



# NEWS WATCH

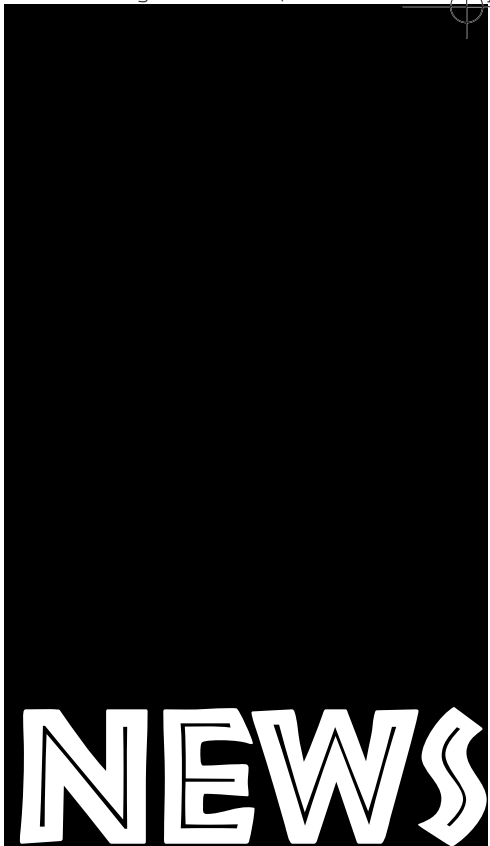


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**NOVEMBER 1997**



**NEWS WATCH**

**FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK**

I got off a plane in New York City recently, headed to a friend's 50th birthday party in a downtown restaurant, and what's the first thing people chatted me up about?

News Watch.

Local members of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists had discussed it at length at a meeting the night before. A producer at CBS News told me they raved about it and were figuring out how New York people can get involved. A cluster of reporters and editors from the *New York Daily News*, *Newsday*, and Telemundo television network offered glowing comments about the magazine, suggestions for the website, and pledged to be eyes and ears of what's published or broadcast in The Big Apple.

The need was apparent. That week, the *New York Post* headline screamed "Gore Comes Out for Ellen" and the *New York Daily News*, next to the picture of a pensive or glum businessman Donald Trump, trumpeted the trivial "I Should Have Dated Di" on the front page.

And the week was just beginning.

The Media and Democracy Congress II started the next day at New York University. It was a gathering of alternative, independent and progressive journalists and media activists, who are quick to acknowledge that they have a long way to go when it comes to diversity.

Some lesbian journalists listening to the panel titled "Beyond Ellen and Andrew Cunanan: Queers, Media and Culture" lamented the lack of strong relationships and under-

standing between gay and lesbian progressive journalists and people of color.

Aha! Did somebody say News Watch again?

Someone in the audience heartily endorsed the project. Three dozen people picked up the magazine after the session ended. A lesbian producer with NBC News enthusiastically raved about the potential for better communication and education among gay and lesbian journalists and her colleagues of color.

One thing in the conversation led to another. "Who knows?" we concluded. Maybe we could expand the Hispanic journalists' monitoring in New York City to include Asian American, African American, Native American and gay and lesbian colleagues. Maybe we could test it in a few key cities around the country.

Those of us here at News Watch will be talking to people from each of those groups to see how some of these networks can come together. Your e-mails, phone calls and face-to-face enthusiastic response to this effort to improve media portrayal of people of color and gays and lesbians spurs us to do even more.

These aren't pipe dreams. With your help and commitment, we can all do it together.



*Iván Román  
Publisher and Director of the Center for  
Integration and Improvement of Journalism*

**WHO WE ARE**

The **News Watch Project** is a news media monitoring and advocacy project. Based out of the Center for Integration and Improvement of Journalism at San Francisco State University's Journalism Department, it works closely with Unity '99, which is comprised of the four journalism associations of color — Asian American Journalists Association, National Association of Black Journalists, National Association of Hispanic Journalists and Native American Journalists Association — and with the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association. *Major funding for this project is provided by The Ford Foundation, with additional support from The Rockefeller Foundation.*

**WHAT WE DO**

The **News Watch Project** monitors news media coverage of communities of color — African American, Asian Pacific American, Latino and Native American — and of gays and lesbians, and advocates for fair and accurate coverage of those communities. In addition to a quarterly journal, the project also offers a variety of electronic information services, including a website. The website includes critiques about current coverage issues, a style guide of tips to improve coverage, text of the prior News Watch report and

**HOW TO OBTAIN A COPY OF THE JOURNAL**

The **News Watch Project** journal is available free to members of the five News Watch partners, journalism departments and news media associations. For all others, the cost is \$3.00 per copy, including postage and handling, for U.S. addresses. (Add \$2.00 US for international requests.) Please send a check payable to the **News Watch Project** to the address below. Thanks.

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*We welcome your feedback and also your examples of good and bad print or broadcast coverage of communities of color or of gay and lesbians. Please send in examples with source and date.*

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at San Francisco State University's Journalism Department

NOVEMBER 1997

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### FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

A short delay in setting up the program had delayed publication of the first issue of News Watch. With one issue barely under our News Watch belts, we had to jump right into the production of issue two in order to get back on schedule. And planning's already underway for the next one after that! Seems like there is never any time just to rest. But, then again, there is always so much happening about which News Watch can write that my guess is that there will never be any "down" time

Thankfully, we have good pool of journalists who believe in the project's mission to monitor and critique news coverage of communities of color and of gays and lesbians and who are willing to contribute to the journal.

I've been so fortunate in this last year to be a part of the team that publishes this magazine. It's rare to have a chance to work on a project that is not only important to the news industry's development and growth but that is also personally gratifying. Since the late 1960s, I have worked with groups whose missions have been to improve the lives people of color and others who have been excluded from full participation in this country. News Watch's objectives dovetailed well with what I wanted to do.

News Watch has a good group of partners. One of the partners, Unity '99, the coalition of the four national journalism groups serving African Americans, Asian Pacific Americans, Latinos and Native Americans, was also our partner in the 1994 publication.

This month, I will be leaving the News Watch Project in order to begin work as Unity '99's program director. I had coordinated the program for the Unity '94 convention and could not give up the chance to re-join this important collaborative effort. I'll be putting together programs that address diversity issues — including how the news industry is covering communities of color.

It's sad leaving the News Watch project and the great staff, but we'll all still be working together. So, I'm not saying "good-bye" — just "later." In the meantime, let us know what you think about this journal. Thanks for your continued support.



# African Americans: The Face of Poverty?

by C. Gerald Frase



from a photo project on the homeless in Oakland, California.  
Photos by Scott Braley.



Time was when, based on the pictures one saw, America's poor were white. Dorothea Lange's classic photograph, "Migrant Mother," depicts a 1936 Dust Bowl victim — gray-faced, hollow-cheeks, a woman with a gaze of hopelessness. And "Grapes of Wrath," the movie adapted from John Steinbeck's novel, showed poor Oklahoma families — Okies, they were called — trekking westward. All white. New York produced pictures of European immigrants crowded into slum tenements on the now legendary Lower East Side.

Today, the tenements are museums, and poverty has a black face.

"Over the past decades, the black urban poor have come to dominate public images of poverty," said Martin

tion of the National Association of Black Journalists, Gilens discussed his paper, "Race and Poverty in America: Public Misperceptions and the American News Media."

What changed the color of poverty from white to black? Why did black come to represent poverty?

"It started in the '60s," said Charles V. Hamilton, the Wallace Sayre Professor of Government at Columbia University. He postulates that the change emerged from the civil rights movement, "when the ones making the most visible protests for economic and racial justice were black. Black leaders and black organizations were in the forefront. Even if the protests were aimed at racial injustice, segregation, and discrimination, people started saying 'We've got to do something about poverty.' Then, this came to associate,

and all the black leaders kept saying that the face of poverty is not black or white, there are more white poor than there are black."

Hamilton said that many Americans see welfare issue as a black issue, because Okies of the '30s and the Appalachian whites of today are not in the forefront raising the economic justice issue."

"And then," Hamilton added, "of course, the obvious thing, the awareness of these multi-generational inner-city welfare families, and all the welfare queens, quote-unquote, that were black. So there's no question that image set in, and it persists."

In his report, Gilens said, "Surveys show that the American public dramatically exaggerates the proportion of African Americans among the poor and that such misperceptions are associated

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ceptions, he said, were “news media distortions about race and poverty that are both biased in ways that reflect negatively on the poor in general and on poor African Americans in particular.”

There have always been African American poor people in the United States, but they didn't always represent poverty. Gilens said network TV news and weekly news magazines “portray the poor as substantially more black than is really the case. I find that the most sympathetic subgroups of the poor, such as the elderly and the working poor, are under-represented, while the least sympathetic group — unemployed working-age adults — is over-represented. Discrepancies between magazine portrayals of the poor and the true nature of poverty are greater for African Americans than for others.”

The Bureau of Census reports that 9.9 million black people are below the poverty level — that is, have an annual income of below \$15,569. That's 29.3 percent of the nation's poor. Eleven and two-tenths percent of the nation's poor are white, amounting to 24.4 million.

As Gilens reported, however, if one asks, “Of all the people who are poor in this country, are more of them black or are more of them white?” the answer amazes. For example, most people participating in a December 1994 CBS/*New York Times* national survey answered “black.” Twenty-four percent said “white;” 31 percent said “about equal.”

The media also holds this perspective. When Gilens examined five years worth of three weekly news magazines, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News and World Report*, he accumulated 214 pictures containing 635 poor people. Race could be determined for 560 persons. In those years — 1988 through 1992 — *Newsweek* published 82 stories on, or related to, poverty; *U.S. News and World Report*, 56; and *Time*, 44.

African American people pictured in these stories amounted to 62 percent.

Black people, however, seldom represent the most “sympathetic” poor — the elderly, age 64 and over, who

ple. Gilens said the news magazines virtually ignored the elderly poor. Among the 635 persons pictured, only 13 could be poor old folks, of whom 10 were white, two black, and one whose race could not be ascertained.

African Americans were also under-represented in pictures that showed the working poor. Black poor work three-and-a-half times more often than the percentage depicted in magazines images, Gilens said. One hundred percent of the time, the news magazines' standard bearer for the “under-class” — one definition being: the poor residents of census tracts with unusually high proportions of welfare recipients, female-headed households, high school dropouts, and unemployed working-age males — was African American.

Network television — ABC, CBS, NBC — is virtually no different. During the five years of Gilens' study he saw 534 stories on, or related to, poverty. In 50 stories he randomly selected to analyze, 65.2 percent of the poor people the cameras caught were black.

Gilens believed that “past research has shown that media can exert a powerful influence on public perceptions and attitudes, that news pictures convey important information that viewers are comparatively likely to remember, and that the race of the people pictured in news stories is a salient aspect of the story for many readers.”

If the media doesn't significantly shape perceptions, then who or what does, Gilens asks. Personal encounters? Conversations about a subject with friends and acquaintances? Perhaps. But he cites information that perplexes. People in Michigan and Pennsylvania — states where African Americans are 31 percent of the poor — believe that blacks are 50 percent of America's poor. In Washington and Oregon — where blacks are only 6 percent of the poor — residents believe blacks are 47 percent of the poor. Blacks comprise a mere one percent of the population in Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota,



in those states think black people make up 47 percent of the nation's poor.

And schooling makes little difference: 47 percent of those without a high school diploma, 59 percent of high school graduates, 57 percent of those with some college, and 48 percent of college graduates believe most poor people are black. Even 52 percent of blacks, like 55 percent of their white counterparts, believe that most poor people are black.

Is there something about news gathering and news production that makes it easy to use black people to represent all poor people? Are poor black people more accessible? Certainly, there are large numbers in the big cities where the big television stations and the offices and bureaus of the news magazines are located. It is often a short hop to some poor black neighborhood where photographers — of any race — can more easily go for poverty pictures. It's much easier than coping with less cooperative communities where, for one thing, English may not be spoken. And it may be easier than ferreting about for poor whites who are spread out, and somewhat “camouflaged.”

Gilens talked about availability and suitability when he interviewed news magazine photo editors responsible for selecting poverty story pictures. The discussions were disheartening: “It's not like you can just go out and



# Wanted: Asian American Male Broadcast Journalists

by Gerald Katayama



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KGO-TV CHANNEL 7 NEWS

CNN business correspondent and anchor Fred Katayama remembers the moment he knew there was a place for a sansei (third-generation) Japanese American in television news. It was in the early '70s when he was growing up in Los Angeles. "I came

kitchen and said, 'Mom, mom, there's a Japanese man on television. For me, just seeing an Asian American period on the tube was something that startled me...and because of that I started watching every day.'

If Kashiwahara was the role model who opened up the possibilities, Los Angeles anchor Tritia Toyota later became the mentor who offered the encouragement to a young man who wanted to be a journalist. "She said it's tough in this world, but she gave me enough confidence to give it a shot," Katayama says.

Today most Asian American men lack the role models and mentors needed to draw men such as Katayama into broadcasting and that's creating a small crisis in the push to diversify newsrooms across the country. It's a measure of how little progress there's been for Asian American men in broadcasting that in the 25 years that have passed since Katayama watched that KABC newscast, only two Asian American men have much visibility across the country: Katayama and the man he calls a role model — ABC News' Ken Kashiwahara. Asian American women meanwhile seem to be thriving in television news.

The truth is that for most the country television news remains largely black and white, with women providing touches of



home from school one day and Ken Kashiwahara was on the tube," Katayama says. Kashiwahara was on KABC-TV as the first Asian American anchor in the country. As Katayama recalls, it was a moment of



©1990 CAPITAL CITIES/ABC

Top: Fred Katayama,  
Center, David Louie,  
Bottom, Ken Kashiwahara

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you its racism. Maybe it's a little bit of both. Industry analysts say that men, no matter what their race, aren't pursuing careers in journalism. Talented Asian American men simply don't see broadcasting as a career they want to pursue.

"If the kids don't see those (Asian American male) faces on the screens they won't think about going into the business," Kashiwahara says.

Cultural critic Darrell Hamamoto calls it "The Connie Chung Syndrome," which he defines as an over-representation of female Asian American anchors and a near total absence of male counterparts. If there's any doubt about anchor Connie Chung's power as a role model and cultural icon, consider the adoring group of young women gathered around Chung during last summer's Asian American Journalists Association (AAJA) convention in Boston. They often patterned their looks and mannerisms after Chung, whose success created a surge in the demand for female Asian American anchors and inspired young women to set their sights on careers in television news.

Evidence bears this out. According to Dr. Vernon Stone, professor emeritus at the University of Missouri School of Journalism, the Asian American share of the television news work force increased from about one percent in 1972 (the first year he conducted a survey on minorities and television in the news) to two percent in 1994, with women outnumbering men two to one. Asian Americans surveyed were most often anchors or reporters. Stone says quite a number of women were anchors or reporters but very few men. Most other Asian Americans in television news were in production.

Talent consultant and recruiter Don Fitzpatrick says the gender gap is evident at every AAJA convention he's attended over the past 10 years. "I interview reporter-anchors and producer types at the job fair," Fitzpatrick says. "In two-and-a-half days I can see about 100 people. From years one through about seven I would counsel 92 women

years I would see 92 women and seven men."

The reasons, says David Louie, business editor of KGO-TV in San Francisco, may be cultural barriers. Journalism, after all, is not one of your traditional career tracks for Asian Americans men. It may be all right for women, but there's still family pressure on men to enter careers where other Asian Americans have achieved recognition and success.

"Male students have told me they feel pressure at home to go into lucrative fields where there is evidence that one can achieve success...engineering, the sciences, medicine, accounting, and computing," Louie says. "There is no equivalent to Connie Chung, who is an undisputed inspiration to Asian Pacific women."

Opportunities for Asian Americans are just too few, says Ed. Carlos, assignment editor at KIRO-TV in Seattle. Carlos, who was born in the Philippines and grew up in Seattle, is a 1984 graduate of Washington State University. "I guess there really aren't a lot of Asian men in broadcasting so I don't think the envelope has been tested on how high they can go and how far," says Carlos. "I see it as a Catch-22 in that there aren't any role models, so there aren't that many men going into broadcasting; and because there are so few, there's no testing of these boundaries."

But will the envelope will ever be pushed if the predominantly white male hiring establishment cannot set aside the sometimes subtle and subjective filters that exclude Asian American men and favor stereotypical white anchors? Such filters create a sense of unease and self-consciousness. While few talk about it openly, Asian American men are acutely aware of the old stereotypes that cast Asian women as "exotic" and more appealing to white audiences and Asian men as alternately subservient or demonic. Some Asian American men may conclude that to succeed they must have that rich Ted Baxter voice and the classic Caucasian looks considered handsome or attractive for the camera

**TIPS**

1. Begin mentoring and recruiting programs aimed at Asian Pacific American males — and other males — before students begin college. It might otherwise be too late.
2. Make special efforts to recruit, advise and retain Asian Pacific American, and other minority, journalism students.
3. Make special efforts to recruit, mentor and retain Asian Pacific American, and other minority, journalism faculty members, especially those with professional print and broadcast experience.
4. Take the risk of assigning Asian Pacific American men as news anchors.
5. Promote more Asian Pacific American men into middle management positions.

an audition tape some years before joining CNN a television news executive told him: "You sound passive, but you can't help it."

"What do you mean?" Katayama asked.

"It's because of your culture," the news executive explained.

Katayama says there were a lot of reasons that he could have sounded passive. It was the first tape he ever made for television and anyone would have seemed passive. Katayama says he personally thinks if he sounded passive it was because he's from California where the population is a little more laid back. But Katayama says he was taken aback by the executive's statement. "I wonder if he would have said that if I would have been of a different race, or color or gender," Katayama says. To its credit, CNN hired Katayama as an anchor



# The Making of News: Andrew Who?

by Alan Acosta

**D**og days of summer. The tabloids and the “Hard Copy” clones are floating aimlessly in the July doldrums. The Jon-Benet case has spun down to nary more than a whisper. Paula Jones seems momentarily out of the picture.

And then, in a shot heard ‘round the world, international superstar fashion designer Gianni Versace is murdered in front of his Miami Beach mansion. The next thing you know, there was Andrew Cunanan on the cover of every newspaper and magazine in the country, the youthful party boy, shirt open, smirk on his face.

For the next two weeks, the lilting phrases rolled off the printing presses and newscasters’ tongues as if they had emanated from the Talmud of tabloid journalism—“high-priced hooker,” “homicidal homosexual,” “gay serial-killer.” But there was one new twist: these phrases came from “legitimate” newspapers and newscasts. The ascension of O.J. journalism was now complete.

Not unlike media coverage of the Simpson case, the Cunanan coverage was a textbook case of life in the fast-lane of modern journalism. Normally staid publications and news shows, frantic in their efforts to break “news” on the case, lost track of the basic tenets of the craft. Fueled by tabloid news shows and a pack mentality, they often moved too quickly and too recklessly, and the results were irreparably tarnished.

And like the Simpson case, it provides some clues about how to avoid the obvious pitfalls. For in the coverage of the Cunanan case there were several junctures where the more responsible media outlets did not rush to judgment, approaching the story with a

pieces of work.

Nonetheless, much of the coverage left millions of gay men and women victimized by the broad brush strokes of irresponsible characterizations of Cunanan that seemed to center on the alleged murderer’s sexuality. Forget that at least two of his victims were heterosexual. The media could hardly utter the nouns “killer” or “prostitute” or “party boy” without the requisite modifier “gay” or “homosexual.” (Pick one from each column.)

Even more troubling — perhaps shameless is a better word — was the way mainstream news outlets latched onto questionable shards of information and by incessantly repeating them soon turned them into indisputable truths. Which, of course, turned out to be false.

To wit: Cunanan’s mother made an offhand comment to a Chicago paper that her son was a “high-class homosexual prostitute” (one might posit she had a few outstanding issues with her son), and nearly all of the media ran with the ball, despite the *New York Times’* reporting early on that Minneapolis police said there was no evidence Cunanan was a prostitute. (Can one imagine our august journals and news shows so reflexively referring to any young woman who “dated” an older man as a hooker?)

Even worse was the cavalier way journalists discussed Cunanan’s purported HIV status as a given — and then proceeded to trot out media whores to offer dime-store psychoanalyses of a man driven to murderous extremes by AIDS. Not one mainstream paper that I know of questioned the original report in a San Diego paper, which cited a supposed “AIDS counselor” who said Cunanan had

Do you know of any health professional who goes around sharing this type of confidential information in such an apparently sanguine manner? We all heard a lot of people seeking to redeem their 15-minutes-of-fame coupons in this sorry affair, but this strikes me as totally implausible, even by those sordid standards.

Nonetheless, pundits and newscasters treated this report as gospel. There was only one problem: according to information “leaked” from the Dad County coroner’s office after Cunanan death, the autopsy showed he was HIV-negative. Well, never let the facts get in the way of a good story, as we used to say in the newspaper business.

Not all coverage was bad, however. Lydia Martin and her colleagues at *The Miami Herald* often walked a delicate line between reporting on a legitimate news story and the salacious traps other newspapers fell into all too readily. The *New York Times* also actually went out and reported stories instead of falling prey to the run-and-gun, bag-a-rumor trot-out-the-shrink school of reporting many papers and news shows resorted. The *Times’* web site was particularly impressive — compelling, well-reported stories in a format that allowed easy access to all of the Cunanan-Versace stories. And the *San Francisco Chronicle* ran some sophisticated and smart pieces, among them a story on what the case said about the history of uneasy relations between police and the gay community.

But too often, newspapers played



comment on it, as in this story in the *Los Angeles Times*: “Police would not comment on reports that Cunanan recently learned that he is HIV-positive, nor that the first two murders — those of architect David Madson and Navy officer turned gas company engineer Jeffrey Trail — may have been the result of a love triangle.”

Two baseless rumors — one later batted down, the other unprovable. A cheap way of getting unsourced, unverifiable information in the paper in a gambit familiar to any first-year j-school student.

Although there was much to object to in most of the television news coverage, there were also some bright spots along the way. On the network front, “Dateline NBC” ran some thoughtful, quickly-produced pieces as the story was unfolding, bringing a little intelligence to the pack-crazed airwaves during the manhunt.

Juju Chang of ABC News reported on Cunanan after the killing of New Jersey cemetery worker William Reese, before the story took the meteoric turn sparked by the murder of Versace. When she started reporting from Miami, Chang’s work showed considerably more depth than that of many other reporters who suddenly parachuted into south Florida.

There was one silver lining for the gay community. Gay advocacy groups got out ahead of the story and issued advisories, lists of “dos and don’ts” and guidelines for responsible coverage. The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), the National Lesbian and Gay Task Force and a number of local groups used their websites and press operations to assist journalists facing the dual challenge of intense competition and daily deadline.

Nonetheless, there was an astonishing lack of self-reflection in most of the coverage. Three weeks after Cunanan was found dead in a houseboat not far from Versace’s home, “Dateline” ran an interview with Robins Thompson, whom they identified as Cunanan’s best friend

ble, had this to say about his deceased friend: it was extremely unlikely he had AIDS, he was not a party boy in the sense of wild sexual appetites, he certainly wasn’t a hooker and was not a master of disguise. Never mind that NBC had earlier engaged in the orgy of misinformation about Cunanan just like everyone else. They now reported with a straight face and no apologies that it’s unlikely any of these widely reported “facts” was true.

Which is not to single out one network. As noted, NBC did some decent reporting during the Cunanan affair. It is only to say that as the cacophony of Cunanan coverage came to a crescendo on that houseboat and then faded in the weeks to follow, the media’s infatuation with the rise and fall of Andrew Cunanan pointed to a larger trend. Networks and major newspapers had become as dependent on the “sleaze” aspect of news as tabloids and many local news shows. In this new world, gay men and lesbians have won a weird sort of equality, just one more group in a long line to be exploited by media empires ever more intent on appealing to the basest values and tastes of a resigned and dispirited republic.

A few weeks after all the sound and fury died down, I moderated a panel for the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association on media coverage of the case. As might be expected, panelists found the coverage deeply flawed.

After the panel, I was interviewed by a Chicago television news reporter on the coverage of the case. Did I think, the reporter asked, the Cunanan story would have long-lasting negative impact on the gay and lesbian community? Probably not, I answered. First of all, the lively debates on the web and in forums like the one we had just finished might cause the more responsible among us to reconsider and improve our coverage.

But secondly — and more importantly — I told him, soon the pack would move on to the next story and Cunanan would get over his what

around the next bend. And gays and lesbians would be off the hook.

Thirty-six hours later, Princess Diana died from injuries suffered in an automobile crash in a Paris tunnel.

Andrew who? 🗨️

*ALAN ACOSTA is the director of the Stanford University News Service. Prior to joining the school, he worked as deputy city editor at the Los Angeles Times, where he also served in a number of editing capacities, including as member of two Pulitzer Prize-winning teams and primary desk editor in that paper’s Pulitzer Prize-winning coverage of the Los Angeles riots. Acosta is a member of the News Watch Advisory Council representing the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association*

## TIPS:

**1.** Don’t use phrases like “gay serial killer” and “gay murderer.” They are sensationalistic and typically make a link between someone’s sexual orientation and a crime that is difficult, if not impossible, to prove. When in doubt, reverse the circumstances and ask if you would refer to the subject as a “straight murderer” or “straight serial killer.”

**2.** Identify the sexual orientation of someone who has committed — or is suspected of committing — a crime in the proper context of the story, if it is relevant to that story.

**3.** Don’t call in “experts” to speculate on someone’s HIV status when there is no hard evidence that it has any bearing on the story.

**4.** Include the viewpoint of someone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender when reporting on controversial issues that affect those communities. Indeed, more than one viewpoint should be solicited because the community is extremely diverse.

**5.** Don’t refer to a lesbian or gay “lifestyle.” The word implies something casual and changeable, whereas being lesbian or gay is a fundamental sexual orientation, like heterosexuality. Just as there is no “straight lifestyle,” there is no one lesbian or



# Improving the Odds on Fair Coverage of Indian Gaming

By Karen Lincoln Miche

It was a Sunday evening in February when Rick Hill, head of the American Indian gaming lobby, tuned his television to "60 Minutes" commentator Andy Rooney. What he heard left him seething.

"The New York state legislature voted against casino gambling," said Rooney, holding up a newspaper with a headline which read: "New York Senate Roundly Rejects Casino Gambling."

management companies. When Rooney added in his broadcast that "so-called Indian casinos are a joke," and that their management is "often about as Indian as I am," it was enough to make Hill want to lash back at CBS.

"I was disappointed that the editors at "60 Min-utes" would let his comments go through," said Hill, an

Oneida Indian from Wisconsin and chair of the National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA).

"We've got enough problems dealing with attacks on Indian sovereignty and

them are rich," says Hill.

Since the passage of the national Indian Gaming Regulatory Act in 1988, tribes involved in gaming have increasingly come under close scrutiny and harsh criticism from competitors and anti-gaming interests. The opposition claims that tribes have an unfair advantage over private owners, such as Donald Trump, because of their status as sovereign governments.

Their sovereign status protects them from state interference in regulating gaming operations and exempts them from paying taxes on revenues. Indian gaming is regulated, however, by the tribes and the National Indian Gaming Commission, and states are required to have negotiated agreement with tribes to operate gaming.

The need for balanced and unbiased reporting is critical especially now says Hill, as Congress holds hearings this fall aimed at Indian gaming which would erode tribal sovereignty and cut off operating funds to some tribes. The two measures are being proposed by Sen. Slade Gorton, R-Washington, who has opposed Indian treaty rights in his home state for 25 years.

To better understand this issue and Indian gaming in general, Hill and other Indian leaders encourage reporters and editors to brush up on American Indian history and tribal sovereignty, learn differences between Indian gaming and commercial gaming, and dig



GARY THIBEAULT, M. PHOTO, CR. PPA CERTIFIED

Pequot owned Foxwoods Casino in Connecticut.

In the Feb. 2 broadcast, Rooney went on to say: "I was plenty happy about that because I own a house near where they were going to put a casino. Casino gambling doesn't produce one damn thing in America except piles of cash for sleaze-ball owners."

With these few words, says Hill, Rooney insulted the 130 tribes in the United States that own casinos —

other issues without somebody like Andy Rooney perpetuating myths and stereotypes about Indian gaming."

Hill says Rooney's commentary is one of many biased and unfair news reports delivered by mainstream media about Indian casinos. Many news stories, he says, portray high-stakes gambling as a way for tribes to get rich quick, while others cast Indian casinos as societal threats because of possible infiltration by organized crime.

# NEWS WATCH

“It’s all about destroying myths,” says Hill. What’s difficult to grasp about Indian issues is the understanding of sovereignty.

Indian tribes entered into treaties with the U.S. government as sovereign nations, exchanging their land for certain guaranteed rights. For more than 160 years, the U.S. Supreme Court has recognized Indian tribes as sovereign governments. In 1987, the high court ruled in *California v. Cabazon* that tribes had the right to operate gaming without interference from the state if such gaming is legal in that state. By then, tribes had been operating high-stakes bingo for less than a decade.

In 1988, Congress passed the Indian gaming law, which promotes economic development and self-sufficiency for tribes, promotes strong tribal government, and provides a regulatory base to protect Indian gaming from organized crime.

“Indian sovereignty isn’t a right that was given to us. It’s an inherent right,” says Hill. He adds, “Most of the reporters who call us don’t know that Indian nations are governments. As governments, they have rights to regulate their own affairs.”

In 1995, \$400 billion was wagered legally by 100 million players nationwide in Indian and non-Indian gambling establishments, and the house won \$39 billion of it. NIGA reports that Indian gaming represents \$4 billion of the total house take and accounts for 8.6 percent of total wagering in this country.

A report by the General Accounting Office released in December found that a small group of tribes pulls in huge profits from gambling. The report said that 10 tribes have generated more than half of the Indian gaming revenues.

Other studies have shown that tribal unemployment and welfare rates have dropped as Indian casinos hire

rates have dropped in areas surrounding Indian gaming establishments.

Still other studies by the federal government, Indian tribes and private research firms have shown that despite economic gains created by Indian gaming, American Indians remain among the poorest in the nation. They continue to rank highest in poverty, alcohol and drug abuse, juvenile delinquency and other social problems. “We’re still at the bottom of every social and eco-

## TIPS

1. Review a copy of the Indian Gaming Act to increase knowledge of basic tenets.
2. Contact national and local Indian rights groups, such as the National Congress of American Indians and the National Indian Gaming Association to gain a better understanding of Indian perspectives on gaming.
3. Visit Indian gaming operations and talk to Indian people in the surrounding community.
4. Read gaming industry publications for news and trends.

nomie measure,” said Ron Allen, chair of the Jamestown S’Kallam tribe in Washington state and president of the National Congress of American Indians, based in Washington, D.C.

Allen says the media have not only missed the mark on Indian gaming coverage, but they have ignored, or are oblivious to, other Indian issues. “We’re not even on the radar screen,” he says. He said the media focus on controversial issues, while “overlooking the real issue of what tribes are trying to do in their communities.”

Tribes have used gaming profits to build schools, clinics, community centers; set up education and scholarship

and other projects to strengthen their communities.

Allen and Hill say the trade press does a fairer and more thorough job of covering Indian gaming than the mainstream media. For instance, the August cover story in *International Gaming and Wagering* magazine profiled the Mississippi Choctaw and how gaming has pulled them out of poverty.

But gaming is not the answer to all the tribes’ problems. Some Indian tribal members say gambling has torn apart families, and threatens their culture and traditions. Some have seen a decline in attendance at tribal function and religious ceremonies since the onset of gambling in their communities. The clash between gaming supporters and the opposition resulted in violence among the Mohawks in 1990. Though the standoff is an extreme example, opposition to gaming exists to some degree among many tribes.

The Mashantucket Pequot in Connecticut — the most successful Indian gaming tribe and the most profitable gambling operation in the United States (largely due to their location) — has few such complaints from its tribal members.

The Pequots own and operate Foxwoods Casino near the community of Ledyard. Although the tribe would not divulge its gaming revenues, it said that it grossed \$600 million last year from slot machines alone. The tribe is required to give the state 25 percent of the take from slots as part of the negotiated agreement. Since it began operating slots in 1993, the Pequots say they have paid the state of Connecticut more than half a billion dollars.

Unlike the majority of gaming tribes — which operate smaller facilities in rural and isolated parts of the country — the Pequots have drawn widespread news coverage. They are careful not to characterize their coverage as either good or bad press.

“We’re essential to the survival of

# Latino Publications: Filling a Mainstream Void

by James E. Garci

Hispanics have often criticized mainstream news organizations for failing to adequately cover their communities. Daily newspapers, they say, tend to present negative images of them by routinely featuring Latinos in stories about crime, welfare and illegal immigration, but omitting them from coverage of the business community or social and cultural events.

As the Latino population increases — it is now the fastest growing ethnic group in the country — experts say that this trend has been mirrored by a virtual explosion of Hispanic-oriented publications. Most are owned by Hispanics, though a growing number are not. Some cities that once claimed one or two Latino-oriented publications now have a half dozen or more. And with the Latino population in the United States expected to grow to more than 40 million by 2010, publications aimed at Latino populations will only continue to multiply.

This surge in Latino readership, meanwhile, has not gone unnoticed by large corporate news organizations.

In Chicago, the Tribune Company, which

publishes *¡Exito!* The fledgling weekly tabloid is the company's answer to the more established Spanish-language *La Raza*, which is owned by Luis H. Rossi.

In San Jose, California, Knight-Ridder Inc., which publishes the English-language *San Jose Mercury News*, now publishes a Spanish-language weekly called *El Nuevo Mundo*. This Knight-Ridder weekly newspaper competes with several local papers,

including *La Oferta Review*, *El Vistazo*, and a monthly called *El Estadio*. Knight-Ridder also owns the daily *El Nuevo Herald* in Miami, and *La Estrella*, a twice-weekly newspaper in Fort Worth, Texas.

While Latino readers seem pleased by the growing interest in their communities, not everyone has welcomed the arrival of the non-Hispanic-owned corporate-financed publications.

In a recent interview with *Hispanic* magazine, Eddie Escovedo, president of the National Association of Hispanic Publications, articulated a growing sentiment among Latino publishers: "Hispanics are sick of being ignored and negatively portrayed by mainstream media... and they are only now being discovered (by mainstream news organizations) solely because of their rising purchasing power."

While some have accused Latino-owned publications of pulling their punches when reporting on favorite Hispanic leaders or so called pro-Hispanic advertisers, no one denies that Latino-owned publications typically present a far more diverse and representative image of their communities than the mainstream press. Yet as one media analyst noted non-Hispanic-owned news organizations, too, are sometimes pressured by powerful



FOCUS

NEWS WATCH

ing news coverage for financial gain — usually to protect advertising revenue. And there are many small publishers who insist that their staffs abide by strict journalistic standards.

Much of the tension between the managers of mainstream- and Latino-owned publications has to do with increased competition for advertising dollars. In a show of solidarity with Hispanic publishers, the Hispanic Association of Corporate Responsibility has begun certifying publications as Hispanic-owned.

While recent news accounts have highlighted what some have characterized as the “predatory” business practices of mainstream news organizations, readers seem to be benefiting from the increased competition by gaining access to a broader variety of higher quality publications.

In the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex, Knight-Ridder’s *La Estrella* and the A. H. Belo Corporation’s *La Fuente* compete with more than a dozen area weeklies — most notably, *El Sol de Tejas* in Dallas and *El Informador Hispano* in Fort Worth.

From the outset, the Spanish-language *La Fuente* has tried to develop a “lifestyle” publication that emphasizes, according to General Manager Cindy Benavides, the “positive qualities” of the Latino community. Benavides, who serves as the weekly tabloid’s de facto editor-in-chief, said her mission is to create a marketable product by filling what the Belo Corp. perceived as a major void in regional news coverage. “We decided to concentrate on writing about small businesses, education, food, travel, and community stories that highlight individuals who make a positive difference in (the Latino) community,” she said.

*La Fuente* currently distributes 105,000 free copies directly to Latino households every week, though they plan to begin newsstand distribution soon.

According to Benavides, local Latino-owned publications, such as *El Sol de Tejas*, have already stated a claim

be men, by practically mirroring the editorial content and sections of the daily *Dallas Morning News*. (*The Dallas Morning News* also is owned by the A. H. Belo Corp.)

She said *La Fuente* is trying to appeal to a largely “female, family-ori-



LATIN FOCUS

ented” audience of readers by concentrating on community-oriented, personality-oriented feature news stories. The paper has made conscious efforts to avoid using market strategies that might antagonize local Latino publishers. Whatever concerns there may be in the Latino community about her newspaper, Benavides said *La Fuente* does not want to drive its competitors out of business.

Lucy Santiago-Allen, general manager of *El Sol de Tejas*, has mixed reactions to the Belo paper. She agrees that *La Fuente* tends to offer readers lighter stories while leaving the hard news market to *El Sol* and other community newspapers. “They would be what I call our lifestyle section,” she said.

When it comes to the business aspect, however, Santiago-Allen is more circumspect. Latino-owned businesses wanting to reach the Spanish-language market can only spend so much on publicity, she said. For now, the booming Texas economy means the advertis-

change.

Founded in 1966, *El Sol de Tejas* is a 20- to 28-page broadsheet featuring mostly local, national and international news — usually wire stories from Mexico and Latin America. It also has sports section. The company publishes about 30,000 issues a week and distributes them free to newsstands.

In Fort Worth, *La Estrella* has taken a different approach from *La Fuente*. For instance, instead of just a weekly paper, *La Estrella* publishes on both Wednesdays and Fridays. The Wednesday edition is bilingual and distributed as a special section to 69,000 subscribers of the English-language *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* — Knight-Ridder’s local daily newspaper. On Friday, 11,000 copies of a Spanish-language edition of *La Estrella* are distributed free to newsstands in Tarrant and Dallas Counties — the region’s most heavily Hispanic.

Liz Zavala, *La Estrella*’s editor-in-chief, said Wednesday’s edition tends to include a heavier sampling of features and local hard news stories, with a general reading audience target of families and women. While that edition is similar to *La Fuente*’s approach, the Friday edition of *La Estrella* differs sharply: it is heavy on international and national spots news and sports and tends to be tailored to a male audience.

“The Friday edition has our “Las Americas” (international news) section and a weekly column by Jorge Ramos, a national anchor for Univision (a Florida-based Spanish-language television network),” Zavala said. “The Wednesday edition has more of a feature news personality. It’ll have more stories about people in the community and information that helps people find services.”

*El Informador* owner Frederick Garcia, to say the least, is not happy about *La Estrella*’s presence. He said he suing *La Estrella* for engaging in what he describes as unfair business practices.

According to Garcia, there isn’t much of a difference between *La Estrella*’s Wednesdays and Fridays edi-



# From the Webmaster: Calling All Journalists and News Hounds

*By Judy Gerber*

The News Watch website is on-line and available to you. We encourage you to make use of it often. The site will be updated continually, so there's always a good time to visit. The address is <http://newswatch.sfsu.edu>. (Please note that there is no www in the address.) Read about how journalists missed the point in coverage of the debate over an apology for slavery; or a cheerleader's piece on CNN about INS efforts to keep out the "invasion" of people across the border; or when to use the terms "Hispanic" and "Latino"; or where the term "Chicano" really comes from.

We want the contents of the web site to be part of the dialogue in newsrooms, and if you see something that belongs there—good or bad—send it in. Your contribution can make a difference. Recently, someone faxed us a copy of a CNN Interactive article that, among other problems, used the word "illegal" as a noun for undocumented immigrants. The reader's comments were scrawled on the page. We put that on our website the next day with a critique, and we sent it on to CNN. They took the article down, and forwarded the criticism to CNN domestic, where the story originated. Some of the changes we want to see will occur just that way: one small chip at a time.

News Watch staff monitors national media, but that's just a small piece of the news. We need to find out what happens in your area. How does your local paper cover "the other side of the tracks?" Do headlines evoke stereotypes? Does the front page consistently show people of color in negative stories and white people doing productive work? Send us an example.

The website has several departments. We use "Short Takes" for general analysis and criticism. The cartoon section



contains graphic images with problems. "Say What?" is reserved for the truly blatant pieces that we think never should have seen the light of day. "Headlines" are just that—problematic headlines. Sometimes the content of a story reads just fine, but the headline misses, like using "Arab" instead of "Palestinian," or "Gay killer" to report a murder case. We also know that sometimes someone makes a mistake in choice of words but does not really stand by it. We sometimes need to give these people the benefit of the doubt, so we have reserved a section for those "Faux-Pas." Our last section points out "Double Standards" in reporting, like stories that name the race of a victim of police brutality but not the race of the police involved.

*So set a bookmark at*

***<http://newswatch.sfsu.edu>***

*and get involved*

**Send material for the web site to:**

e-mail: [newsproj@sirius.com](mailto:newsproj@sirius.com)

fax: 415 398-8706

snail mail: News Watch Project • 942 Market St., Suite 309 • San Francisco, CA 94102

**Corrections [from the last issue]**

Page 8: The photo was taken by Morgan Gwenwald at the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation "Come Out with Ellen" party in New York, April 30, 1997.

Page 13: Helen Zia, who wrote the article "Campaign Fundraising — Is the Focus on Asian Americans Fair?" was the executive editor of *Ms.*

**Editor's Note:**

**Tips — Too Easily Forgotten**

A few journal readers have commented to us that they thought the tips were too simple or weren't new ideas. Yes, the tips seem so simple and so familiar to us. Yet these are journalism basics that we sometimes take for granted, or forget, when we are doing a story. If, by being more conscious of these concepts, we are able to do our work better, to get out a stronger story, and to raise the level of coverage, then I say,

## Indian Gaming...

*Continued from page 9*

media attention,” said Arthur Henick, media relations manager for the Mashantucket Pequots. “But I think media coverage is a lot like life itself. It has its ups and downs.” Henick said he fields calls regularly from the local dailies and weeklies to *The New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*, and from local radio and TV news shows to the major networks and CNN. “We still have to write letters on occasion to correct misconceptions or bad information,” said Henick. “It’s part of the ongoing relationship we have with the media.”

The Pequots are the tribe down the road from veteran broadcast commentator Rooney, who said he stands by his opinion that gambling produces nothing positive. “It is my opinion that gambling casinos are not the solution

to the Indians’ problem,” Rooney said in written response for this story. “Every thousand dollars lost in a casino is a thousand dollars not spent on a legitimate product made by a company that employs American workers.

“A gambling operation, no matter what percentage of the take goes to Indians — and in most cases it’s a small percentage — does not help one single Indian become independent by learning a trade or a profession...If Indians prosper temporarily because of the money they are handed from casino profits, it is the worst kind of welfare and beneath the dignity of the glorious Indian tradition,” he wrote.

Rooney also wanted to get the record straight about his previous reference to “sleazeball” casino owners: “I regret that the term ‘sleazeball owners’ was in proximity to my reference to Indian casinos, even though it should have been clear that I was not referring

to Indians when I used it.”

Allen suggests that journalists visit Indian reservations and tribal communities to better understand them. “Our educational system has never prepared Americans to learn the history and truth about Indians,” said Allen. “American Indians have got to be the most diverse culture in American society. Reporters and editors should take the time to learn about it.”

Allen says Rooney is an example of how “someone with very little knowledge can be dangerous.”

**KAREN LINCOLN MICHEL** is a freelance writer based in the Chicago area, and is co-owner of the twice-monthly newspaper *News From Indian Country*. A member of the Ho-Chunk Nation, Michel is past president of the Native American Journalists Association and has served on the board of *Unity* '99. She previously worked for *The Dallas Morning News* and *the LaCrosse (Wis.) Tribune*.

## Latino Publications...

*Continued from page 11*

tions. As for the content of the two newspapers, Garcia said, “My style versus theirs? They have no substantial news. They’re doing fluff pieces.” Zavala disagreed.

A free publication, *El Informador* is distributed weekly and publishes 25,000 copies in Tarrant County and portions of Dallas County. Garcia said his reporters focus on local breaking news. “We’re going into the community,” he said. “That’s why we’ve maintained a loyal customer base.”

In Chicago, the two largest Spanish-language papers also seem to have divvied up the market. *La Raza* tends to cover “working-class issues that really affect the Mexican immigrant in particular,” said Javier J. Silva, director of communications for the Latino Institute, a local think-tank. The Tribune Company’s *Exitol* mag-

ested in entertainment and fashion trends than local politics. In other words, said Silva, young, better-educated readers with significant disposable income.

While other mainstream-owned Latino-oriented publications across the country, such as the recently launched *People en Español*, owned by Time-Warner Corp., also appear to be targeting readers who prefer entertainment, lifestyle and travel stories, one media analyst notes that the industry is in its infancy and will likely dramatically evolve over the next few years.

*Latina* magazine, for instance, was financed by a major African American publisher and concentrates on women’s issues. *Hispanic* magazine, owned by a Cuban American, remains a general-interest magazine targeting Hispanics, though it has shifted recently to covering more issue-oriented stories.

Federico Subervi, a professor at the University of Texas at Austin, points out that, because the incursion by mainstream news organizations into

systematic research has been complete comparing their content with that of smaller, Latino-owned publications.

Generally speaking, however, competition should ratchet up the quality of journalism the Latino community receives, Subervi said, though much depends on individual publishers and their motives. “The ownership doesn’t always determine the quality,” said Subervi. “It’s about a commitment. Sometimes that commitment is motivated by a closeness and relationship to the community and not the bottom line.”

A former newspaper reporter, **JAMES GARCIA** is editor and publisher of *Politico*, a weekly newsletter covering U.S. Latino politics. He most recently was a state desk reporter and columnist for the *Austin-American Statesman*. He also serves as a member of the *NewsWatch* advisory council and a member of the board of directors for the *National Association of Hispanic Journalists*. Readers can write him at [JamesGarcia@politico.com](mailto:JamesGarcia@politico.com).

## Asian Newsmen...

*Continued from page 5*

anchoring experience.

News executive need more sensitivity and a greater commitment to creating the same kind of opportunities for Asian American men that have been open to Asian American women. Without that kind of commitment, Louie fears that the current trend of more women and fewer men in broadcast journalism will be irreversible.

"Every time we see a step forward for an Asian Pacific American male, such as KRON-TV (San Francisco) hiring former CBS News correspondent James Hattori as weekend news anchor), we see a step backward — KRON-TV taking back James Hattori's Sunday anchor duties and giving them to someone else, a white male," Louie says.

While much of the prestige of television news is on camera, much of the power is off camera where management makes decisions about hiring and firing and selecting anchors. While Asian American men, of course, occupy positions off camera such as producers, assignment editors, cameramen and directors, you'd be hard pressed to name a handful in key news executive positions.

Carlos thinks he'd like a shot at one of those upper management jobs, but he knows it's going to take some time. "I think further down, much later on, I think about being a news director...It would be great. But, then again, there are no role models, and so I just have to figure out how to get there on my own; and after 13 years in this business, I feel like I should have been there by now, but it's not happening."

Wally Zimmerman has been in broadcasting for 28 years and has been a news director in Wisconsin and Honolulu, where he currently runs the newsroom at KITV News, the ABC affiliate in Honolulu. KITV has one of the most ethnically diverse newsrooms

says that the reality of the marketplace is that Asian American men won't be moving up to the ranks of upper management soon.

"I think it's because there's not a lot of men, and I think it's too early in the cycle," he says. "It takes a long time to become a news director, not on an individual basis but as a group. For somebody to move through the whole chain takes a long time. Women played a prominent role in television news organizations way earlier than they did in

a minute, where are the Asians' or 'who is the Asian perspective on this,' and I feel that I have that role."

Other Asian Americans have found satisfaction as photographers, the male domain in television news. Camera crews in Hawaii are predominantly Asian Pacific men. A smattering of Asian American men operate the cameras all across the country. Lugging heavy camera equipment around is not a kind of job that attracts many women to broadcasting.

Cameramen Tom Matsuzawa of KIRO-TV in Seattle and Bob Guanzon of KITV in Honolulu say they see their roles doing creative work behind the cameras and never gave much thought to getting on-camera work even though their wives work as television news reporters.

Simply having role models and mentors won't solve the problem facing Asian American men in broadcasting. No one, after all, wants the stereotypically mindless television newscaster of the Ted Baxter school running around — no matter what their ethnic background. But if there aren't many role models, there won't be many aspirants; and without any aspirants, there won't be any role models who will be mentors. Recruiting young talent won't be easy because journalism tends to be at the bottom of the career choices for most high school students.

Concerned Asian American journalists — both men and women — must start early in recruiting and mentoring the next generation of journalists. Tiritia Toyota serving as a mentor went a long way toward encouraging Fred Katayama to pursuing a career in journalism.

"If there are going to be more Asian American male — or for that matter just more male journalists we have to start talking to kids in the grade school junior highs and high schools," Don Fitzpatrick says. "If they aren't motivated there, they won't be enrolling in journalism school when they turn 18."



### WRITER'S NOTE

I found that doing this story greatly heightened my awareness about the need for role models in broadcasting. While I agree with

David Louie that the goal is to have Asian American men anchoring the primetime newscast, I think we shouldn't forget the importance that these men have the right stuff in terms of having been news reporters. Ken Kashiwahara is a good role model not only because he's been an anchor, but because he's an excellent field reporter. He's got some passion for the news. To the extent that Asian American men can gain visibility as national correspondents, I think they will serve as the kind of role models of the kind of Asian Americans we want, and need, in broadcasting: those who care about the news. (G.K.)

many other professions, but even now they are only beginning to go up to the top level of news organizations, only now after more than a generation ... almost two generations. Well, Asian men two generations ago were invisible on television. It's going to take a full generation more."

If that's true, Asian Americans such as Carlos have a long wait ahead. But Carlos says he's still able to fill an important niche, which is why he chose a off-camera career. "I wanted to be more on the editorial side to have some influence on the stories that we cover"

## Face of Poverty?...

*Continued from page 3*

misperceptions. As a group, they felt, perhaps subconsciously, that black is "what the poor should look like." One acknowledged to Gilens "that only some kind of 'subtle racism' can explain the racial patterning of poverty in American news magazines."

Both Gilens and Hamilton cite the impact of the portrayal of poverty as a black issue as one reason for the nation's zest for so-called welfare reform. Gilens says that this image increases white opposition to welfare and allows whites who believe most poor are black to blame recipients for their situation and to support cuts in welfare and spending.

Hamilton, in his recent book, *Dual Agenda: Race and Social Welfare Policies of Civil Rights Organizations*, written with his wife Dona Hamilton, quotes a sentence from the diary of President Nixon White House aide H.R. Haldeman. He wrote that Nixon, discussing welfare reform, said: "The whole problem is really the blacks. The key is to devise a system that recognizes

this while not appearing to. Problem with overall plan is that it forces poor whites into the same position as blacks." Media stereotyping of America's poor as black does, as President Nixon asserted, equate poor whites with poor blacks. Poor whites, aware of the scorn in which African Americans generally are held, reject any linkage. Thus, despite the need, very little helpful social legislation and very few useful economic and social programs will be created on either a local or national level — for anyone.

The sad aspect, Gilens says, is that "apparently well-meaning, racially liberal news professionals" are to blame. He assigns responsibility for the racial misrepresentation of poverty to the men and women who choose the pictures, that is, photo editors. Possibly, geographic concentrations of blacks may facilitate the over-representation. Or, photo editors may be trapped by their own misperceptions. More likely, he believes, the distortions are due to "editors' conscious or unconscious indulgence" of the public's stereotypes. Or, perhaps to editors' own unconscious stereotypes concerning the nature of poverty in America. ●

### TIPS

1. Include "visual" journalists — shooters and graphic artists — and their editors in discussions of poverty-related story assignments with an eye to accurate portrayals of the poor.
2. Use pictures of white poor as well as black — white, not non-black poor, but white-poor.
3. Include stories about white poor in coverage of poverty issues.

**C. Gerald Fraser** is senior editor at Earth Times, a semi-monthly newspaper devoted to environment and international development. The publication focuses on United Nations projects, including development, population and water projects. Prior to this he spent over 24 years as a reporter at The New York Times, which he left in 1991. For the last half of his tenure there, he covered cultural news, particularly visual and performing arts.

## Asian Newsmen...

*Continued from previous page*

Journalism educators must recruit, advise and retain minority students and minority faculty. A survey of journalism educators by former San Francisco State Journalism Department chair Betty Medsger reveals that only eight percent of journalism faculty members are non-white. One rough estimate is that there may be about 50 Asian American journalism professors, many of whom don't necessarily have any professional newspaper or television experience. Asian American men must consider roles as teachers, even in a part-time capacity, to encourage young men, and, yes, serve as role models for them.

The news industry needs to make a greater commitment to diversification

era. While Asian American males have been anchoring sports, Louie says the breakthrough must come in news anchoring. News directors across the country must give more than lip service to diversifying the news; they must be willing to take the risk of breaking down barriers and assigning Asian men to be news anchors.

News management needs to take a look at itself. Minority news professionals, men and women, must be moved into positions of power within the newsroom. The Radio Television News Directors Foundation Newsroom Diversity Campaign focuses its resources on hiring minority news professionals into news management positions, but companies need to provide the support to bring Asian Pacific men into the middle management positions

news directors.

Kashiwahara sees some room for optimism that Asian Americans will occupy some of those key positions in newsrooms. There is, after all, a growing consciousness among men and women in the newsroom about the need for television to look more like America. "I remember when AAJA first started with a small group, and look at it today, there are hundreds of members," Kashiwahara say. "So you know, think when those people grow and mature and move up in authority, that will change. I hope it will anyway." ●

**Gerald Kato** is an associate professor of journalism at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. He previously worked as a newspaper and television reporter in California and Hawaii. He is a member of the Asian American Journalists Association.

# NEWS WATCH ADVISORY COUNCIL

## News Watch Advisory Council Expands

The Advisory Council serves as the liaison between News Watch and its five partners, and also with other news media groups and educational institutions. Council members work with their respective associations to facilitate information exchange and also provide support to the project. The News Watch Project and Center for Integration and Improvement of Journalism recently appointed four new members to the council, which now includes 15 people from the news media industry. The council meets twice a year in San Francisco.

In the last issue, the project introduced the representatives from the five News Watch partners — Unity '99 (which includes Asian American Journalists Association, National Association of Black Journalists, National Association of Hispanic Journalists and Native American Journalists Association) and National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association. These 10 people were selected by their respective associations to bring in their groups' perspectives, concerns and resources.

The council also had five positions which News Watch has filled with its own appointees from the news media industry. These positions help balance out the print versus broadcast breakdown, as well as bring in some of the "heavy hitters" from the industry. As of October 1997, joining previously News Watch-appointed council member Erna Smith, chair of the San Francisco State University Journalism Department, are the following four new members:

**GAIL EVANS**, as executive vice president at CNN, oversees the network's talk shows, booking and research department and program development.



Currently serving her second term as a trustee of the Radio and Television News Directors Foundation, Evans is also an adjunct professor at

Emory University's Goizueta School of Business, where she teaches a course on gender issues in the workplace.

Previously, she was a founding partner of Atlanta-based Global Research Services, a research and marketing firm, and worked on several House and Senate staffs and also at the White House during the Johnson administration in the office of the Special Council to the President. In 1997, President Clinton appointed her to his Commission on White House Fellowships.

**GREGORY FAVRE** is executive editor of *The Sacramento Bee* and vice president/news for McClatchy Newspapers. Born in New



Orleans, Favre grew up working on family newspapers in Mississippi. He was the assistant sports editor at the *Atlanta Journal*; managing editor at the *Dayton Daily News*, *Chicago Daily News* and *Chicago Sun-Times*; editor of the *Palm Beach* (Fla.) *Post* and *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*. He also had a stint in broadcast when he was the news

director of Miami station WPLG-TV.

Favre is past president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, and also past chair of various ASNE committees. In 1997, he received the National Association of Minority Media Executives Catalyst award for leadership in advocating and advancing diversity.

**ROBERT ROSENTHAL** is executive editor of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and is responsible for all of the paper's news gathering operations. Prior to this, he worked as the



*Inquirer's* associate managing editor — overseeing the national, foreign, business and sports departments; assistant managing editor; city editor and foreign editor.

He was the paper's Africa correspondent for four years and also reported from Israel and Lebanon. He previously worked at the *Boston Globe* and *The New York Times*, where he was an editorial assistant on the Pulitzer Prize-winning Pentagon Papers project.

He has won the 1984 National Association of Black Journalists award for Third World Reporting; and, in 1986, the Overseas Press Club award for a magazine story about the Afrikaners in South Africa and the National Sigma Delta Chi award for distinguished foreign correspondence for his South Africa reporting.

**PAULA WALKER** is the vice president and news director for WNBC (New York),

where she also previously served as assistant news director. Prior to joining that station,



she worked as executive news director for KHOU-TV (Houston) news director for KOTV-TV (Tulsa), and news manager for WFAA-TV (Dallas).

Before making the move to television news, she worked extensively with newspapers. Her print positions included stints as a reporter at the *Syracuse Herald Journal*, investigative bureau reporter at the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, and assistant city editor at the *Dallas Times Herald*.

Walker is active in the National and New York Associations of Black Journalists; the African-American Alumnae/i of Vassar College, the New York Vassar Club and the New York Press Club. She has been inducted into the YWCA Academy of Women Achievers.

They join the following members on the advisory council:

**Academic:** ERNA SMITH, chair of the San Francisco State University Journalism Department and former copy editor for the *San Francisco Examiner*.

**Asian American Journalists Association:** CINDY HSU, morning and noon anchor for WCBS-TV (New York); KEN YAMADA, senior editor with *Solutions Integrator*, the publication for buyers and sellers of corporate computer systems published by International Data Group.

## NEWS WATCH ADVISORY COUNCIL

**National Association of Black Journalists:** JACKIE JONES, assistant city editor at *The Washington Post*; SHARON STEVENS, education reporter for NBC affiliate KSDK-TV (St. Louis).

**National Association of Hispanic Journalists:** NANCY BACA, assistant features editor at the *Albuquerque Journal*;

JAMES GARCIA, editor and publisher of *Politico*, a national on-line monthly news magazine focusing on Latino politics.

**Native American Journalists Association:** KARA BRIGGS, city government reporter for *The Oregonian* (Portland, Oregon); LORI EDMO-SUPPAH, reporter for the *Idaho State Journal* (Pocatello, Idaho).

**National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association:** ALAN ACOSTA, director, Stanford University News Service; ROBIN STEVENS, Web producer at CNET: The Computer Network, based in San Francisco.

## NEWS WATCH PROJECT STAFF

**DIANE YEN-MEI WONG**, Project Director. Was program coordinator for Unity '94 and Unity '99, a coalition of the four national journalism associations of color and national executive director for the Asian American Journalists Association; currently a columnist for *Hawaii Herald* newspaper; working on her second play, "First Time Hawaii"; author of *Break Down the Walls* (the evaluation of Unity '94) and coordinating editor of *Making Waves: Writings by and about Asian American Women*.

**JUDY GERBER**, Assistant Director and Webmaster. Has over 20 years of experience as a print and broadcast journalist, most recently as a freelance writer for "CNN International" news program and as associate producer for "CNN World Report"; producer and host of "A Defiant Heart," a biweekly public affairs program for WRFG-FM, a local Atlanta community radio station; founding member of Turnout, a lesbian and gay organization at CNN; also writes for a local television news in San Francisco.

**ROBERT DEMALLAC**, Information Technology Consultant. Provides computer, technical and information systems support and consultation for the project; serves as assistant computer network manager for the San Francisco State University Journalism department; previously worked at the university book store in the computer department; a senior in the university's Science/Humanities NEXA program.

*The following part-time staff members conduct much of the research for the News Watch Project. They identify, analyze and write about news, op-ed and other related items from newspaper, magazine, television, radio and on-line news sources. They are graduate students at San Francisco State University.*

**THEODORA CONSOLACION**, Researcher. Worked as a teacher associate for a course on psychological statistics and as a graduate assistant for two other statistics classes; active with both the Asian American and gay/ lesbian/ bisexual/ transgendered communities; graduated from SFSU in psychology with empha-

sis on research and Asian American studies minor; a masters degree candidate in research psychology.

**GABRIEL MARTINEZ**, Researcher. Was director of the UC Berkeley Center for Racial Education, which organized events and programs for people of color communities on that campus; has worked with the Korean American and African American Roundtable and Asian Immigrant Women Advocates; graduated from UC Berkeley in history, with an emphasis on 20th century US race relations and culture; a masters degree candidate in ethnic studies



**CIIJ** Established in 1990, the Center for Integration and Improvement of Journalism at San Francisco State University offers model programs to bring ethnic diversity to America's newsrooms and to promote improved coverage of this country's multicultural society. Programs include: (1) writing coach and mentor program for SFSU students, (2) journalism workshops for Bay Area high school students and journalism educators, (3) research and advocacy on media diversity, and (4) training for Bay Area community and ethnic press