic filing extensions. Also, many nonprofits use tax years that are different than calendar years, which may extend their filing deadline. Plus, it takes time for GuideStar to obtain forms and put them online.

Next, you need to figure out what information from the 990s is needed for a project. I made two extensive main spreadsheets. One was to help figure out each nonprofit's overall budget, and what percentage of expenses went for such things as fundraising, services and payroll. Here are what I found to be some key lines from the Form 990 for such a spreadsheet:

- Line 1d: Total contributions, gifts and grants
- Line 12: Total revenue
- Line 13: Expenses for services
- Line 14: Expenses for management
- Line 15: Expenses for fundraising
- Line 17: Total expenses

Adding lines 25-29: Provides total payroll expenses

The top exec made more than the Chief Justice of the United States, or the speaker of the House of Representatives.

Charting salaries

I made a second spreadsheet tracking the names of top executives, their salaries and the names and salaries of other highly paid officials. I found that information about who is paid the most can be listed in different places by different nonprofits. One of the key hiding places on the form is "Part V-A Current Officers, Directors, Trustees and Key Employees," generally on page 5 of the 2005 form. Another place is "Part V-B," where payments made to former officers who departed during the year are reported. Finally, and often most important, is Part I of Schedule A for "Compensation of Five Highest Paid Employees," where most of the top executives' compensations are listed. A box at the bottom of Part I asks for "total number of other employees paid more than \$50,000." Tracking numbers reported there helped me show that Scout councils in Utah had far more employees than the national average who make more than \$50,000.

I then collected similar data for other key nonprofits serving youth (as identified by philanthropic research groups), including the Girl Scouts of America, Boys & Girls Clubs, 4-H Club, Big Brothers-Big Sisters of America and Camp Fire USA.

Searching hundreds of 990s and typing data into spreadsheets takes time. But I did it during lulls in other work, and it took a few weeks. (By the way, I'm happy to share the final spreadsheets with anyone who may want them to do similar stories about Scout councils in their area.)

Simple calculations and sorting with Microsoft Excel and Access showed the Boy Scouts of America pay their top executives far more than do other youth-serving groups. I found execs in Utah earned far more than average among Scout execs across the country. But officials here complained I was not comparing them with districts of similar size, so they provided size categories used by the BSA. I recalculated and found that Utah execs were actually paid less than average than people who led similarly sized councils, with hundreds of Scout execs across the country making high six-figure salaries.

But with other data, I showed that being a Scout exec is still one of the highest paid professions in Utah. The leaders of the three councils here, for example, made more than the typical Utah doctor or lawyer. The top exec made more than the chief justice of the United States, or the speaker of the House of Representatives.

You can read the original story online at www.deseretnews.com/article/1,5143,695226688,00.html.

Lee Davidson is a special projects reporter for the Deseret Morning News in Salt Lake City, Utah.

FOI Files

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

Illinois school district as well as other material that had been in his Illinois personnel file.

Since Illinois was doing such a poor job policing its ranks for errant teachers, I couldn't help but wonder how well it screened those entering the profession.

In 2004, Illinois became the 46th state to require FBI background checks for teachers.

But lobbyists for the state's two teachers unions successfully blocked legislation to require all teachers to undergo the background checks. Instead, the law only requires teachers hired after 2004 to be vetted.

So what kind of people slipped through the system before 2004?

Here are some examples from various public documents I was able to obtain:

George G. Tolbert was convicted of sexually abusing two children and served four years in prison for his crimes. But he was still able to receive an Illinois teaching certificate and teach for 10 years. Even after school officials learned of his crimes he remained certified to teach.

Chassappasi Rain shot two people in 1978 and was convicted of assault with intent to do bodily harm. He was able to obtain an Illinois teaching certificate in 1990 but was fired from the Chicago Public Schools in 2002 after writing a letter to a fellow teacher that was described by a tenure-hearing officer

as "vicious, graphic, obscene and threatening." Rain now teaches in Dolton, Ill.

Michael Buehler was certified to teach in Illinois and was hired as an elementary school principal despite having his name on a national database of educators who have lost their teaching credentials. Buehler had surrendered his Wisconsin teaching credentials in 1993 after a \$770,000 lawsuit settlement with a former student who alleged that Buehler had impregnated her three times and engaged in 400 to 500 acts of sexual intercourse beginning when she was 13. There was no admission of liability in the settlement.

It took eight months and about 300 FOI requests to complete this investigation. State education officials are seeking to hire investigators and a state lawmaker says she plans to introduce legislation to require all teachers to be fingerprinted and subjected to FBI criminal background checks.

The entire investigation can be viewed at www.hiddenviolations.com. The investigation started independently, and the stories were published before the Associated Press released its own national series on teacher misconduct. Our stories looked more closely at Illinois and built on my previous investigations, while the AP had a more national view in mind, but it was interesting to see that there were no major conflicts or contradictions between the information in the two series.

THE Rosalynn Carter Fellowships FOR MENTAL HEALTH JOURNALISM



"Informed journalists can have a significant impact on public understanding of mental health issues, as they shape debate and trends with the words and pictures they convey."

—Rosalynn Carter

The Carter Center in Atlanta, Ga., announces six one-year journalism fellowships of \$10,000 each. Designed to increase accurate reporting on mental health issues and decrease incorrect, stereotypical information, the fellowships begin in September 2008. Fellows will not be required to leave their current employment.

THE CARTER CENTER



The application deadline is April 28, 2008. To apply, e-mail: Rebecca G. Palpant, M.S. The Carter Center Mental Health Program cemhp@emory.edu www.cartercenter.org/health/mental_health/fellowships/index.html

For more information, see www.cartercenter.org



Media colleagues and Oakland citizens paid tribute to murdered journalist Chauncey Bailey's passion for journalism and his community. A memorial marked the sidewalk where he was shot on Aug. 2, 2007.

The Chauncey Bailey Project: Media coalition reinvents Arizona Project model

BY THOMAS PEELE
BAY AREA NEWS GROUP

Late on a Thursday afternoon in early December, the *Oakland Tribune's* newsroom crackled with work on the Chauncey Bailey Project.

Two reporters yelled back and forth about shotgun shells and a statement in a deposition about a 25-year-old unsolved murder. At another desk, a journalism professor and a retired reporter hunched over a laptop, working on a database that contained thousands of bits of information that graduate students had culled from public records like deeds, liens and mortgages.

Across a partition, fellow investigative reporter A.C. Thompson and I pored over police documents, tightening a story to be published the next morning. Behind us, a writer from an alternative weekly typed out paragraphs for a story about sketchy government loans that were never repaid.

Around the corner, editors requested extra space in the Sunday paper for a 93-inch narrative. Hours earlier and a few miles away at the University of California-Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism, students held their weekly meeting with one of

the country's top editors, planning what they could do next to help.

All that work was in response to the killing of a newspaper editor on a busy street in an American city.

If anyone thought his work-in-progress would die, too, they were terribly wrong.

The Chauncey Bailey Project is dedicated to finishing *Oakland Post* editor and writer Chauncey Bailey's work investigating Your Black Muslim Bakery; the legacy of its founder, Yusuf Bey; and Oakland, which was recently ranked the fourth most dangerous city in America.

In a time of reporting-staff reductions across media, the collaboration for a story of this magnitude made sense. The lead investigative team of freelancer A.C. Thompson, G.W. Schulz of the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, the *Tribune's* Josh Richman and me has brought more reportage to the story than any one news organization could. The collaboration of radio, television and Web sites in addition to print has presented a unified journalistic effort to cover

Bailey's death and continue his work.

Within weeks of Bailey's shooting in August of 2007, work began under the leadership of Dori Maynard of the Robert C. Maynard Institute for Journalism Education, and Sandy Close of New America Media in San Francisco.

Maynard commented that because Bailey's murder happened in Oakland, the project "should have a very strong Oakland presence. We have to let people know it is not OK to kill a journalist. It has very obvious implications for democracy."

Quickly joining the project were *The Oakland Tribune* and *The Contra Costa Times*, which are sister papers in the Bay Area News Group; *The San Francisco Bay Guardian*; The Bay Area Association of Black Journalists, KQED radio; KTVU-San Francisco; IRE; the Society of Professional Journalists; the journalism schools at Berkeley, San Francisco State University and San Jose State University; and volunteers, including retired *Santa Rosa Press Democrat* business reporter Mary Fricker and veteran radio reporter Bob Butler.

Robert Rosenthal, recently named director of the Center for Investigative Reporting and the former *San Francisco Chronicle* managing editor, is serving as the Bailey Project's top editor.

"When a journalist is killed, we're all one family," Rosenthal said.

Bailey was the first journalist killed on American soil for his or her work since Miami radio reporter Dona St. Plite in 1993 and the most prominent since Don Bolles was fatally wounded by a car bomb in 1976.

A dangerous subject

Chauncey Wendell Bailey, 57, who had put in stints at *The Detroit Free Press*, *The Hartford (Conn.) Courant* and *Oakland Tribune* and who was editing the *Oakland Post*, a weekly that covered the city's African-American community, was walking to work early on Aug. 2, 2007.

Bailey "was so synonymous with Oakland that he was Oakland," said his friend, *Tribune* managing editor Martin Reynolds. "Everybody knew Chauncey and knew they could go to him. He was a good guy with a great sense of humor."

As Bailey reached the corner of 14th and Alice streets in downtown Oakland, a man wearing a ski mask carrying a black 12-gauge Mossberg shotgun confronted him. He got close enough to his prey that witnesses heard Bailey blurt, "Don't shoot me."

Bailey managed to swing awkwardly at the gunman before the gun erupted twice. Pellets ripped through his lungs and into his brain. As the journalist lay dying in the street, the masked man started to walk away, then turned, returned and fired a third, point-blank blast into Bailey's stomach.

Even before police arrested 20-year-old Devaughndre Broussard the next day, some details were known. Bailey was writing about an Oakland institution called Your Black Muslim Bakery, where Broussard worked. Bailey wanted to report on the

bakery's troubles, including a bankruptcy filing. He had already written a story, but the *Post's* publisher ordered it reworked.

Bailey was apparently pursuing more sourcing when the story became known at the bakery. Its 21-year-old CEO, Yusef Ali Bey IV, has denied involvement in Bailey's killing.

Joseph Stephens, a former hairdresser born in Texas, founded the bakery in the early 1970s and changed his name to Dr. Yusuf Bey, although he didn't hold a doctorate. The business became a symbol of African-American empowerment and defiance. It was also a polygamist cult in which Bey took more than a dozen "wives" and fathered more than 40 children. Its religious aspects were dubious. Bey didn't conduct religious services, but he did amass political and street power and once ran for Oakland mayor. The bakery became home to dozens of ex-convicts who took the patriarch's name.

When he died of colon cancer in 2003, Bey was facing charges of statutory rape and child abuse, including allegations he raped girls as young as 12. His followers fell into a bloody power struggle to succeed him. Bey IV eventually took control. On the day Bailey died, Bey IV was facing nine separate criminal cases stretching over two and half years, most of them involving violence.

Early progress

While it is loosely modeled on the Arizona Project, which brought journalists from around the country together to probe Bolles' death and continue his investigations, the Bailey Project is far different. There has been little national involvement other than the assistance of IRE and grants from SPJ and the Knight Foundation.

The Bailey Project involves an often unwieldy collaboration of organizations across the media spectrum: daily and weekly newspapers, Web sites, radio, television and student volunteers. Many of the journalists involved, such as the *Guardian's* G.W. Schulz, work full time at their regular jobs while putting in dozens more hours a week as project volunteers.

Early on, the project moved slowly and, at times, awkwardly.

Radio and television sometimes needed additional lead time on stories after they had been prepared for print publication. *The Guardian* is a weekly and publishes on Wednesdays; it has been unable to print versions of all stories, but has published them on its Web site. The editors of *The San Francisco Chronicle* chose not to participate in the project; the paper has published several significant stories on its own.

"This has been difficult and frustrating at times," Rosenthal said. "Some stories we should have done much more quickly; others were done by other media. That said, I am very proud of the work that has been done and will be done."

By early December the project had reported

Courtesy of Bay Area News Group



A unique coalition of Bay Area journalists and student work to produce stories for multiple news organizations. From the left, *Oakland Tribune* reporter Josh Richman; investigative reporter Thomas Peele; Mike Oliver (sitting at computer), projects editor for the Bay Area News Group; project executive editor Robert "Rosey" Rosenthal and *Oakland Tribune* Managing Editor Martin Reynolds.

significant stories including:

- An examination of why police waited nearly four months to arrest Bey IV after two women accused him and several others of kidnapping and torture. Evidence was found at the crime scene linking him to the assaults. Police claimed they needed time to build a case.
- An investigation of one of Bey's former Muslim-law wives who is now a real estate broker. She has faced allegations of fraud in a series of land deals, and she represented an Oakland woman who tried unsuccessfully to buy the bakery in bankruptcy court.
- A minute-by-minute narrative of Bailey's last hours alive.
- An investigative piece that raised questions about whether another bakery employee drove Broussard from the bakery to the corner where Bailey was shot and whether police botched an opportunity to arrest him before he fled the state.

Additional investigative stories are planned for the months ahead. Student volunteers have gathered hundreds of court files and thousands of other public documents on members of the Bey organization to build a database. A Web site, Chaunceybaileyproject.org, is scheduled to launch in January.

The project remains open-ended. Major investigative stories about the breadth and reach of the Bey organization are planned for early 2008 as is ongoing probative coverage of the police investigation and Broussard's claims to have acted on his own.

Thomas Peele, an investigative reporter for the Bay Area News Group, is assigned full time to the Chauncey Bailey Project. You can reach him at Tpeelee@bayareanewsgroup.com.

Laura A. Oda | Oakland Tribune



Your Black Muslim Bakery, now closed, is at the heart of the Bailey Project's probe. Teams of reporters and journalism students are tracing the business and personal connections behind the enterprise.



Rick Attig
Oregonian



John Daley
KSL-TV
Salt Lake City



Elizabeth Dalziel
Associated Press
Beijing



Steven Dudley
Miami Herald
Bogotá



Paul Kvinta
Freelance writer
Atlanta



Andrea Lewis
KPFA Radio
Berkeley



Eric Pape
Newsweek
Paris



Daniel Sinker
Independents' Day
Media



Matthew Stannard
San Francisco
Chronicle



Ruth Teichroeb
Seattle Post-
Intelligencer



Helen Ubiñas
Hartford Courant



Rick Young
PBS Frontline
Washington

The Knight Fellowships program at Stanford congratulates 12 U.S. journalists who won fellowships for the 2007-08 year.

Fellows will study everything from climate change and the deteriorating health of the planet to new publishing models for independent media and Islam and the West.

What do they get?

Knight Fellows get nine months of study, intellectual growth and professional change at one of the world's great universities, right in the middle of Silicon Valley — in classes, independent study and research and special forums with academic and journalism leaders. At the end of the year they return to the rapidly changing journalism landscape with a renewed sense of purpose, deeper knowledge and tools to tackle the challenges ahead.

What are we looking for?

We want journalists who have already accomplished a lot and are ambitious to do more. Candidates must have seven years' professional experience. Fellows receive a stipend of \$60,000 plus tuition, and supplements for health insurance, books, housing and child care. All benefits and activities of the program are open to spouses and partners of Fellows.

The application deadline for next year is February 1, 2008.

For a brochure and application form, visit our website:
<http://knight.stanford.edu>



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IRE SERVICES

Member news

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Society of Newspaper Editors. ■ **Sheila Farr** and **Susan Kelleher** of *The Seattle Times* won a C.B. Blethen Memorial Award for their series "Chihuly Inc." from the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Association in the enterprise reporting category for newspapers with circulation more than 50,000.

■ **Alan C. Miller**, a member of the *Los Angeles Times*' Washington, D.C., investigative team, is taking a leave from the paper. With a Knight Foundation grant, Miller plans to establish a national program to bring active and retired journalists into schools to teach students about news literacy. ■ **Deborah Potter** has a new book, "Advancing the Story: Broadcast Journalism in a Multimedia World" (CQ Press), co-authored with Deb Wenger. ■ **Mark Szakonyi** is an economic development and small business reporter with the *Jacksonville (Fla.) Business Journal*. He was previously a business reporter at *The (Newark, Ohio) Advocate*.

■ **Jeff Taylor** is now the managing editor of news and features at the *Detroit Free Press*. He oversees investigative reporting as well as the metro, features, business, sports and community staffs. ■ **John Trumbo** of the *Tri-City (Wash.) Herald* won a C.B. Blethen Memorial Award for "Dollars for Deals" from the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Association in the investigative reporting category for newspapers with circulation less than 50,000. ■ **Rod Watson** and Jonathan Epstein of *The Buffalo (N.Y.) News* won a 2007 Excellence in Urban Journalism Award for their series "The High Cost of Being Poor." ■ **Scott Zamost**, investigative producer at Miami's WTVJ/NBC 6, joins CNN as an investigative producer. He will be based in Atlanta and work in the Special Investigations Unit.

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTERS AND EDITORS, INC. is a grassroots nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the quality of investigative reporting within the field of journalism. IRE was formed in 1975 with the intent of creating a networking tool and a forum in which journalists from across the country could raise questions and exchange ideas. IRE provides educational services to reporters, editors and others interested in investigative reporting and works to maintain high professional standards.

Programs and Services:

IRE RESOURCE CENTER—A rich reserve of print and broadcast stories, tipsheets and guides to help you start and complete the best work of your career. This unique library is the starting point of any piece you're working on. You can search through abstracts of more than 20,000 investigative reporting stories through our Web site.

Contact: Beth Kopine, beth@ire.org, 573-882-3364

IRE AND NICAR DATABASE LIBRARY—Administered by IRE and the National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting. The library has copies of many government databases, and makes them available to news organizations at or below actual cost. Analysis services are available on these databases, as is help in deciphering records you obtain yourself.

Contact: 573-884-7711

CAMPAIGN FINANCE INFORMATION CENTER—Administered by IRE and the National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting. It's dedicated to helping journalists uncover the campaign money trail. State campaign finance data is collected from across the nation, cleaned and made available to journalists. A search engine allows reporters to track political cash flow across several states in federal and state races.

Contact: Mark Horvit, mhorvit@ire.org, 573-882-1984

ON-THE-ROAD TRAINING—As a top promoter of journalism education, IRE offers loads of training opportunities throughout the year. Possibilities range from national conferences and regional workshops to weeklong boot camps and on-site newsroom training. Costs are on a sliding scale and fellowships are available to many of the events.

Contact: David Donald, ddonald@ire.org, 573-882-2042

Publications

THE IRE JOURNAL—Published six times a year. Contains journalist profiles, how-to stories, reviews, investigative ideas and backgrounding tips. *The Journal* also provides members with the latest news on upcoming events and training opportunities from IRE and NICAR.

Contact: Megan Means, meganm@ire.org, 573-884-2360

UPLINK—Electronic newsletter by IRE and NICAR on computer-assisted reporting. *Uplink* stories are written after reporters have had particular success using data to investigate stories. The columns include valuable information on advanced database techniques as well as success stories written by newly trained CAR reporters.

Contact: David Herzog, dherzog@ire.org, 573-882-2127

REPORTER.ORG—A collection of Web-based resources for journalists, journalism educators and others. Discounted Web hosting and services such as mailing list management and site development are provided to other nonprofit journalism organizations.

Contact: Mark Horvit, mhorvit@ire.org, 573-882-1984.

For information on:

ADVERTISING—Megan Means, meganm@ire.org, 573-884-2360

MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTIONS—John Green, jgreen@ire.org, 573-882-2772

CONFERENCES AND BOOT CAMPS—Stephanie Sinn, stephanie@ire.org, 573-882-8969

LISTSERVS—Amy Johnston, amy@ire.org, 573-884-1444

Mailing Address:

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2008 CAR CONFERENCE

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Make your plans now!

Early-bird conference registration ends on Feb. 15. Register online at www.ire.org/training/houston08. For registration questions, contact John Green, jgreen@ire.org, 573-882-2772.

To reserve a room at the Doubletree Hotel Downtown Houston at the group rate (\$139 plus tax) book by Feb. 5. See details at www.ire.org/training/houston08.

If you have hotel or general conference questions, please contact Stephanie Sinn, Stephanie@ire.org, 573-882-8969.

Here's a peek at the preliminary schedule.

Watch for schedule and speaker updates at www.ire.org/training/houston08/mainschedule.html.

- Social science methods
- Building Intranets
- Programming basics
- New directions in providing data to the newsroom
- The Internet: The Invisible Web
- Statistics (basic and advanced)
- Introduction to Frameworks
- Using Wikis and other tools
- Using spreadsheets for daily and long-range stories
- Web scraping
- Intro to SQL
- Using databases for daily and long-range stories
- Social network analysis
- Using XML
- Writing, editing and presenting the data-driven story
- Open source CAR
- The latest in mapping and the Web
- CAR for bridges, dams and roads
- The quick CAR investigation
- CAR for disasters
- Dynamic databases
- CAR for the environment
- CAR for tipsters and crowdsourcing
- Investigations and blogging
- CAR for utilities and energy
- International databases for local coverage
- Making the most out of census data
- Writing the CAR story
- Building up a data library for your beat
- Google mash-ups on the run
- CAR for education
- CAR on the Web: Ethics and standards
- Broadcast and CAR
- Re-thinking CAR investigations
- CAR for consumer reporting
- CAR for property and foreclosures
- Visualizing data
- How to win FOI fights (E)
- CAR training: New ideas for mid-career
- Downloading data for daily stories
- Tips for quick data analysis

New! Jazz Bash at the Red Cat Jazz Café.

Enjoy music and camaraderie at an IRE fundraiser starting at 8 p.m. on Fri., Feb. 29. The Red Cat Jazz Café features French Quarter-inspired atmosphere and some of Houston's best Cajun and Creole food. Advanced tickets are \$15 and include two drinks. (On-site tickets, if available, will be \$20.)

The conference will feature the latest in computer-assisted reporting and presentation of the 2007 Philip Meyer Awards, recognizing the best use of social research methods in journalism.

Learn critical skills in panels and hands-on classes. The optional sessions on Thursday will include a new track for CAR and the Web. The main sessions on Friday, Saturday and Sunday will cover newsroom beats, mapping, campaign finance tools, CAR for broadcast, editing the CAR story, using Freedom of Information laws, and hands-on training for all skill levels.

