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A JOURNAL OF POLITICS & CULTURE

VOL. XX NO. 4 \$5.00

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Winter Issue: Copyright 1992, Institute for Southern Studies, 2009 Chapel Hill Road, Durham, NC 27707.

Southern Exposure is published quarterly by the Institute for Southern Studies, a non-profit research and publication center. Annual membership is \$24 for individuals, libraries, and institutions.

Southern Exposure is indexed in *Alternative Press Index*, *The American Humanities Index*, and *Access: The Supplementary Index to Periodicals*. Address all editorial and subscription correspondence to *Southern Exposure*, P.O. Box 531, Durham, NC 27702. Second-class postage is paid at Durham, NC 27702 and additional offices. ISSN: 0146-809X. Post Office No. 053470.

POSTMASTER: Send form 3579 with address changes to *Southern Exposure*, P.O. Box 531, Durham, NC 27702.

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 Institute for Southern Studies
 P.O. Box 531
 Durham, NC 27702

Department of Membership, Management and Circulation (Published by 29 U.S.C. 3685)

14. Title of Publication: **Southern Exposure**
 Quarterly
 P.O. Box 531 Durham NC 27702-9998

15. Publication Dates: 01/14/92 to 09/14/92
 16. Issue Frequency: 4
 17. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: 10-1-92
 18. Annual Subscription Price: \$24.00

19. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (This box must be printed in full)
Institute for Southern Studies
 Eric Bates P.O. Box 531 Durham NC 27702-9998
 Eric Bates P.O. Box 531 Durham NC 27702-9998

20. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Do not print if same as above)
 Institute for Southern Studies P.O. Box 531 Durham NC 27702-9998

21. Complete Mailing Address of the Circulation Office (Do not print if same as above)

22. Complete Mailing Address of the Advertising Office (Do not print if same as above)

23. Complete Mailing Address of the Distribution Office (Do not print if same as above)

24. Complete Mailing Address of the Fulfillment Office (Do not print if same as above)

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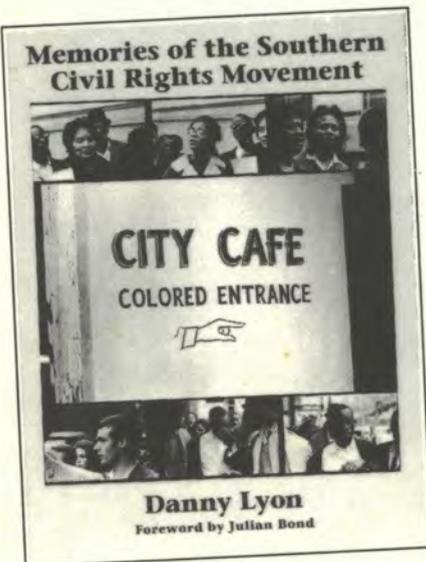
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Clayborne Carson, director and senior editor of The Martin Luther King, Jr., Papers Project

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 Chapel Hill, Phone (800) 848-6224, Fax (800) 272-6817

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DATeline: THE SOUTH

DUTTON, Ala. (Aug. 25)— Election Day came and went in this small town today, yet not a single voter showed up at the polls. The reason: No one came forward to run for mayor or town council, so no elections were held. Governor Guy Hunt was forced to cast the deciding vote, appointing a mayor and three councilmen.

ROCK HILL, S.C. (Aug. 29)— The Catawba Indians settled their lawsuits against 61,000 landowners today for \$50 million and another 3,500 acres for their reservation. The suits had stalled local economic development for years as the Catawbas fought to regain some of the 144,000 acres they were granted in 1840. But the victory came with a price: Landowners angered by the lawsuits are refusing to allow the Catawbas to dig the rare clay they have used for centuries to produce their distinctive pottery.

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (Sept. 16)— Dr. George Nichopoulos, best known as Elvis Presley's personal physician, surrendered his permit to prescribe addictive drugs today after a state medical board once again agreed to delay his hearing on charges that he overprescribed medicine to patients. Nichopoulos lost his medical license for 90 days in 1980 and was placed on probation for providing Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, and others with narcotics. The hearing will determine whether Nichopoulos will now lose his medical license for good.

NORFOLK, Va. (Sept. 17)— The Shirley Pewter Shop pleaded guilty to removing "Made in Thailand" stickers from imported merchandise and selling the items as handmade in colonial Williamsburg. The founder of the renowned pewter company admitted that he hired temporary employees for the sole purpose of removing stickers from imported pewter punch bowls, candlesticks, Jefferson cups, paperweights, and other items. The judge condemned the activity as "lying and cheating" and fined the company and its owners \$200,000.

HAPEVILLE, Ga. (Sept. 18)— On the same day that President Bush came to

town to speak on the economy, 3,000 people lined up at the local office of the state labor department to apply for 20 temporary jobs at the Ford Motor Company. Job seekers assembled as early as four a.m. to apply for assembly line jobs just a few miles from where Bush was campaigning. Unemployment in the Hapeville area has shot up by 45 percent during the past year.



OXFORD, Miss. (Sept. 19)— Two concerned citizens announced today that they bought Wild Willie, a steer that was castrated on a Mississippi State football field to "motivate" players before a game with their archrivals, the Texas Longhorns. Army recruiter Frank Truitt and insurance salesman Billy Walker paid \$4,000 for the bull, more than 10 times the going rate. "He will not be killed," said Truitt. "He will be loved. Our intentions are to love him and treat him like he should be, and make him a hero."

DECATUR, Ala. (Sept. 22)— Church officials are puzzled by the recent discovery that Wesley Place, a Methodist retirement facility, looks like a huge swastika when viewed from above. The ominous shape evidently resulted from federal budget cuts which necessitated last-minute changes in the floor plan during construction in 1980. "We weren't really aware of it being that way," said the Reverend Wray Tomlin, director of Methodist Homes for the Aging. "We didn't have an aerial view of it."

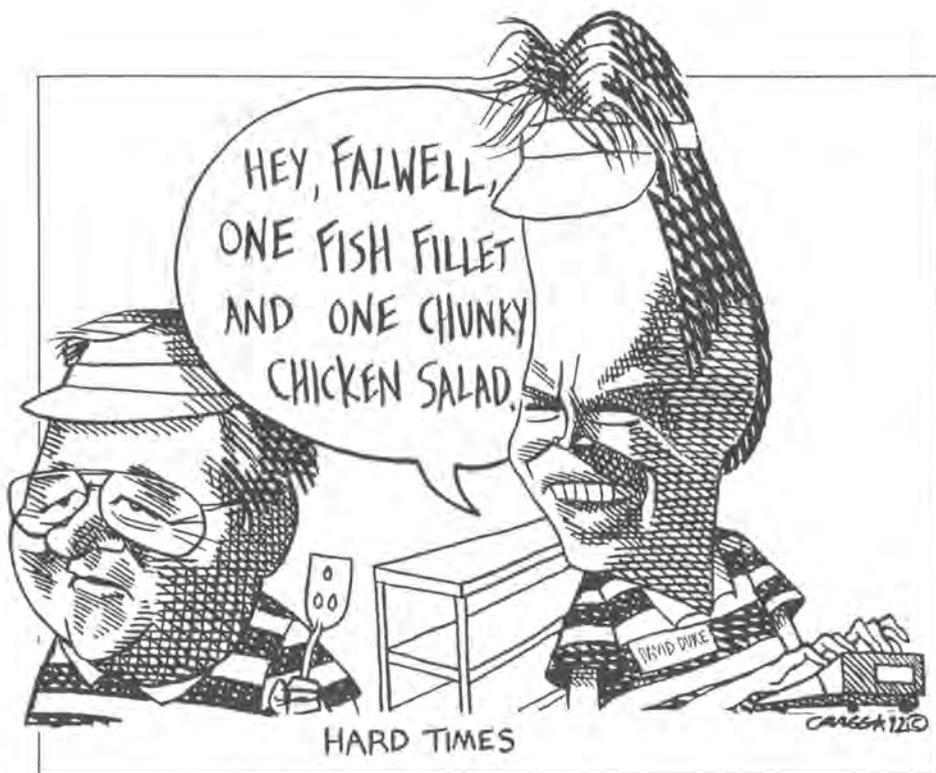
NEW ORLEANS, La. (Sept. 23)— A federal appeals court today overturned a state law which banned abortions for victims of rape and incest unless a woman reported the crime to police within a week. The court ruled the law unconstitutional,

saying it placed an "undue burden" on women seeking abortions. "This means that states that try to pass laws that criminalize abortion will be out of luck with the courts," said Ruth Colker, a Tulane University law professor. State officials are waiting to see whether the U.S. Supreme Court agrees to review Guam's even stricter abortion law before deciding to appeal the ruling.

GREENSBORO, N.C. (Sept. 25)— Mental health advocates called for the resignations of two members of the Guilford County Mental Health Board who made insensitive comments about the mentally ill. Tony Moschetti suggested that "instead of using animals for medical research, we should use people like" Michael Hayes, a mentally ill man acquitted of killing four motorists. When the Alliance for the Mentally Ill protested, board member Vickie McKenzie dismissed them as "those nutty" people. Elaine Purpel, president of the Alliance, said such comments reflect a "fundamental lack of ethical awareness and moral fiber."

MAITLAND, Fla. (Sept. 28)— Police charged Eric Kaplan, a candidate for the state house, with attempted murder after five shots were fired into the bedroom window of his opponent, Robert Starks. Starks was out of town, but his wife was struck in the leg. Although Kaplan denied involvement, police found a five-shot .38 revolver and a note with Starks' address in his home, and a blanket riddled with bullet holes in his car. Starks said he was "amazed, bewildered, flabbergasted. He's a very outgoing, nice-looking, all-American guy, some guy you'd want your daughter to date."

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (Sept. 30)— The city council nearly passed an annual budget giving the local Chamber of Commerce more than \$1 million for union busting. The money was earmarked for a plan called "Forefront Montgomery," which the Chamber presented as a means to promote industry in the area. In reality, the plan called for "union avoidance seminars" and "expanding a network that allows area businesses to warn one another



LYNCHBURG, Va. (Sept. 29) — The Reverend Jerry Falwell, who built a lucrative empire as founder of the Moral Majority, is \$73 million in debt. The Thomas Road Baptist Church, from which Falwell once broadcast, is now in the hands of the federal agency salvaging the assets of failed savings and loans. Falwell used the church as collateral 11 times to build the fundamentalist Liberty University. "When I first got involved in this, I had the impression that Jerry Falwell was a good old boy, not a con man," says investor Claude Ferebee. "He may be the smartest con man of them all."

BATON ROUGE, La. (Nov. 10) — David Duke, the former Nazi and Klansman who failed to sell himself to voters during recent campaigns for governor, senator, and president, also flopped at selling insurance. Duke was hired by Physicians Mutual Insurance, but soon lost the job and was spotted handing out brochures for a long-distance telephone company at the Fall Home Fest in New Orleans. "He looked sort of pitiful," said Katie Nachod, a Tulane University librarian. Duke has found no takers for a college lecture tour, and no publisher will even read his autobiography. "He's no longer news," says Holly Sarre, his New York agent.

of union activity." Two councilmen fought the plan, generating enough publicity to defeat the measure.

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (Oct. 4) — The heirs of author Alex Haley auctioned off his estate today, hoping to settle \$1.6 million in debts. Items up for bid included the original manuscript of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, the author's 136-acre farm, and his Pulitzer Prize for *Roots*. "It's sad to see it being destroyed and carried off piece by piece this way," said John Rice Irwin, a friend of Haley. The author died last winter at the age of 70.

COTTONDALE, Fla. (Oct. 6) — "Watermelon Alley," an historic collection of roadside stands on Highway 231, is

threatened by road widening. A new four-lane highway will eliminate bottlenecks between Alabama and Panama City, but may also eliminate stands where travelers can buy boiled peanuts, produce, and specialty goods like Charlie's Pepper Sauce and Lillie Meeks Mayhaw Jelly. "Watermelon Alley is known all over the U.S.," says Jean Slessor, a wicker maker who lost her parking lot to the right-of-way. "Now it's gone."

MIAMI, Fla. (Oct. 22) — Religious leader Yahweh Ben Yahweh, serving 18 years on federal racketeering charges, was swindled himself by a con man. Fredrick Bowman, who was serving time in the same prison, evidently overheard Yahweh instruct a Temple of Love follower to hire

attorney Alan Dershowitz, who represented Claus von Bulow and Leona Helmsley. When Bowman was released, he called the Temple pretending to be Dershowitz, and took the sect for about \$7,000 in expenses. "He sounded very well-versed in the legal procedures," said Temple of Love attorney Jayne Weintraub.

MCINTOSH, Ala. (Oct. 22) — Sixteen years after four studies found chlordimeform caused cancer in laboratory mice, workers who manufactured the insecticide are being tested for bladder cancer. Federal officials praised CIBA-GEIGY Corp. as a "pioneer" for testing 2,500 employees, but others say the company took too long to begin tests. "They certainly had information that the chemical caused health problems prior to 1988 when it was banned," says William Fontenot of the Louisiana attorney general's office. The company has said it will only test crop dusters and farm workers who can prove they "got a real dousing" of the chemical.



DOUGLASVILLE, Ga. (Nov. 18) — The state Supreme Court issued a landmark ruling today in the case of Darrin Davis, a third-grader who called 911 to get help for his parents when he found drugs in his home. Police got "consent" from Darrin to search the house, and then arrested his parents. The court ruled unanimously that 10-year-olds cannot grant such consent, barring police from pressuring children to turn in their parents. Darrin had written President Bush about his problem; he received a form letter wishing him a happy summer vacation. He also set a house on fire in an attempt to be jailed with his father.

Compiled by Hannah Bynum.
Illustrations by Steven Cragg.

Readers are encouraged to send items to *Dateline: The South*. Please send original clippings or photocopies and include name and date of publication.

SOUTHERN TURNOUT STILL RANKS LAST

Ever since November 3, the media have been busy analyzing the cause and effect of the presidential election in minute detail — tracking the daily movements of the transition team, worrying about the role of Hillary Clinton, even luring the Clinton family cat, Socks, into a forbidden photo opportunity.

But when it comes to examining voter participation — the vital element in any democratic process — the media pundits have provided little more than a snapshot. For the most part, election observers have been content to point to the slight increase in turnout at the polls. Nationwide, 54.9 percent of all eligible voters cast a ballot this year, up from a post-war low of 50.1 percent in 1988.

A closer look at the numbers, however, reveals that the South still lags behind the rest of the nation. Only 50.6 percent of eligible Southerners went to the polls this year, compared to 56.8 percent of non-Southerners.

Even in Georgia, where a tight race for U.S. Senate required a runoff, only 47 percent of voting-age adults cast a ballot — a whopping 25 points lower than the turnout in Maine and Minnesota.

A Democratic ticket headed by two Southerners pulled many Reagan-Bush Dixiecrats back to the fold, but it failed to inspire a regional surge in voter interest. Alabama posted a dramatic 20 percent jump in turnout over 1988, but the rest of the South averaged gains similar to those

experienced elsewhere. The Perot factor, economic woes, and a desire for change apparently stimulated more activism than the Double-Bubbas.

In fact, more Southerners voted for George Bush than for either of his opponents. The Clinton-Gore team carried Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Louisiana. It won Georgia by a hair, but lost North Carolina by 20,600 out of 2.6 million votes cast, and missed in Florida by 100,000 out of 5.3 million votes.

Ironically, these three Southern states with the closest races ranked among the worst in the nation for voter turnout. Preliminary counts show that the South has nine of the 15 states where the smallest share of voting-age adults bothered to vote.

Why don't Southerners vote in the same proportions as other Americans?

According to "The Democracy Index," a new report by the Institute for Southern Studies, the states with the highest turnout are not those with the hottest or costliest political races. Instead, the numbers show that people are most likely to go to the polls in states that make voter registration easiest and make the influence of money hardest to conceal.

On November 3, Minnesota, Maine, Montana, Wisconsin, and North Dakota topped the list in turnout among voting-age adults — just as they have in the previous two presidential elections. Each state has a long tradition of "good government" reforms and agrarian populism, and each has passed laws making it easier to vote and harder to corrupt campaigns with money. Among the measures:

▼ North Dakota is the only state that does not require voters to register. Minne-

sota, Maine, and Wisconsin are the only states that allow voters to register as late as election day.

▼ Minnesota and Wisconsin also have the nation's most far-reaching systems to replace private campaign money with public funds in gubernatorial and state legislative races.

▼ Minnesota, Montana, Maine, and Wisconsin are four of the eight states that require detailed descriptions of an individual contributor's economic interests, while also banning direct political donations from corporations.

By contrast, the five states with the lowest average turnout during the 1980s — South Carolina, Georgia, Texas, Virginia, and Tennessee — have long histories of disenfranchising minority and low-income white voters. They also lack effective measures to monitor, much less curtail, the influence of wealthy campaign contributors.

None of these states has strict provisions to limit the size of campaign contributions, require contributors to disclose their economic interests, or encourage public financing of elections. Their statewide elections cost more than the national average, and state legislators stay in office longer.

Women have a much smaller chance of getting elected in these states, and while minority voter participation is up, low-income whites remain largely disengaged from the whole political process.

Other states with low turnout and lax regulation of campaign spending include Alabama, Hawaii, New York, North Carolina, New Mexico, Maryland, Mississippi, and Nevada.

To better understand the strong correlation between voter involvement and campaign reforms, consider how each state fares when it comes to 10 key laws that ease voter registration and control the flow of campaign contributions. Eight of the dozen states with the best turnout in November have adopted at least five of the laws. By contrast, only three of the 30 states with the worst turnout have that many of the laws on their books.

Such numbers suggest that if political leaders really want to win back voter confidence, they must make access to the ballot easier — and reduce the access that lobby-

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ists and wealthy contributors already have. American voters clearly mistrust the corrupting influence of campaign money, and they demonstrate their cynicism by boycotting the ballot box.

In the past year, a number of states have begun to show signs of improvement. States from Arizona to South Carolina to

Rhode Island have imposed stronger restrictions on lobbyists. Others, like New Hampshire, Kentucky, and Nebraska, have enacted new methods to control campaign spending. And some states with chronically low turnout — including North Carolina and Nevada — have recently begun allowing registration by mail. How

well such measures contribute to the larger goal of promoting democracy will be reflected in how many voters show up at the polls in the next few elections.

—Bob Hall

Bob Hall is research director of the Institute for Southern Studies.

LESS MONEY, MORE VOTERS

According to the Democracy Index, the five states with the highest voter turnout in the past two presidential elections also have the most laws making it easier to register and harder to conceal campaign contributions. Southern states — which rank among the worst for voter turnout — have few such provisions.

Under "Campaign Finance," the Index awards one point for provisions that (1) limit an individual's total contributions to gubernatorial candidates to \$2,000 or

less, (2) require statewide candidates to disclose the occupations of donors who contribute more than \$100, (3) ban direct contributions from corporations, (4) require rapid disclosure of large contributions made in the week before election, and (5) provide significant public funds to statewide or legislative candidates.

Under "Voter Registration," the Index awards one point for provisions that make it easy for adults to register (1) by mail, (2) when getting a driver's license, (3) at wel-

fare offices or other state agencies, (4) on Election Day, or (5) within at least 18 days of Election Day. (North Dakota receives one point in each category as the only state that requires no registration.)

The Democracy Index ranks the states on over 80 factors related to voter participation, campaign financing, the cost of elections, disclosure requirements, conflict-of-interest limits, citizen initiatives, and legislative ethics. To receive a copy, write the Institute at P.O. Box 531, Durham, NC 27702.

	VOTER TURNOUT				CAMPAIGN FINANCE					VOTER REGISTRATION					TOT PTS
	1992 %	RANK	1988 %	RANK	STRICT LIMITS	JOB ID	BAN CO.\$	LAST WEEK	PUBLIC FUNDS	VIA MAIL	MOTOR VOTER	RELIEF AGENCY	ELEC. DAY	18 DAYS	
Maine	72.0	1	61.1	4	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	7
Minnesota	71.6	2	65.5	1		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Montana	70.1	3	62.4	2	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				6
Wisconsin	69.0	4	61.0	5		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	7
North Dakota	67.7	5	61.4	3			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6
Louisiana	59.9	25	52.3	27											0
Alabama	55.2	29	46.0	42										✓	1
Kentucky	53.6	34	48.1	35	✓	✓				✓					3
Virginia	52.8	35	48.0	36				✓							1
Arkansas	52.6	36	47.3	38	✓	✓						✓			3
Tennessee	52.2	37	44.7	44			✓			✓					2
Mississippi	52.0	38	50.5	29						✓	✓				2
W. Virginia	50.9	40	46.7	40	✓		✓			✓	✓				4
Florida	50.2	42	44.7	45	✓	✓			✓						3
N. Carolina	50.1	43	43.7	46			✓			✓	✓				3
Texas	48.8	47	45.5	43			✓			✓	✓				3
Georgia	46.9	48	39.4	49											0
S. Carolina	44.3	49	39.0	50						✓					1

BLACKS AND WOMEN SWEEP INTO OFFICE

Southern women and black candidates inched closer to equal representation in November, winning a record number of seats in Congress and state legislatures across the region.

In Congress, the number of Southern women rose from three to 11. In state legislatures, their ranks climbed from 242 to 256—a record 12.5 percent of all legislative seats in the region, up from 10 percent in 1990.

The new seats give women greater strength to influence state and federal policies. "Women tend to focus on issues that affect the lives of women, children, and families," says Lucy Baruch, information director of the Center for the American Woman and Politics at Rutgers University. "They bring to the table a different political agenda."

Election results compiled by the center, however, indicate that the South still trails the rest of the nation in electing women to state legislatures. Nine of the 10 states with the lowest proportions of women in their legislatures are Southern. Kentucky ranks last, with women holding only 4.3 percent of all seats. North Carolina—first in the region with 18.2 percent—still falls below the national average of 20 percent.

African-American candidates also fared well on Election Day, thanks to new majority-black districts mandated by the Voting Rights Act. In Congress, the number of black representatives from the South jumped from five to 12, including the first black House members since Reconstruction from Alabama, Florida, Virginia, and North and South Carolina. Six more Hispanics were also elected to the House of Representatives, bringing their number to 17.

The newcomers bring with them a wealth of experience. "The new people coming aren't just political novices. They're really fairly experienced political types," says David Bositis of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. "Not only were they state legislators, they were chairmen and chairwomen."

The victories give African-American lawmakers unprecedented influence. "For black members of Congress, this is potentially a watershed year," says Bositis. "Being part of the Congressional Black Caucus should be a fairly exciting place to be. There are blacks moving up into positions of

power in Congress—real power."

A key to that power may be whether the newly strengthened roster of black, Hispanic, and female lawmakers can work together. "When you combine these three caucuses together, we have a significant number of votes that can either pass or stop legislation," says Texas Representative Solomon Ortiz, the outgoing chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. Among House Democrats, blacks and Hispanics now constitute nearly 30 percent of the 130-vote majority needed to elect a speaker and other leaders.

Southern blacks also gained strength in state legislatures, picking up 42 seats and boosting their regional representation to 13 percent. "Blacks hold 26 percent of seats in the Mississippi House of Representatives," says Hastings Wyman Jr., editor of the *Southern Political Report*. "That's not control, but that's clout. Affirmative action and other civil rights proposals can be expected to command more legislative attention now."

Hastings cautioned, however, that gains by Southern blacks could be offset by Republican victories. "The flip side of more black-majority districts is fewer black votes in other districts. The result on both the state and federal level was a gain for blacks and for Republicans. The losers were white Democrats, many of whom voted for programs favored by blacks."

Republicans picked up two Southern seats in the U.S. Senate, eight seats in the House, and 35 seats in state legislatures. The GOP now holds 30 percent of legislative seats in the region, up from 15 percent in 1978.

But despite the increasing polarization, women and African-American leaders in the South hailed their victories as important progress. "With this election you have black representatives from every Southern state except Arkansas," says Representative John Lewis of Georgia. "This election is a major step down the long road toward the full participation of blacks and other minorities in the political process."

—Eric Bates

FOR ONE WE LOST: POET DON WEST

Don West, the poet and activist who devoted his life to helping the working-class South, died September 29 at the age

FOR ONE I LOST

By Don West

Pale moon
Hung on a
Ridge-top
At midnight —
All is still.

Your song
Vibrates in
Dry leaves
Of heather
On the hill.

Pale moon...
Your song —
A frosty
Grey night
In September...

Corn shocks,
White stalks,
Bare fields
And You —
I remember!



DON WEST

of 86. During his lifetime West organized unions, taught school, and preached. He co-founded the Highlander Folk School and *The Southerner* newspaper, and founded the Appalachian Folk Life Center.

West was born in Gilmer County, Georgia, into a poor but hard-working family. The son of a sharecropper and the oldest of nine, West remembered being put to work at such a young age that once, when a sack of corn fell off a mule he was leading, he was too little to reach to put it back on.

Supported by his family, West at-

tended Lincoln Memorial University in Tennessee. After being expelled for organizing a student strike, West entered Vanderbilt Divinity School and studied social ethics with Dr. Alva Taylor, an influential theologian and activist of the time. West then spent a year in Scandinavia on scholarship, studying the Folk School Movement.

When he returned in 1932, he and friend Myles Horton founded the Highlander Folk School in Monteagle, Tennessee "to educate rural and industrial leaders for a new social order." The school played a pivotal role in the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

West left Highlander after a year to aid the defense of Angelo Herndon, a Georgia man sentenced to 20 years on a chain gang for organizing unemployed workers to march for food. West continued throughout his life to organize defense committees for jailed union workers and others whose civil rights were violated. As a labor organizer himself, West was instrumental in raising wages for Southern workers in the Works Progress Administration and in organizing the National Hunger March.

In 1940 West began teaching at Oglethorpe College in Atlanta. In 1946 he published his fourth book of poetry, *Clods of Southern Earth*. It was an immediate success, reportedly selling more copies than any book of poetry except *Leaves of Grass*.

"His poetry was the conscience of America," says Bob Baber, a poet and friend. "When West read his poetry about the strip mining of the land and culture, everyone was in awe. He was imposing and solemn, and you listened."

In 1948 the Ku Klux Klan burned his home and West was fired from his teaching job. He went to work as first editor of *The Southerner*, the newspaper of the Church of God of the Union Assembly. Within a year, the paper had over 5,000 subscribers.

During the 1960s, West established the Appalachian Folk Life Center in Pipestem, West Virginia. Over the past two decades, he worked to promote and preserve the culture and traditions of the people of Appalachia.

"He really believed in the right and the ability of the working class to control their lives and their economy," says Dr. John David of the Southern Appalachian Labor School. "Everything West did, he did to encourage and empower people to speak out and speak up. He inspired through direct action, example, and through his poetry."

West considered his poetry a form of activism. "Challenging the status quo may be the unforgivable sin, but it's definitely the people's poet's responsibility," he once explained. "Such poets or artists bring a message of faith and hope in humanity. This is the major mission of the poet and artist."

—Hannah Bynum

SAYING GOOD-BYE TO JOHN HANDCOX

"Where my songs are sung and my poems are read, I live on, yes I live on." The labor activist and songwriter John Handcox sent me these words some years ago, thinking about his place in history. I thought of them again when John died September 19.

Handcox wrote some of the great union songs of the 1930s—songs like "Roll the Union On" and "There's Mean Things Happening in This Land," songs that Pete Seeger describes as having a "rare depth and simplicity that made them stand up over time." A rhyming genius, Handcox wrote about everything in verse and sang in the idiom of the African-American gospel and blues styles of his native Arkansas.

His grandparents had been slaves, and his family worked as tenant farmers. Through his music, Handcox transmitted the rich tradition of his people's culture of struggle to the union movement, where it flowered and became a part of labor lore.

"If I can help to make this a better world, even if I don't make a dime, I think that I have accomplished something," Handcox once said. He accomplished a lot. The poet-laureate of the Southern Tenants Farmers Union, Handcox fled a lynch mob in Arkansas and traveled across the country during the 1930s. He ended up in San Diego, where he worked as a fresh-food peddler, a store owner, and a carpenter, and raised a family that includes 28 grandchildren and nearly 100 great-grandchildren.

Rediscovered by Joe Glazer and Pete Seeger during the 1980s, Handcox became an honored guest at labor arts exchanges and folk festivals across the country. Though he had little schooling, he wrote scores of significant songs, poems, and remembrances.

Those who met him personally were always delighted by his good humor, gentle ways, and remarkable stories and sayings. "Be kind, be honest, and be friendly," he used to say. "If we would put

HARD TO SAY GOOD-BYE

By John Handcox, with Sheila Stewart

It's hard to say good-bye
so hard to say good-bye
it could be that we just met
it's hard to say good-bye.

It's hard to say goodbye
to friends you love so much
I hope that God keeps us safe
to always keep in touch

And if we ever meet again
be it over land or sea,
I will always remember the
kindness
you have always shown to me.

Some day we'll meet in
heaven
with the good lord up above
and sing and be delivered
with sincere and honest love.



JOHN HANDCOX

those words into practice, this would be a good world to live in." John did what he could to put them into practice, fighting racism and injustice throughout his life—on the picket line and at a personal level. He died at home, 88 years old, vigorous to the end.

—Mike Honey

Readers are encouraged to submit news articles to Southern News Roundup. Please send original clippings or photocopies with name and date of publication, or articles of no more than 500 words.

FAST

Camcorders? Laser printers? VCRs? Seventeen years after

FORWARD

we first focused on the **MEDIA**, the picture has changed.

By

J i m L e e

The last time we devoted an entire issue of *Southern Exposure* to the media was back in 1975. The cover of that issue — entitled “Focus on the Media” — says something about our perceptions of media technology 17 years ago. The major elements are a large motion picture camera used for television and a strip of motion picture film curling across the face of the magazine. Allusions to newspapers and radio can be seen underneath.

What is interesting is what *cannot* be seen; many of the fundamental elements of today’s mass media simply were not a part of the picture in 1975. The first VCR was introduced that year with a price tag of nearly \$2,000. Camcorders did not exist. Neither did compact discs. Digital recording was discussed in trade magazines in futuristic terms. Satellite technology was only beginning to show its potential. Desktop publishing was a costly and high-tech undertaking. Cable television was making inroads, but nobody envisioned 150 channels. Fax, E-mail, laser printers, high-definition television, interactive

video — such words were not even in our vocabularies. Blockbuster Videos was not a Saturday-night option.

Since that first media-focused issue, most of us have come to think of ourselves as living in an Information Age. Indeed, economists and other social scientists point out that so much of our day-to-day work revolves around the production and exchange of information, we essentially labor in an information economy. More people than ever before are engaged in some sector of the information industry. In fact, more Americans are employed in the generation and processing of information than in the manufacture of goods.

Not all of this information shows up in the mass media as news or entertainment, of course. Much of it involves financial figures, scientific data, government statistics, or military information. Nevertheless, we accept information processing as a fact of life. We know that everything is computerized, and it strikes us as ordinary.

Still, even in 1975, the trend toward an increasing reliance on information was apparent. Most of the mass media were controlled by a few large corporations. The industry was growing, but the number of owners was shrinking as conglomerates gobbled up independent newspapers and broadcast outlets. Cross ownership of different media in the same market and elsewhere was cause for alarm. The Federal Communications Commission sought to limit the number of outlets any one company could control to seven FM, seven AM, and seven TV stations. But the regulatory efforts were little more than Band-Aids applied to a bleeding wound.

If the wound was bleeding then, it is hemorrhaging now. Media industry forces persisted, and the 1980s brought a climate of deregulation that favored large corporations. Companies can now own as many as 12 AM, 12 FM, and 12 TV stations, and can sell them more rapidly. The result was predictable. As our new survey of media ownership in this issue

shows, corporate giants have consolidated their hold on Southern newspapers and television stations.

Thanks to the media boom, we have more to choose from than ever before — more TV channels, more videos, more movies, more magazines, more records, more radio stations, even more daily newspapers, at least in the South. More of us are employed to produce what we see and hear. But with ownership of the channels of communication more concentrated than ever, much of what we see and hear comes from the same sources. We may have a diversity of faces to look at, but most of them speak with the same voice.

In the midst of the growing media monopoly, however, a few alternative voices continue to speak out. Some media are huge, powerful entities that invade every aspect of our lives. Others are smaller, almost personal entities that reach us by indirect routes, that touch our lives in unexpected ways. Together, they weave a complex and varied web of interaction between producers, distributors, and audiences that defies simple description.

Few homes remain unconnected to radio or television. Nearly three fourths of all households have VCRs, and almost two thirds are hooked up to cable systems. Barely half of all Americans read a newspaper each day, but our consumption of mass-produced paper publications — from supermarket tabloids to junk mail — has reached an all-time high. Our participation in this high-tech communications array, as consumers of the media and the goods they sell through advertising, is worth billions of dollars to those who own it. Time-Warner, the largest media conglomerate in the nation, collected \$8 billion all by itself in 1988.

In this issue of *Southern Exposure* we look at large and small media, old and new. Our survey of daily newspapers and commercial television stations looks at who owns the mass media in the region; Brigette Rouson looks at who doesn't. Mike Nielsen and Eric Bates examine movie production as a growth industry in the region; Mark Reid and Tom Whiteside show us Southern images on the silver screen. And in "Just Do It," correspondents from all across the region introduce us to ordinary Southerners who are doing their own media work — some legally, some illegally.

Included here as well are the winners of our fifth annual Southern Journalism Awards — the best of the daily press in the region. When *SE* first presented the awards in 1987, the editors described how local newspapers shape our perceptions of ourselves and the world around us: "By defining legitimate newsmakers and sources of worthy copy, the press circum-

scribes the public debate and regulates a community's capacity to analyze its problems and reflect on its potential for change."

That is no less true today. Whether owned by a huge Canadian corporation or a local Southern publisher, the hometown paper is still the single most influential arbiter of a community's images and information.

The Southern Journalism Awards are designed to honor those reporters whose stories broaden the range of issues, voices, and sources typically found in the mainstream media.

As always, our heartfelt thanks to the panel of judges who selected the winners from among 118 entries: Bill Adler, Maxine Alexander, Harry Amana, Don Baker, Linda Belans, Richard Boyd, Cynthia Brown, Millie Buchanan, Anne Clancy, Evangeline Ellison, Meredith Emmett, Robin Epstein, Ilda Hall, Jerry Hardt, Roger Hart, Lois Herring, Neill Herring, Steve Hoffius, Chip Hughes, Marc Lee, Ruby Lerner, Marc Miller, Jim O'Reilly, Dee Reid, Carol Reuss, Hazel Rich, Linda Rocawich, Derek Rodriguez, Al Sawyer, Susan Schmidt, Carolyn Schwartz, Caroline Senter, Bob Sherrill, Vernie Singleton, Dimi Stephen, Lena Stewart, Elizabeth Tomquist, Lester Waldman, Nayo

Watkins, Michael Yellin, Barry Yeoman, and Gordon Young.

The publication of this issue of *SE* marks the end of Volume XX, our second decade. Over the past 20 years, the magazine and its publisher, the Institute for Southern Studies, have worked to encourage solid investigative reporting in the region, and to prod the mainstream media to use their powers of analysis and reflection to the fullest. To build on this tradition and to commemorate our 20th anniversary, the Institute is establishing an endowed Investigative Journalism Fund. The fund will sponsor independent investigative projects, provide internships for a new generation of journalists and activists, and develop the capacity of local communities to investigate and resolve their own issues.

Such work is more important than ever. We don't pretend to examine all the media in this issue — we barely touch on the booming cable industry, for example, or on the record business that presents Southern music to the world. Nor do we pretend to analyze all aspects of the media we do examine. Instead, we offer a beginning, an initial look at media in the region. We promise it won't be another 17 years before we get around to it again. □

Jim Lee is a professor of radio, television, and motion pictures at the University of North Carolina and a member of the board of directors of the Institute for Southern Studies. Gifts to the Investigative Journalism Fund should be sent to P.O. Box 531, Durham, NC 27702.



THE COVER OF OUR WINTER 1975 ISSUE PICTURED FEW ELEMENTS OF TODAY'S MASS MEDIA.



PICK UP ANY DAILY SOUTHERN NEWSPAPER — OR TUNE IN ANY TV STATION — AND ODDS ARE IT BELONGS TO A CORPORATE CHAIN.

WHO OWNS THE MEDIA?

Corporate chains, that's who.

Our survey finds newspapers and TV stations in the South dominated by a handful of FIRMS.

jumped from 126 to 244 — a leap of 94 percent.

Overall, corporate chains now own 70 percent of all daily papers and 54 percent of all television stations in the South. The top 20 corporations alone control more than half of all dailies and 10 percent of all TV stations in the region.

With large corporations in command of the media, industry observers say it should come as no surprise that most news and information is filtered through a pro-business perspective. The result has been a kinder, gentler treatment of corporate America by the media — and an increasing emphasis on making money over informing the public.

“There’s no question that most newspapers have become much more bottom-line oriented — even the ones we think of as quality newspapers,” William Winter of the American Press Institute told the *Washington Journalism Review*. “We hear a lot of editors talking about staffs being cut back. Editors are having to fight harder to get any kind of increase. All of this is the direct result of the corporatization of American journalism.”

MEDIA BARONS

Media barons have a long and potent history in the United States. From William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer to S.I. Newhouse and Rupert Murdoch, powerful and sometimes ruthless men have started their own newspapers — or simply seized control of those started by others. Their rise began over a century

Richard Elam is bucking a trend. He is one of only four independent newspaper publishers along the entire Texas Gulf Coast, from Corpus Christi to the Louisiana line. For hundreds of miles, all the rest of the papers are owned by corporate chains.

In Texas, as in the rest of the region, newspapers and broadcast outlets are increasingly owned by vast media chains like Hearst, Scripps-Howard, and Gannett, as well as by smaller groups like Freedom Newspapers and Harte-Hanks Communications. In the face of such growing corporate control, Elam and his partner Fred Barbee have stubbornly held on to two small-town weeklies — the *Wharton Journal-Spectator* and the *El Campo News-Leader*.

It is not because they have no choice. “We have a standing offer” from a chain

to buy the newspapers, Elam says. All he has to do is say “yes” and his papers would be gobbled up, too.

The trend toward group ownership is not new. In 1975, when *Southern Exposure* first looked at media ownership, 65 daily newspapers in Texas were group-owned. Today the number has grown to 72. Over the same period, group ownership of Texas television stations has nearly doubled, from 32 stations to 59.

Other Southern states differ only in degree. From Texas to West Virginia, more and more media outlets have fallen under the control of fewer and fewer corporations. Since 1975, the number of group-owned daily newspapers in the region has grown from 248 to 318 — an increase of 28 percent. The number of chain-owned TV stations has

BY

Jim Lee and
Eric Bates

ago, when trains and telegraphs liberated people from the confines of hometowns and created a greater need for news and information.

One of the first to see the money-making potential of the press was J.E. Scripps. In 1878, having turned the *Detroit Evening News* into a profitable business, Scripps quickly started up a second newspaper in Cleveland. Within two years the Scripps Publishing Co. owned eight newspapers from Buffalo to St. Louis.

John Knight, an Ohio investor, started a series of raids on Southern newspapers in 1937, when he took over the *Miami Herald* for \$3 million. In a front-page column, Knight promised that the paper would serve the public, "uncontrolled by any group."

But group control of the hometown newspaper is exactly what came to Miami, along with nearly every other city in the country. In 1900 the nation supported 2,042 daily newspapers and 2,023 publishers. Today there are only 1,650 dailies nationwide — and all but 300 are owned by corporate chains.

Indeed, five companies now control more than a third of all newspaper circulation nationwide. Among the modern media barons are Scripps-Howard and Knight-Ridder — the corporate descendants of the earliest entrepreneurs — as well as the Gannett, Newhouse, and Tribune companies.

Such media giants have not been content to merely increase their control of newspapers, however. In recent years, they have extended their reach to radio, television, and cable systems, and are now positioning themselves for the arrival of fiber-optic networks and high-definition television. Consider a few of the mega-deals of the past decade:

▼ Ted Turner, owner of the Atlanta-based Cable News Network and Super-Station WTBS, bought MGM/UA Entertainment in 1985. The studio deal — estimated at \$1.5 billion — gave the media mogul what *Newsweek* magazine called a "diversified entertainment



WITH PROFITS HIGH, CORPORATIONS HAVE TAKEN AN INCREASING INTEREST IN INFLUENCING THE MEDIA, ESPECIALLY IN THE SOUTH.

empire." Turner also tried to take over CBS, but the network raised enough money to fend him off by selling subsidiaries and laying off hundreds of employees.

▼ The following year, Gannett — the largest owner of newspapers in the nation — bought the *Louisville Times* and *Courier-Journal* from the Bingham family, which had owned the papers for nearly seven decades. The combined circulation of the two dailies added another 300,000 readers to the Gannett empire.

▼ In 1986, General Electric absorbed RCA and its prize subsidiary NBC for \$6.3 billion. For the first time in history, the deal placed the largest electronic media network in the nation under the direct control of a non-journalistic corporation — one that also happens to be the second-biggest supplier of the Pentagon.

▼ In 1989, Time, Inc. bought Warner Communications, Inc. for \$9 billion. Overnight, the deal created the largest media and entertainment empire in the nation — a corporation that controls a movie studio, a television studio, 24 publications, 6.3 million cable subscribers, two book publishers, and the largest record company and pay-TV

network in the nation.

The year-end deal startled even the most jaded observers, prompting worldwide concerns about corporate media control. "On that December afternoon," wrote the Italian paper *La Repubblica*, "a little piece of the legendary American press freedom died."

HEADING SOUTH

As such deals indicate, there has been a lucrative media explosion since *Southern Exposure* first surveyed regional ownership of newspapers and television stations in 1975. As the Southern population boomed and industry moved to the region in search of cheap labor and lax regulation, big media chains joined other Northern compa-

nies in their quest to profit from Southern markets. They have been aided by new technologies like computers and satellites, as well as by the deregulatory stance of the Reagan administration, which removed many barriers erected to prevent undue concentration of media ownership.

The media explosion was also fueled by the grandchildren of the 19th-century media barons, who began facing stiff taxes on their inheritances during the 1960s. To raise capital, they sold their newspapers to chains or allowed shares of their companies to be traded on stock markets. Because their newspapers had been privately held for generations, outsiders had never known exactly how much money was involved. But as soon as investors learned that pre-tax profits on many papers regularly top 30 percent, corporate buyers quickly entered the picture.

Nowhere has the rapid media growth been more apparent than in the South. Since 1975, the number of television stations in the region has nearly doubled, and Southern newspapers increased their numbers slightly as dailies elsewhere declined. From CNN in Atlanta to *USA Today* in Fairfax,

Virginia, the region and its institutions have been at the center of the corporate struggle to reshape the media.

To better understand who is behind the changes, *SE* recreated its 1975 survey of media ownership in the region. The survey looked at every chain that owns television stations and daily newspapers in each of the 13 Southern states. Among the findings:

▼ In the past 17 years, the Canadian-based Thomson Newspapers has moved south in search of new markets, establishing itself as the owner of more Southern dailies than any other chain. Since 1975, Thomson has increased its string of newspapers in the region from eight to 33, including the *Daily-Mail* in Charleston, West Virginia.

Thomson, which now controls dailies in every Southern state except Tennessee, has long been among the most profitable — and the most ruthless — of newspaper chains. According to reporter Jonathan Kwitny, the late Lord Roy Thomson once remarked that he “began to get a twinge of conscience” that he was ill-serving a community only when his profit margins exceeded 40 percent.

▼ Although Thomson owns the most newspapers, it ranks eighth in overall circulation with 570,000 readers. Knight-Ridder is first with 1.6 million, followed by Gannett, Cox, the Tribune and New York Times chains, Scripps-Howard, and Newhouse.

▼ Newspaper ownership in Alabama, where 84 percent of all dailies are controlled by chains, is the most concentrated in the region. Chains also own more than three fourths of all daily papers in Florida, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia.

▼ North Carolina experienced the most rapid rise of chain ownership in the region since 1975, with media groups more than doubling their control. Chains also increased their share of newspapers by 71 percent in Virginia, 67 percent in West Virginia, and 53 percent in Georgia.

▼ Never content to limit themselves to newspapers, media groups have nearly doubled the number of television stations in their Southern portfolios since 1975. The change has been most dramatic in Florida, where the number of chain-owned TV stations has soared from 14 to 33.

▼ Chains now own at least three TV stations in more than a dozen Southern cities, including Little Rock, Miami, Atlanta, Louisville, New Orleans, Jack-

son, Charlotte, Knoxville, Houston, Richmond, and Charleston, South Carolina. In Birmingham, all five channels are tuned to a chain: ABRY Communications owns WTTO, Park Communications owns WBMG, Great American Broadcasting owns WBRC, Krypton Broadcasting Group owns WABM, and Times Mirror owns WVTM.

▼ Many corporations now own both radio and television stations in several Southern states. Among the multimedia, multi-state owners is Adams Communica-

newspapers, *Newsweek* magazine, four television stations (including stations in Miami and Jacksonville), and cable television systems that reach half a million subscribers, including viewers in Gulfport, Mississippi and Sherman, Texas.

Perhaps the best example of the scope of the modern media empire is Capital Cities, which bought the ABC television network for \$3.5 billion in 1986. The corporation delivers news and entertainment programming to more than 225 ABC affiliates across the country. In addition, Capital Cities owns and operates eight of those affiliates, including KTRK in Houston and WTVD in Durham, North Carolina, along with 21 radio stations. On top of that, Capital Cities owns a majority interest in the cable sports channel ESPN and holds substantial interests in cable programming services like Lifetime Cable and Arts & Entertainment. It sells home videos worldwide, owns the *Ft. Worth Star-Telegram* and seven other daily newspapers, and publishes 78 weekly newspapers and 42 shopping guides. No matter where readers and viewers turn, they are bound to encounter Cap Cities.

As media takeovers in the region have multiplied, the lines between the South and the rest of the nation have blurred. The hometown paper is likely to be owned by a global conglomerate like Cap Cities, while a homegrown entrepreneur like Ted Turner cashes in on the nationwide cable industry and the Virginia-based *USA Today* remakes the front pages of newspapers across the country. Southern media increasingly reflect the standards and practices of their national counterparts — and they increasingly help set those standards for the nation as a whole.

Not all the effects of such concentrated media ownership have been salutary, however. For Richard Elam, who has held on to his two weekly papers in Texas, the trend toward group ownership has meant unfair competition. Elam says group owners operate with economies of scale that make production more efficient and less costly. In addition, many chains use their far-flung networks of newspapers and TV stations to offer major retail chains more advertising for less money.

The flow of advertising dollars has also shifted as large retail chains — themselves group-owned — have moved into small Southern towns over the past decade. “The effect is to put some of the

CHAINING THE SOUTH

Corporate chains now own 70 percent of all daily newspapers and 54 percent of all commercial TV stations in the region.

	NEWSPAPERS		TELEVISION	
	#	%	#	%
Alabama	21	84	18	56
Arkansas	18	58	9	60
Florida	35	81	33	46
Georgia	23	64	20	56
Kentucky	14	61	9	41
Louisiana	16	55	13	48
Mississippi	13	59	10	53
N. Carolina	35	67	21	62
S. Carolina	13	77	14	67
Tennessee	19	70	18	56
Texas	72	75	59	58
Virginia	24	75	12	50
W. Virginia	15	65	8	57
South	318	70	244	54

Sources: Editor & Publisher Yearbook 1992 and Broadcasting and Cable Market Place 1992.

tions, which controls TV stations in West Virginia, Texas, North Carolina, and Tennessee, as well as radio stations in Texas and North Carolina.

TAXES AND TECHNOLOGY

What is new and different about the modern media barons is the increasing variety and complexity of their empires. Knight-Ridder, for example, owns 30 newspapers, including a dozen in the South, as well as the massive Dialog information system of database files. Viacom Cable reaches 1.1 million cable subscribers nationwide and also owns four AM, 10 FM, and five television stations, including KSLA in Shreveport, Louisiana.

The Washington Post Co. owns two

local retail merchants out of business and reduce the number of people who advertise in the newspaper," says Elam.

Elam, who teaches media at the University of North Carolina, says group owners enjoyed a boost from new technologies like computers and the commercial offset press. Both innovations were costly at first, so only groups could afford them, but their impact has been widespread. Large chains used the technologies to eliminate people from the workforce and cut costs. "The International Typographic Union just disappeared," Elam says.

Fewer jobs for workers has meant greater profits for owners. At a time when most major corporations count themselves lucky to collect 10 percent of their revenues as pre-tax profits, most daily newspaper publishers expect pre-tax profits as high as 40 percent. And how better to shelter those profits, Elam says, than by spending them to buy new media outlets?

"Federal tax rulings in recent years have encouraged a great number of newspaper corporations to buy other newspapers," Elam says. "The government has essentially encouraged groups to spend their new profits or pay more taxes on them."

"SO MUCH POWER"

Independent publishers are not the only ones hard hit by the increasing concentration of media ownership. According to Ben Bagdikian, author of *The Media Monopoly* and a professor at the University of California, the public has also felt the effects.

Bagdikian observes that the profit motive pushes media companies to shape information to attract the most appealing demographic audiences. "It is normal for all large businesses to make serious efforts to influence the news," says Bagdikian. "Now they own most of the news media that they wish to influence."

Like most large corporations, Bagdikian notes, media owners are geared toward short-term profits rather than long-term development. In the competition to expand their empires, he says, news executives are under pressure to "design the product to make quick cash flow." The emphasis on profits accounts for "the remarkable sleepiness on the part of most of the news media during the Reagan years when all these political disasters were occurring and

they simply didn't get reported."

Even industry leaders acknowledge that the slumping economy has made media owners bend over backwards to accommodate advertisers. According to McCann-Erickson Worldwide, 1990 was the worst year for newspaper advertising since 1961.

"Editors are tending to listen more to ad department concerns," David Berry, past president of the Association of Newspaper Classified Advertising Managers, told the *Washington Journalism Review*. "We are all realizing it's a hurting market. Why shoot ourselves in the foot?"

For the most part, the federal government has come to the aid of large media owners. Alfred Sikes, chair of the Federal Communications Commission, has not only loosened restrictions on the number of broadcast stations one company can own in a given market, he has also pushed to allow telephone companies to enter the field of video technology. Sikes and other advocates of deregulation are also working to hand over the lucrative field of high-definition TV to major corporations.

The media barons who emerge over the next decade are likely to control even more complex networks of television programming, pay-per-view services, interactive fiber-optic cable systems, computer services, cellular phones, and fax machines. Such advances in communication technology create all the more cause for concern about who will control such powerful resources. With a dwindling handful of media barons controlling nearly all the data and entertainment that travel by phone, cable, computer, and satellite, citizens who need diverse information to function effectively in a democracy are already increasingly limited to the transmissions of corporate media.

"In a country as large and as diverse as we are, it is dangerous for so few organizations to control so much power," says Ben Bagdikian. "We all know how resistant news organizations are to bad news about themselves. With the media in the hands of a handful of corporations, how will the average person even know that a social problem exists?" □

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Since 1975, the number of Southern television stations owned by corporate chains has soared from 126 to 244 — an increase of 94 percent. The list includes companies that control two or more commercial stations, as reported in *Broadcasting & Cable Market Place 1992*.

ALABAMA

Anniston	WJSU	Osborn
Birmingham	WABM	Krypton
Birmingham	WBMG	Park
Birmingham	WBRC	Great American
Birmingham	WTTO	ABRY
Birmingham	WVTM	Times Mirror
Dothan	WDHN	Morris Network
Dothan	WTVY	Woods
Huntsville	WAFF	American Family
Huntsville	WHNT	New York Times
Huntsville	WZDX	Media Central
Mobile	WALA	Burnham
Mobile	WMPV	Sonlight
Mobile	WPML	Clear Channel
Montgomery	WMCN	Sonlight
Montgomery	WSFA	Cosmos
Selma	WAKA	Bahakel
Tuscaloosa	WCFT	Federal

ARKANSAS

El Dorado	KTVE	Gray
Fayetteville	KHOG	Sigma
Fort Smith	KFSM	New York Times
Fort Smith	KHBS	Sigma
Jonesboro	KAIT	Cosmos
Little Rock	KARK	Morris Network
Little Rock	KATV	Albritton
Little Rock	KLRT	Clear Channel
Pine Bluff	KASN	MMC Television

FLORIDA

Cape Cod	WFTX	Wabash Valley
Daytona Beach	WESH	H&C
Fort Lauderdale	WSCV	Telemundo
Fort Pierce	WTVX	Krypton
Gainesville	WCBJ	Diversified
Hollywood	WYHS	HSN
Jacksonville	WAWS	Clear Channel
Jacksonville	WJKS	Media General
Jacksonville	WJXT	Post-Newsweek
Jacksonville	WNFT	Krypton
Jacksonville	WTLV	Gannett
Melbourne	WBSF	Blackstar
Miami	WBFS	Combined
Miami	WCIX	CBS Broadcast
Miami	WHFT	Trinity
Miami	WLTU	Univision
Miami	WPLG	Post-Newsweek
Miami	WTVJ	NBC Television
Naples	WEVU	Home News
Ocala	WOGX	Wabash Valley
Orlando	WFTV	Cox

WHO OWNS YOUR LOCAL TV STATION?

Orlando	WOFL	Meredith
Panama City	WJHG	Gray
Panama City	WMBB	Spartan
Pensacola	WEAR	Heritage Media
St. Petersburg	WTOG	Hubbard
Tallahassee	WTWC	Holt
Tampa	WBHS	HSN
Tampa	WFLA	Media General
Tampa	WFTS	Scripps-Howard
Tampa	WTVT	Gillett Holdings
West Palm Beach	WFLX	Marite
West Palm Beach	WPTV	Scripps-Howard

GEORGIA

Albany	WALB	Gray
Atlanta	WAGA	SCI
Atlanta	WATL	Chase
Atlanta	WGNX	Tribune
Atlanta	WSB	Cox
Atlanta	WXIA	Gannett
Augusta	WAGT	Schurz
Augusta	WJBF	Pegasus
Augusta	WRDW	RP Companies
Columbus	WLTZ	Lewis
Columbus	WRBL	RP Companies
Columbus	WTVM	American Family
Macon	WMAZ	Multimedia
Macon	WMGT	Morris Network
Monroe	WHSB	Trinity
Rome	WTLK	Sudbrink
Savannah	WJCL	Lewis
Savannah	WSAV	News-Press & Gazette
Savannah	WTOC	American Family
Valdosta	WVGA	Morris Network

KENTUCKY

Bowling Green	WBKO	Benedek
Hazard	WYMT	Bluegrass
Lexington	WKYT	Bluegrass
Lexington	WTVQ	Shamrock
Louisville	WAVE	Cosmos
Louisville	WDRB	Blade
Louisville	WHAS	Providence Journal
Louisville	WLKY	Pulitzer
Newport	WXIX	Marite

LOUISIANA

Alexandria	KALB	T.B. Lanford
Baton Rouge	WAFB	American Family
Baton Rouge	WBRZ	Manship Stations
Harlingen	KGBT	Draper
Lafayette	KATC	RP Companies
Lafayette	KLFY	Young
Lake Charles	KPLC	Cosmos
New Orleans	WDSU	Pulitzer
New Orleans	WGNO	Tribune
New Orleans	WVUE	Bumham
Shreveport	KSLA	Viacom
West Monroe	KARD	Woods
West Monroe	KMCT	Carolina Christian

MISSISSIPPI

Biloxi	WLOX	Love
Columbus	WCBI	Birney Imes Jr.
Greenwood	WABG	Bahakel
Hattiesburg	WHLT	News-Press & Gazette
Holly Springs	WBUY	Sonlight
Jackson	WAPT	North Star
Jackson	WJTV	News-Press & Gazette
Jackson	WLBT	Civic
Laurel	WDAM	Federal
Meridian	WTOK	Benedek

NORTH CAROLINA

Asheville	WHNS	Cannell
Asheville	WLOS	Anchor Media
Belmont	WJZY	Capitol
Charlotte	WBTV	Jefferson-Pilot
Charlotte	WCCB	Bahakel
Charlotte	WCNC	Providence Journal
Charlotte	WSOC	Cox
Durham	WTVD	Capital Cities/ABC
Goldsboro	WYED	Beasley
Greensboro	WFMY	Gannett
Greenville	WNCT	Park
High Point	WGHP	Great American
High Point	WGHP	Taft
New Bern	WCTI	Diversified
Raleigh	WLFL	Paramount
Raleigh	WRAL	Capitol
Washington	WITN	American Family
Wilmington	WECT	News-Press & Gazette
Wilmington	WWAY	Adams
Winston-Salem	WNRW	Act III
Winston-Salem	WXII	Pulitzer

SOUTH CAROLINA

Anderson	WAXA	Anchor Media
Charleston	WCBD	Media General
Charleston	WCIV	Albritton
Charleston	WTAT	Act III
Columbia	WACH	FCVS
Columbia	WIS	Cosmos
Columbia	WLOL	Bahakel
Florence	WBTW	Spartan
Florence	WPDE	Diversified
Greenville	WGGG	Carolina Christian
Greenville	WYFF	Pulitzer
Hardeville	WTGS	American
Myrtle Beach	WGSE	Carolina Christian
Spartanburg	WSPA	Spartan

TENNESSEE

Chattanooga	WDFE	Park
Chattanooga	WRCB	Sarkes Tarzian
Chattanooga	WTVC	Freedom
Jackson	WBBJ	Bahakel
Johnson City	WJHL	Park
Kingsport	WKPT	Home News
Knoxville	WATE	Nationwide
Knoxville	WBIR	Multimedia
Knoxville	WKCH	FCVS
Knoxville	WKCH	Media Central
Knoxville	WKXT	South Central
Memphis	WHBQ	Adams
Memphis	WMC	Scripps-Howard
Memphis	WPTY	Chase
Memphis	WREG	New York Times
Nashville	WKRN	Young
Nashville	WTVF	Landmark
Nashville	WZTV	Act III

TEXAS

Abilene	KRBC	Abilene Radio & TV
Abilene	WHB	Shamrock
Alvin	KHSH	HSN Communications
Amarillo	KFDA	R.H. Drewry
Amarillo	KVII	Marsh Media
Austin	KBVO	McKinnon
Austin	KTBC	Times Mirror
Austin	KVUE	Gannett
Austin	KXAN	LIN
Beaumont	KBMT	McKinnon
Beaumont	KFDM	Freedom
Big Spring	KWAB	R.H. Drewry

Brady	KWIV	T.B. Lanford
Brownsville	KVEO	Associated
Corpus Christi	KIII	McKinnon
Dallas	KDAF	Fox Television
Dallas	KDFW	Times Mirror
Dallas	KDTX	Trinity
Dallas	KXTX	Christian Broadcasting
Dallas	WFAA	A.H. Belco
El Paso	KDBC	Birney Imes Jr.
El Paso	KVIA	Marsh Media
Fort Worth	KTVT	Gaylord
Fort Worth	KTXA	Paramount Stations
Fort Worth	KXAS	LIN
Galveston	KTMN	Telemundo
Garland	KUVN	Univision
Houston	KHOU	A.H. Belco
Houston	KHTV	Gaylord
Houston	KPRC	H&C Communications
Houston	KRIV	Fox Television
Houston	KTRK	Capital Cities/ABC
Houston	KTXH	Paramount Stations
Irving	KHSX	HSN Communications
Kemville	KRRT	Paramount Stations
Lubbock	KLBK	Woods
Lufkin	KTRE	Civic
Midland	KMID	Davis-Goldfarb
Odessa	KOSA	Adams
Odessa	KPEJ	Associated
Odessa	KTPX	R.H. Drewry
Port Arthur	KJAC	Price
San Angelo	KACB	Abilene Radio & TV
San Angelo	KLST	T.B. Lanford
San Antonio	KABB	River City
San Antonio	KMOL	Chris Craft
San Antonio	KMOL	United Television
San Antonio	KSAT	H&C Communications
San Antonio	KVDA	Telemundo
San Antonio	KWEX	Univision
Sweetwater	KTXS	Lamco
Tyler	KLTV	Civic
Victoria	KAVU	Withers
Waco	KWKT	Associated
Waco	KWTX	KWTX Broadcasting
Waco	KXXV	Shamrock
Weslaco	KRGV	Manship Stations
Wichita Falls	KAUZ	Adams
Wichita Falls	KFDX	Price

VIRGINIA

Bristol	WCYB	Lamco
Hampton	WVEC	A.H. Belco
Harrisonburg	WHSV	Benedek
Lynchburg	WSET	Albritton
Norfolk	WTKR	Narragansett Capital
Petersburg	WRIC	Nationwide
Portsmouth	WAVY	LIN
Richmond	WRLH	Act III
Richmond	WTVR	Park
Richmond	WWBT	Jefferson-Pilot
Roanoke	WDBJ	Shurz
Roanoke	WSLS	Park

WEST VIRGINIA

Bluefield	WVVA	Quincy
Charleston	WVAH	Act III
Clarksburg	WBOY	Birney Imes Jr.
Huntington	WOWK	Gateway
Huntington	WSAZ	Lee
Parkersburg	WTAP	Benedek
Weston	WDTV	Withers
Wheeling	WTRF	Adams

WHO OWNS YOUR HOMETOWN PAPER?



Since 1975, the number of daily Southern newspapers owned by corporate chains has jumped from 248 to 318 — an increase of 28 percent. The list includes companies that control two or more dailies in different cities, as reported by *Editor & Publisher Yearbook 1992*.

ALABAMA

Alexander City	<i>Outlook</i>	Boone
Andalusia	<i>Star News</i>	Boone
Anniston	<i>Star</i>	Ann.Star
Athens	<i>News Courier</i>	Bryan
Birmingham	<i>News</i>	Newhouse
Birmingham	<i>Post-Herald</i>	Scrps-Hwd
Cullman	<i>Times</i>	Bryan
Dothan	<i>Eagle</i>	Thomson
Enterprise	<i>Ledger</i>	Thomson
Florence	<i>Times Daily</i>	NY Times
Fort Payne	<i>Times-Journal</i>	Southern
Gadsden	<i>Times</i>	NY Times
Huntsville	<i>Times & News</i>	Newhouse
Jasper	<i>Mountain Eagle</i>	Cleveland
Mobile	<i>Press & Register</i>	Newhouse
Montgomery	<i>Advertiser & Jnl</i>	Multimedia
Scottsboro	<i>Sentinel</i>	Southern
Selma	<i>Times-Journal</i>	Boone
Talladega	<i>Home</i>	Ann. Star
Troy	<i>Messenger</i>	Boone
Tuscaloosa	<i>News</i>	NY Times

ARKANSAS

Arkadelphia	<i>Daily Siftings Herald</i>	Donrey
Blytheville	<i>Courier News</i>	Park
Camden	<i>News</i>	Wehco
El Dorado	<i>News-Times</i>	Wehco
Fayetteville	<i>NW Arkansas Times</i>	Thomson
Fort Smith	<i>SW Times Record</i>	Donrey
Helena	<i>Daily World</i>	Park
Hot Springs	<i>Sentinel Record</i>	Wehco
Little Rock	<i>Arkansas Democrat</i>	Wehco

Magnolia	<i>Banner News</i>	Wehco
Malvern	<i>Daily Record</i>	Worrell
Mt. Home	<i>Baxter Bulletin</i>	Multimedia
Newport	<i>Independent</i>	American
Pine Bluff	<i>Commercial</i>	Donrey
Rogers	<i>NW Ark. Mrg News</i>	Donrey
Springdale	<i>Morning News</i>	Donrey
Stuttgart	<i>Daily Leader</i>	Worrell
Texarkana	<i>Gazette</i>	Wehco

FLORIDA

Boca Raton	<i>News</i>	Knt-Ridder
Bradenton	<i>Herald</i>	Knt-Ridder
Brooksville	<i>Daily Sun Journal</i>	Park
Cape Coral	<i>Breeze</i>	Ogden
Daytona B.	<i>News-Journal</i>	Cox
Ft. Lauderdale	<i>Sun-Sentinel</i>	Tribune Co.
Fort Pierce	<i>News Tribune</i>	Freedom
Ft. Myers	<i>News-Press</i>	Gannett
Ft. Walton B.	<i>NW Fl Daily News</i>	Freedom
Gainesville	<i>Sun</i>	NY Times
Inverness	<i>Citrus Chronicle</i>	Landmark
Jacksonville	<i>Fla. Union-Times</i>	Morris
Key West	<i>Citizen</i>	Thomson
Lake City	<i>Reporter</i>	NY Times
Lake Wales	<i>Highlander</i>	Stauffer
Lakeland	<i>Ledger</i>	NY Times
Leesburg	<i>Commercial</i>	NY Times
Marianna	<i>Jackson Floridian</i>	Thomson
Melbourne	<i>Florida Today</i>	Gannett
Miami	<i>Herald</i>	Knt-Ridder
Naples	<i>Daily News</i>	Scrps-Hwd
Ocala	<i>Star-Banner</i>	NY Times
Orange Park	<i>Clay Today</i>	Thomson
Orlando	<i>Sentinel</i>	Tribune Co.
Palatka	<i>Daily News</i>	NY Times
Palm Beach	<i>Daily News</i>	Cox
Panama City	<i>News-Herald</i>	Freedom
Pensacola	<i>News Journal</i>	Gannett
Sanford	<i>Herald</i>	Haskell
Sarasota	<i>Herald-Tribune</i>	NY Times
St. Augustine	<i>Record</i>	Morris
Stuart	<i>News</i>	Scrps-Hwd
Tallahassee	<i>Democrat</i>	Knt-Ridder
Tampa	<i>Tribune</i>	Media Gen.
Winter Haven	<i>News Chief</i>	Stauffer

GEORGIA

La Grange	<i>Daily News</i>	Buchheit
Cartersville	<i>Tribune News</i>	Cleveland
Atlanta	<i>Journal/Constitution</i>	Cox
Gainesville	<i>The Times</i>	Gannett
Columbus	<i>Ledger-Enquirer</i>	Knt-Ridder
Macon	<i>Telegraph</i>	Knt-Ridder
Milledgeville	<i>Union-Recorder</i>	Knt-Ridder
Athens	<i>Banner Herald/News</i>	Morris
Augusta	<i>Chronicle & Herald</i>	Morris
Savannah	<i>Morn News & Press</i>	Morris
Statesboro	<i>Herald</i>	Morris
Moultrie	<i>Observer</i>	Multimedia
Duluth	<i>Gwinnett Daily News</i>	NY Times
Warner Robbins	<i>Sun</i>	Park
Americus	<i>Times-Reporter</i>	Thomson

Cordele	<i>Dispatch</i>	Thomson
Dalton	<i>Daily Citizen-News</i>	Thomson
Griffin	<i>Daily News</i>	Thomson
Thomasville	<i>Times-Enterprise</i>	Thomson
Tifton	<i>Gazette</i>	Thomson
Valdosta	<i>Daily Times</i>	Thomson
Carrollton	<i>Daily Times Georgian</i>	Worrell
Douglasville	<i>Douglas Sentinel</i>	Worrell

KENTUCKY

Ashland	<i>Daily Independent</i>	Ottaway
Corbin	<i>Times-Tribune</i>	Thomson
Covington	<i>Kentucky Post</i>	Scrps-Hwd
Danville	<i>Advocate-Messenger</i>	Schurz
Elizabethtown	<i>News-Enterprise</i>	Landmark
Frankfort	<i>State Journal</i>	Dix
Glasgow	<i>Daily Times</i>	Donrey
Lexington	<i>Herald-Leader</i>	Knt-Ridder
Louisville	<i>Courier-Journal</i>	Gannett
Madisonville	<i>Messenger</i>	NY Times
Mayfield	<i>Messenger</i>	Haskell
Maysfield	<i>Ledger-Independent</i>	Howard
Richmond	<i>Register</i>	Thomson
Somerset	<i>Commonwealth-Jrnl</i>	Park

LOUISIANA

Bastrop	<i>Daily Enterprise</i>	Smith
Bogalusa	<i>Daily News</i>	Wick
Franklin	<i>Banner-Tribune</i>	Morgan City
Houma	<i>Daily Courier</i>	NY Times
Jennings	<i>Daily News</i>	Fackelman
Lafayette	<i>Daily Advertiser</i>	Thomson
Lake Charles	<i>American Press</i>	Shearman
Monroe	<i>News-Star</i>	Gannett
Morgan City	<i>Daily Review</i>	Morgan City
New Iberia	<i>Iberian</i>	Wick
New Orleans	<i>Times-Picayune</i>	Newhouse
Opelousas	<i>Daily World</i>	NY Times
Ruston	<i>Daily Leader</i>	Fackelman
Shreveport	<i>The Times</i>	Gannett
Slidell	<i>Sentry</i>	Wick
Thibadaux	<i>Daily Comet</i>	NY Times

MISSISSIPPI

Biloxi	<i>Sun Herald</i>	Knt-Ridder
Clarksdale	<i>Press-Register</i>	Emmerich
Cleveland	<i>Bolivar Commercial</i>	Cleveland
Corinth	<i>Daily Corinthian</i>	NY Times
Greenville	<i>Democrat-Times</i>	Freedom
Greenwood	<i>Commonwealth</i>	Emmerich
Hattiesburg	<i>American</i>	Gannett
Jackson	<i>Clarion-Ledger</i>	Gannett
Laurel	<i>Leader-Call</i>	Thomson
McComb	<i>Enterprise-Journal</i>	Emmerich
Natchez	<i>Democrat</i>	Boone
Pascagoula	<i>Press-Register</i>	Newhouse
Picayune	<i>Item</i>	Donrey

NORTH CAROLINA

Aberdeen	<i>Citizen News-Record</i>	Park
Asheboro	<i>Courier-Tribune</i>	Donrey
Asheville	<i>Citizen-Times</i>	Multimedia

Burlington	Daily Times-News	Freedom
Chapel Hill	Newspaper	Ottaway
Charlotte	Observer	Knt-Ridder
Clinton	Independent	Park
Concord	Tribune	Park
Eden	The Daily News	Park
Elizabeth City	Daily Advance	Thomson
Elizabethtown	Bladen Journal	Park
Gastonia	Gaston Gazette	Freedom
Goldensboro	News Argus	Buchheit
Greensboro	News & Record	Landmark
Hendersonville	Times-News	NY Times
Jacksonville	Daily News	Freedom
Kannapolis	Daily Independent	Park
Kinston	Daily Free Press	Freedom
Lenoir	News-Topic	NY Times
Lexington	The Dispatch	NY Times
Lumberton	Robesonian	Park
Marion	McDowell News	Park
Monroe	Enquirer Journal	Thomson
Morganton	News-Herald	Park
Mt. Airy	News	Buchheit
New Bern	Sun-Journal	Freedom
Newton	Observer-News	Park
Reidsville	Review	Southern
Roanoke Rpd	Herald	Wick
Rockingham	Daily Journal	Park
Rocky Mount	Evening Telegram	Thomson
Shelby	Shelby Star	Thomson
Statesville	Record & Landmark	Park
Wilmington	Morning Star	NY Times
Winston-Salem	Journal	Media Gen.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Aiken	Standard	Evening Post
Anderson	Independent-Mail	Harte-Hanks
Beaufort	Beaufort Gazette	McClatchy
Charleston	Post & Courier	Evening Post
Columbia	The State	Knt-Ridder
Florence	Morning News	Thomson
Greenville	News & Piedmont	Multimedia
Hilton Head	Island Packet	McClatchy
Myrtle Beach	Sun News	Knt-Ridder
Orangeburg	Times & Democrat	Howard
Rock Hill	The Herald	McClatchy
Spartanburg	Herald-Journal	NY Times
Union	Times	Buchheit

TENNESSEE

Athens	Post-Athenian	Media Services
Clarksville	Leaf-Chronicle	Multimedia
Cleveland	Banner	Cleveland
Columbia	Daily Herald	Donrey
Cookeville	Herald-Citizen	Cleveland
Dyersburg	The State Gazette	NY Times
Greenville	Sun	Media Services
Jackson	Sun	Gannett
Johnson City	Press	Carl A. Jones
Kingsport	Times-News	Sandusky-Norwalk
Knoxville	Journal	Persis
Knoxville	News-Sentinel	Scrps-Hwd
Lebanon	Democrat	Carl A. Jones
Maryville-Alcoa	Daily Times	Persis

Memphis	Commercial Appeal	Scrps-Hwd
Murfreesboro	Daily News-Journal	Morris
Nashville	The Tennessean	Gannett
Oak Ridge	Oak Ridger	Stauffer
Sevierville	Mountain Press	Worrell

TEXAS

Abilene	Reporter-News	Harte-Hanks
Alice	Echo-News	Boone
Amarillo	News & Globe-Times	Morris
Angleton	Times	Southern
Athens	Daily Review	Donrey
Austin	American-Statesman	Cox
Bay City	Tribune	Southern
Baytown	Sun	Southern
Beaumont	Enterprise	Hearst
Big Spring	Big Spring Herald	Thomson
Bonham	Daily Favorite	Head
Borger	News-Herald	Donrey
Brenham	Banner-Press	Hartman
Brownsville	Herald	Freedom
Brownwood	Bulletin	Boone
Bryan	Eagle	Worrell
Clear Lake	Citizen	Gulf Coast
Cleburne	Times-Review	Donrey
Conroe	Courier	Gulf Coast
Corpus Christi	Caller-Times	Harte-Hanks
Clute	Brazosport Facts	Southern
Del Rio	Del Rio News Herald	Thomson
Denison	Herald	Donrey
El Paso	Herald Post	Scrps-Hwd
El Paso	Times	Gannett
Fort Worth	Star-Telegram	Cap Cities
Gainesville	Daily Register	Donrey
Galveston	News	Walls
Greenville	Herald Banner	Worrell
Harlingen	Valley Morning Star	Freedom
Henderson	Daily News	Hartman
Houston	Chronicle	Hearst
Houston	Post	Media News
Huntsville	Item	Thomson
Jacksonville	Daily Progress	Donrey
Kerrville	Daily Times	Thomson
Kilgore	News Herald	Donrey
Killeen	Daily Herald	Mayborn
Laredo	Morning Times	Hearst
Longview	News-Journal	Cox
Lubbock	Avalanche-Journal	Morris
Lufkin	Daily News	Cox
Marshall	News Messenger	Thomson
McAllen	Monitor	Freedom
McKinney	Courier-Gazette	Hartman
Midland	Reporter-Telegram	Hearst
Mineral Wells	Daily Independent	Livermore
Nagadoches	Daily Sentinel	Cox
New Braunfels	Herald-Zeitung	Southern
Odessa	American	Freedom
Pampa	Daily News	Freedom
Paris	News	Southern
Pasadena	Citizen	Gulf Coast
Pecos	Enterprise	Buckner
Plainview	Daily Herald	Hearst
Plano	Star Courier	Harte-Hanks

Port Lavaca	Wave	Hartman
Rosenberg	Herald Coaster	Hartman
San Angelo	Standard Times	Harte-Hanks
San Antonio	Express-News	News Amer.
San Antonio	Light	Hearst
Sequin	Gazette-Enterprise	Southern
Sherman	Democrat	Donrey
Stephenville	Empire-Tribune	Boone
Sweetwater	Reporter	Donrey
Temple	Daily Telegram	Mayborn
Terrell	Tribune	Hartman
Texas City	Sun	Walls
Waco	Tribune-Herald	Cox
Waxahachie	Daily Light	Boone
Weatherford	Democrat	Donrey
Wichita Falls	Times Record News	Harte-Hanks

VIRGINIA

Alexandria	Alexandria Journal	Gannett
Arlington	Arlington Journal	Gannett
Arlington	USA Today	Gannett
Charlottesville	Daily Progress	Worrell
Christiansburg	News Messenger	Worrell
Culpepper	Star-Exponent	Worrell
Fairfax	Fairfax Journal	Gannett
Harrisonburg	Daily News-Record	Byrd
Lynchburg	News & Daily Adv	Worrell
Manassas	Journal Messenger	Park
Martinsville	Bulletin	Haskell
Newport News	Daily Press	Tribune
Norfolk	Ledger-Star	Landmark
Norfolk	Virginia-Pilot	Landmark
Petersburg	Progress-Index	Thomson
Pulaski	Southwest Times	Worrell
Radford	News Journal	Worrell
Richmond	Times-Dispatch	Media Gen.
Roanoke	Times/World News	Landmark
Staunton	News-Leader	Multimedia
Suffolk	News-Herald	Worrell
Waynesboro	News-Virginian	Park
Winchester	Star	Byrd
Woodbridge	Potomac News	Media News

WEST VIRGINIA

Beckley	Register-Herald	Thomson
Bluefield	Daily Telegraph	Thomson
Charleston	Daily Mail	Thomson
Elkins	Inter-Mountain	Ogden
Fairmont	Times-W. Virginian	Thomson
Huntington	Herald-Dispatch	Gannett
Lewisburg	Daily News	Moffitt
Logan	Banner	Smith
Martinsburg	Journal	Ogden
Parkersburg	Sentinel & News	Ogden
Pt. Pleasant	Register	Multimedia
Weirton	Daily Times	Thomson
Welch	Daily News	Moffitt
Wheeling	Intelligencer/News	Ogden
Williamson	News	Buchheit

CHANGING

People of color pushed to buy new TV and radio stations

CHANNELS

during the 1980s. So why are the media still so **WHITE**?

BY
Brigette Rouson

After two decades as a broadcaster, Bill Wright was fed up with the “glass ceiling” limiting African Americans in the industry. He had worked in announcing, news, and sales in Texas towns like Tyler and Mount Pleasant, but he could never seem to advance to a top management position.

Finally, in the early 1980s, Wright decided to take matters into his own hands — by purchasing his own television station. Although he knew he could never afford a full-power station, the Federal Communications Commission was offering licenses for new “low power” stations with narrower broadcast range.

“At the time I got the low-power idea, I had some partners who were willing to put up \$300,000 to \$400,000,” Wright recalls. By the time FCC approval came through three years later, however, “that money had dried up.” Undeterred, Wright found new investors and “we put it on the air for \$30,000.”

The move left him with no operating capital; he pays for everything from equipment to staff salaries out of his own pocket. His Dallas station — KJIK, for “Jesus is King” — broadcasts Christian shows from the Trinity Network on weekdays, and eight hours of local programs each weekend.

Wright is one of the lucky ones. Low-power TV — along with full-power radio stations called FM drop-ins — were developed more than a decade ago as opportunities for “underrepresented”

groups to own their own media outlets. Yet 15 years after the FCC pledged to diversify broadcast ownership, people of color in the South have reaped little from the federal initiatives. Instead, regulatory delays and an inhospitable marketplace have combined to undercut the promise of the new technologies, leaving African Americans with few radio and television stations of their own.

“The broadcast industry for minorities is still a real bastion,” says Ervin Hester, an African-American broadcaster who applied for a low-power license in Durham, North Carolina. “Unless you’ve got the deep pockets, you’re not going to survive.”

SHARED POWER

The goal of diversifying media ownership dates back to the civil rights movement of the 1960s. In their struggle for voting rights, black activists in the South recognized the power of radio and television to shape public perception. The result was increased scrutiny of the media — and calls for shared power.

“In the mid-1960s, civil rights activists concerned with black images moved aggressively into the arena of broadcast

policymaking," wrote the late Marilyn Diane Fife of Temple University.

"Broadcasting was seen as an institution of great power. . . . The broadcast industry, like many other commercial enterprises of the time, had a dismal record of service" for African Americans. During the 1970s, blacks owned barely one percent of all radio and television stations in the country.

The promise of direct media ownership seemed to brighten, however, as new technologies began to emerge. One was low-power television (LPTV), which carves out a smaller broadcast area than full-power stations, using a weaker signal to target particular communities. An LPTV station generally covers an area of 25 miles with a signal of no more than 1,000 watts — much lower than the thousands of watts commanded by established, full-power stations.

Another technological opportunity emerged when the FCC adopted Docket 80-90, repartitioning the radio spectrum to make room for more broadcast signals. In effect, new FM stations are "dropped in" the radio dial between previously existing stations. Technically and legally, they enjoy a status comparable to established radio stations.

Activists quickly realized that the new technologies offered a rare chance to diversify media ownership. For decades, licenses for broadcast stations had been in the hands of a few wealthy white individuals and corporations. But here were *new* stations with the potential to reach *new* audiences. "When low-power came out, what I envisioned was a radio station with pictures," says John Kompas, former director of the Community Broadcasters Association. "An owner can stick their head out the window and say, 'What kind of programming do you want to see tonight?'"

Organizations representing people of color, women, and workers called on the FCC to award licenses for LPTV and Docket 80-90 stations to groups long excluded from the ranks of owners. At first, the commission seemed inclined to agree. In 1978, the FCC adopted a formal statement calling for increased "minority" ownership of broadcast facilities. Commissioners also endorsed the need for standard licensing criteria to favor people of color, women, and rural residents. The FCC, said Commissioner Tyrone Brown, has "served notice that our goal is to foster diversity."

But the process of adopting proce-



LOW-POWER TELEVISION "CAME AT THE WRONG TIME," ACCORDING TO PLURIA MARSHALL OF THE NATIONAL BLACK MEDIA COALITION.

dures to foster diversity proved torturous. Beginning a long line of proceedings, the FCC noted the "dearth of minority ownership in the broadcasting industry" and the "extreme disparity between the representation of minorities in our population and in the broadcasting industry." The commission then resolved to use a lottery to award licenses for low-power TV stations — without any provision for increasing minority ownership.

Commissioner Henry Rivera accused the agency of proposing a "clear and permanent break from bedrock FCC policies fostering diversity of ownership." Activists took the fight to Congress, and the FCC finally agreed to adopt a lottery giving members of "underrepresented groups" a 2-to-1 chance of getting a license.

By the mid-1980s, more than 30,000 applicants had lined up for the new stations. After initial processing delays, the FCC began awarding 200 licenses a year in 1987. "We now have about 1,250 low-power television licensed stations in

the country — and the growth continues," says Keith Larsen, who administers low-power TV for the FCC.

SECOND-CLASS SERVICE

How have African Americans and other people of color fared in the LPTV lottery? Despite its string of policy pronouncements on the need to diversify media ownership, the FCC does not even keep a record of "minority" ownership of low-power TV or Docket 80-90 radio stations. Interviews with industry sources turned up only three people of color among LPTV owners in the South — an African American, an Asian American, and a Latino.

Records indicate the FCC has issued five tax certificates for LPTV under a policy that offers tax savings as an incentive to sell broadcast stations to "minority" buyers. Only one certificate was issued in the South — and none to black owners.

As for new FM stations, several African Americans in the region have

obtained licenses under Docket 80-90, but most have been unable to get their stations up and running because of FCC delays and scarce financing. "I've had about 10 people call me who've got the construction permit and they can't build because they don't have the money," says Pluria Marshall, chief executive officer of the National Black Media Coalition.

Favorable incantations of law and public policy have not sufficed to allow African Americans to cross over into the promised land of media ownership. For all the controversy over "preference" policies, a 1990 survey by Marquette University shows that only 12.4 percent of low-power owners are women or persons of color. Of those, a third are Hispanic, a fourth are women, and a fourth are Native American. Fewer than eight percent are African American.

Black broadcasters and other people of color also remain shut out of the established industry. Figures show that all designated "minority" groups combined own only three percent of full-power radio and television stations nationwide.

One of the biggest barriers to diversifying ownership has been money. Industry executives, government officials, and public policy advocates all say that capital is hard to come by — and that licensing itself can be a costly, drawn-out process.

"These FCC cases are exceptionally expensive, and beyond the resources of most people other than investors and wealthy types," says Michael Wilhelm, an attorney who represents applicants for low-power TV and 80-90 stations. "It's going to cost you \$100,000 to \$200,000 in legal fees for the FCC licensing process."

But license costs are only a small part of getting on the air. Once all the procedural hurdles are cleared, a new owner still needs investments and advertising to pay for operations. "Raising money is very hard," says John Kompas of the Community Broadcasters Association.

"The money generally comes out of the broadcaster's back pocket."

When Bill Wright went looking for backing for his low-power station in Dallas, he found himself trapped in a bureaucratic Catch-22. The Small Business Administration told him, "If you go out and find the bank, we'll guarantee the loan." But banks told him they would only loan him the money if he had the guarantee.

The smaller broadcast range of low-power television also makes it harder to attract advertisers and lenders. "Low-

power TV is not considered a full-class service," explains Jim Winston, executive director of the National Association of Black-Owned Broadcasters. "It's a secondary service. If I put a full-power TV station on the air in your area, you have to close down. So you can't afford to invest any serious money in low-power TV, because you can be forced off the air."

To make matters worse, LPTV "came at the wrong time," says Pluria Marshall of the National Black Media Coalition. "Low-power TV was introduced right at the time when the networks had lost another 20 percent of their audience to cable. The structural money makers were beginning to slip — so

why should somebody fool with a little low-power station?"

"PURE HELL"

Hampered by regulatory and financial obstacles, the few people of color who have managed to get low-power licenses in the South are struggling to stay on the air. James Sim, a Korean American, is directing low-power broadcasts to Asian Americans in Roswell, Georgia — but his limited broadcast range of 25 miles also limits advertising. "I built it, transmitter and everything, for about \$200,000," says Sim. "I'm still losing money."

Florida is among the states with the highest concentration of low-power TV, and Enrique Perez is among the new low-power owners serving Latino view-

ers in Tampa and Miami. Perez and his partners spent about \$100,000 to start the station, and the size and wealth of their audience has helped them make ends meet. "When you get to the Hispanic market, we're the only game in town," Perez says. "The reason we're able to stay in business is that our costs are lower than full power."

Even with lower costs, though, affordable programming can be hard to come by. In Georgia, Sim imports shows from Korea, and Perez relies on the Univision network for 90 percent of his Spanish-language programming in Florida. In Texas, Bill Wright uses local camera people as stringers to broadcast city council meetings and parades. "As far as minority angles go, I cover such things as NAACP meetings. But I'm understaffed and underfinanced; I can't do as much as I want to."

Some African-American owners have also faced outright racial hostility. Lee and Judith Jackson did broadcast consulting in Mississippi to make ends meet while they built a low-power station in Indianapolis. When the station went on the air, they began broadcasting black news programs, African-American movies, and forums for black officials and church members.

Before long, however, white residents launched a campaign of terror against the station. Newscasts were targeted daily for interference. A technical employee was beaten. The station was broken into several times. Potential advertisers were harassed as they entered the station.

"That's what it was like for two and a half years," says Lee Jackson. "It was pure hell."

The county sheriff helped protect the station transmitter, but the intimidation continued. "I felt like I was in 1960 back in Wazoo, Mississippi," Jackson recalls.

TALKING WHITE

African Americans who have started new FM drop-in stations have also faced hostility — primarily from established stations. "The industry worries that any new competition divides up the advertising pie in their market, and they're going to make less money," says Jim Winston of the National Association of Black-Owned Broadcasters. "There is a great deal of hostility to any new stations of any kind."

But the competition hasn't stopped black broadcasters from starting up 80-

"If I put a full-power TV station on the air in your area, you have to close down. So you can't afford to invest any serious money in low-power TV, because you can be forced off the air."

90 stations in cities like Little Rock and Nashville. Al Davis went on the air in Texarkana, Texas last August to provide an alternative to the country music that dominated the airwaves. Listeners were "elated," he says — but other broadcasters were suspicious. "Of course, another station coming into this market takes another slice of the pie."

For Fred Matthews, the new FM stations provided a measure of control in a white-dominated industry. "I'm a broadcaster through and through," he says. "I've worked from disc jockey to sales to announcing. Quite frankly, there wasn't a whole lot of opportunity for a black man on the management side. Everybody who hired you and signed a paycheck was white."

Like many black broadcasters, Matthews was expected to conform to the expectations of white managers. "You had to talk a certain way," he recalls. "Everybody had to talk like they were from Indiana or Nebraska. The first thing a manager told me when I got out of school was you've got to learn how to talk white."

Now Fred and his wife Anna are going on the air with an FM drop-in station in Jacksonville, Florida — one of the top 50 markets in the country — with a mix of "urban contemporary" and jazz music, plus a daily talk show and in-depth news reports. Although they don't have to "talk white" anymore, they still find themselves confronting racial stereotypes.

"The advertising community takes the attitude that you're urban, so you don't have white people listening to you," says Matthews. "Most business people are simply not going to buy advertising at a black station, and they can't tell you why. It's simply not in their frame of reference."

Although Matthews received a license with relatively little trouble, he does not encourage others to apply for new broadcast stations. "It can be a very disheartening thing," he says. "I would not go through it again. I would not recommend for anybody to go through it unless they have a great deal of patience."

But for those with money and connections, FM drop-ins can be very profitable. Most are twice as powerful as older stations, giving them a wider broadcast range — and thus greater money-making potential. As a result, some white applicants have used people of color as "fronts" to win license approval from the FCC. The ruse — known in the industry

as "Rent a Black" — has shut some African Americans out of the market and slowed the approval process for legitimate applicants.

Ervin Hester of Durham, North Carolina knows about such scams only too well. After two decades as a radio broadcaster, he wanted his own operation. "I spent eight and a half years working for a station that was white-owned," he recalls. "I was in sales, sports, programming — I did everything but carry the money home."

Hester could not afford to buy an existing station. "So when Docket 80-90 came along, I said this thing is tailor-made for me." With money he made in the cellular telephone business, he put together plans to apply for a drop-in station.

Then Thomas Root and several other white businessmen calling their outfit "Sonrise Management" persuaded Hester to join their application for a license. He was skeptical, but finally agreed. When Sonrise turned out to be a scam, Hester confronted the group and testified against Root, who was indicted and imprisoned.

But the damage was done. Because he participated in the venture, Hester now feels he is barred from receiving a license. "It was a great opportunity for African Americans," he says. "It's gone now as far as I'm concerned."

BEYOND OWNERSHIP

Hester is not the only African-American broadcaster who has grown disillusioned with the prospect of owning new radio and TV stations. Some advocates and scholars now say that low-power TV was doomed from the outset — and that it will soon be obsolete as established stations take over more of the broadcast spectrum to introduce a technology called "high-definition" TV.

"Low power was always a Trojan horse to try to get minorities to back off their demands for participation in full-power broadcasting," contends Nolan Bowie of Temple University. As high-definition TV emerges, he says, the FCC is handing over more of the spectrum to established broadcasters. "It basically

freezes in place the current ownership pattern. The tradeoff is loss of diversity to develop a newer technology."

Seasoned scholars of public policy and social processes say new technologies such as low-power TV and 80-90 stations produce familiar power plays. Associate Professor Carolyn Marvin of the University of Pennsylvania finds historical precedent in the advent of electricity during the 1800s. "Every new communications technology provides a new stage for working out notions of community," she says. People who wield power use technology to keep

high status for themselves, and lower status for others.

Professor Oscar Gandy Jr. of the University of Pennsylvania points to the broadcast industry's harsh criticism of the FCC for adding new FM stations to the spectrum. New mass media, he says, "threaten the equilibrium of the marketplace, and those policy actors most at risk ... are first in line to demand regulatory protection."

Given such limitations to low-power TV and FM

drop-ins, many advocates are turning their attention to alternatives to ownership. Some, like Nolan Bowie, propose that existing stations be required to share their broadcasting rights by providing public access to the airwaves. Under such a system, radio and television stations would operate like telephone companies, allowing everyone to use their facilities to transmit programs.

In the meantime, advocates say, African Americans and other people of color should focus on gaining more control of full-power facilities. Those involved in the process know they face barriers, but they are determined to force the broadcast industry to air a wider — and more representative — range of voices.

"If we got the money to buy a station, we don't need to be competing in low-power or 80-90," says Pluria Marshall of the National Black Media Coalition. "We just need to go ahead and buy us a regular radio or TV station — and do a good job of making it work." □

Brigitte Rouson, a journalist and communications lawyer, is a graduate student at The Annenberg School for Communication. She dedicates this article to the memory of Dr. Marilyn Diane Fife, her mentor and friend.

"The advertising community takes the attitude that you're urban, so you don't have white people listening to you."

BRIGHT LIGHTS

LIGHTS

More and more films are being shot in the

LOW

South, taking advantage of cheap labor and

WAGES

anti-union **LAWS.**

Dustin Hoffman stood on the main street of Hamlet, North Carolina looking every bit the star. Dressed in the dapper attire of a 1920s gangster amidst a lavish set bustling with antique cars, camera crews, and adoring fans, the big-name actor was on location in the small-town South to film *Billy Bathgate*, a \$56-million Hollywood production.

The big-budget movie created quite a stir in Hamlet, a town of 6,500. "It turned out to be a pretty big deal," recalls Police Chief Terry Moore. "The actors were more accessible than people expected them to be, particularly Dustin Hoffman. He signed a lot of autographs. It was exciting to see the town in the movies."

Before the movie could make it to theaters, however, less glamorous images of Hamlet were appearing on screens across the country. Eight months

after the film crew left town, a fire at the Imperial Foods poultry processing plant killed 25 workers and injured 54. The factory owner later pled guilty to manslaughter, admitting that he had padlocked exits to the plant to prevent workers from stealing chickens.

In a tragic irony befitting a Hollywood production, the film and the fire were linked by more than a common location. Both the movie production and the poultry plant had flocked to Hamlet to take advantage of anti-labor policies that leave workers at the mercy of their employers. Imperial Foods was lured to the town from Pennsylvania — and Touchstone, a Disney subsidiary, was drawn from Los Angeles — by "right to work" laws that keep North Carolina wages low by barring the doors to unions.

The term "runaway shop" has been in the news for years as increasing numbers of manufacturing jobs have fled the heavily unionized North. Now the film industry has joined the flight to the South, shooting more and more movies on location in states like Texas, Florida, and North Carolina. All three states have right-to-work laws — and all three are cashing in on the growing number of film productions fleeing Los Angeles and New York in search of cheap labor.

According to a survey by *Hollywood Reporter*, California still ranks first for money spent on film production, taking in

more than \$4 billion in 1990. New York is second with \$2 billion. But Southern states are making significant inroads into the movie business. North

BY
**Mike Nielsen
and Eric Bates**

Carolina now ranks third with \$426 million, and Florida finishes fourth with \$294 million.

The industry counts on young workers desperate enough to travel to Southern locations, taking a cut in pay and benefits in return for steady work. "The name of the game is still getting three square meals," one low-budget producer told the trade journal *Variety*. "Assume that you earn \$1,500 a week as a lead carpenter, but now you're getting \$1,250 — even though the producer isn't paying pension and welfare. On an \$8 million movie shooting in North Carolina, who cares?"

STEADY WORK AND GOOD PAY

To better understand the role that anti-labor laws play in the flight of film production to the South, it is necessary to look at the history and structure of the motion picture industry.

Movies have always been a labor-intensive commodity. Despite often-lavish productions, they require few raw materials: several miles of film stock, some rented equipment and costumes, perhaps a few explosives and some cars to use them on. For the most part, producers spend their money on people, hiring scores of actors and editors and technicians to work for a limited period of time.

In the movie industry, accountants call those who work in technical and manual trades "below the line" employees. Below-the-line workers — including lighting and sound technicians, painters, plasterers, make-up artists, chauffeurs, and animal trainers — generally comprise about 95 percent of all employees involved in production.

Between 1920 and 1950 — the golden days of the Hollywood studio system — many below-the-line employees worked full-time, helping to turn out the steady stream of films that changed weekly at local theaters. For such workers, Los Angeles was one big company town; whether they worked for 20th Century Fox or Warner Brothers, wages and conditions were pretty much the same. That was because all below-the-line workers belonged to one of several labor unions, most of which were affiliated with the International Alliance of Theatrical and Stage Employees (IATSE).

Thanks to the union, film studios resembled self-contained cities bustling



DUSTIN HOFFMAN STARS IN *BILLY BATHGATE*, ONE OF THE GROWING NUMBER OF FILMS BEING SHOT IN THE SOUTH TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ANTI-UNION POLICIES.

with plumbers, carpenters, masons, hair dressers and even blacksmiths. Most could count on steady work. It was, as the saying goes, nice work — if you could get it. But you could not get it without a union card.

Things hadn't always been so good for film crews. The motion picture industry started out at the turn of the century in New York City, where the theater business provided a ready supply of skilled labor. By 1910, however, the fledgling industry began moving film production to Los Angeles, a notorious open-shop city with a well-oiled union-busting machine ready to take on any labor organizers.

Backed by the anti-union *Los Angeles Times*, motion picture producers in Los Angeles paid workers half the going rate in New York. They worked employees long hours without breaks, cheated them out of wages and benefits, violated safety rules, and blacklisted union organizers. When workers called strikes to organize the studios, producers drew on a reserve supply of unemployed strike-breakers to keep production moving.

The union had a notorious history of its own. During the 1930s, IATSE was run by the Frank Nitti crime family, which used the union to steal from members and to demand payoffs from

producers. In the late 1940s, union leaders pushed the House Un-American Activities Committee to blacklist workers and helped set Ronald Reagan on the path of rabid anti-communism. In many cities, the union squelched local union autonomy and strong-armed theater managers who refused to hire union projectionists.

Nevertheless, IATSE offered workers the best hope for fair and equitable treatment. With the passage of the National Labor Relations Act in 1935, workers won the right to bargain collectively with employers. Within a decade, the motion picture industry was completely unionized — and IATSE emerged as the dominant union for nearly all craft workers.

"CHEAP EVERYTHING"

As workers were strengthening their bargaining position, however, the industry was undergoing another major upheaval. In 1948, under pressure from the Justice Department, Paramount and the other major studios agreed to sell off their theater chains to independent firms. At the same time, television began its meteoric rise from a technical novelty to the dominant mode of mass communication. Motion picture companies scaled

back their operations, sold their studios to independent producers, and eliminated their full-time technical staffs.

In essence, large companies like Warners, Fox, Paramount, MGM, Universal, Columbia, United Artists, and Disney shifted their focus from making films to distributing films and TV programs around the world. Although they still produced a few films each year, they increasingly depended on independent producers for a steady supply of movies and videos.

To fill the gap left by the big production companies, new independent enterprises arose. Small firms were often formed to make a single film or a limited number of films based on special financial arrangements with big institutional investors.

IATSE adjusted to the changes by requiring producers to hire workers from a roster based on seniority. The union also negotiated specific job categories and work rules to safeguard jobs. Although the independent producers did not formally sign agreements with IATSE or other film unions, they often used union workers and paid union wages.

But as competition among the independents has heated up in the past two decades, they have begun seeking ways to cut costs. And it didn't take long to hit upon the most obvious budget-cutting tactic: simply film away from Los Angeles, out of sight of organized workers. Cannon is the largest company to use this strategy, but hundreds of smaller companies have followed suit.

Billions of dollars are at stake — and most of it comes out of the pockets of workers. By fleeing Los Angeles, non-union producers can hire fewer below-the-line workers, pay lower wages, contribute nothing to union health and pension funds, and ignore union-negotiated work rules. Industry estimates put the total savings for a single non-union film at 25 percent. With production costs averaging more than \$10 million for a film, the savings are enormous.

"A lot of the Hollywood media love to jump up and down saying we promote cheap labor," says Bill Arnold, who lures moviemakers to North Caro-

lina as head of the State Film Office. "That's not true. We promote cheap everything — cheap labor, cheap food, cheap accommodations."

Still, Arnold acknowledges, low wages have a lot to do with the movies moving South. "Our right-to-work laws allow producers to stretch their budgets by picking up local workers who are not necessarily union and who may make lower wages," he says. "And that spreads the budget out. When 20th-Century Fox made the movie *Reuben Reuben* here in 1985 for

\$3.2 million, the producer made the comment that it could not have been made in Los Angeles for under \$10 million."

The lucrative savings have spurred the major studios to get in on the union-busting act. Many studios now initiate projects and then job them out to independent companies that can gain more concessions from the unions. The industry calls such back-door deals "negative pickups."

"I had a project at Disney," one producer told *Variety*. "They wanted to make it for \$6 million, but they felt that they couldn't make it at

the studio for less than about \$12 million. They asked me to call it Blankety-Blank Production, which would become a pickup down the line. That way we could avoid the unions, they could cut the cost, and we'd all see our profits sooner."

NON-UNION NINJA TURTLES

Southern states like Texas and Florida were among the first to cash in on the anti-union trend in the film industry. The Texas Film Commission has been especially instrumental in attracting movie productions to the region. Founded in 1972, the state-sponsored commission launched a high-powered sales job with an advertising campaign and personal visits to Los Angeles and New York. The goal: use the state's lax labor laws and "pro-business" climate to lure big moviemakers to Texas.

Ellen Justice, who studied the emerging film industry in Texas, cites industry sources who declare that making films and television commercials in the South saves money for producers. The biggest

savings, according to most producers, comes from cutting the number of workers on the job.

"Picking up equipment in Hollywood would require the services of a grip, an assistant cameraman, plus two Teamsters," writes Justice. "In Texas, one or two crew members routinely pick up equipment without assistance from the Teamsters."

For large productions that require the use of hundreds or thousands of background actors called extras, producers who move from Los Angeles to Texas can cut costs even further by avoiding the Screen Extras Guild. In Texas, there is no union for extras — and thus no union wages.

The Florida Film Commission has been using the same tactics for several years, attracting scores of big-budget productions to new studios in Miami and Orlando. Such state-funded commissions essentially serve as agents for filmmakers — using taxpayer money to scout locations and ensure trouble-free shoots.

Dino DeLaurentis went a step further, attempting to set up a 16-acre non-union studio in Wilmington, North Carolina. The project fell through, but Cannon, Caroloco, New World, and other "mini-major" production companies have set up non-union shops on a smaller scale in other states. Studio complexes are currently in the planning stages in Atlanta, Memphis, Houston, New Orleans, and Jacksonville.

North Carolina has been the biggest beneficiary of the film industry flight. Since the State Film Office was formed in 1980, nearly 200 feature films have been shot on location in the state.

"The three most successful independently produced films in history — *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles I and II* and *Dirty Dancing* — were all shot here," boasts Bill Arnold, director of the film office. "Twentieth-Century Fox shot *The Last of the Mohicans* totally on location in North Carolina at a cost of \$46 million."

Such productions add up, Arnold notes. "Counting all production — films, videos, television series — the total economic impact on the state is something in excess of \$2.5 billion. North Carolina has ranked either second or third in the country for six of the last seven years for total revenues derived from filmmaking."

Arnold cites several reasons for the film boom in North Carolina, emphasizing the variety of the state's climate, land, and buildings. "The terrain and architecture in certain spots resembles New England. Rather than endure Boston during January, producers are able to move down to North Carolina and shoot in a much more com-

"North Carolina has ranked either second or third in the country for six of the last seven years for total revenues derived from filmmaking."

fortable climate and still get the same New England look.”

But the bottom line is money. “North Carolina is a right-to-work state, which seems to be important to certain producers,” he says. “We now have a resident workforce of 1,000 technical people who don’t do anything but work movies. We have more movie studio complexes and sound stages than any state besides California.”

QUIET ON THE SET!

Today an estimated two-thirds of all feature films made in the United States — including big-budget, Academy Award winners like *Dances With Wolves* — are non-union productions. Most are made on the sly throughout the South, with little pre-production publicity. Big-name actors are given roles — and a share of the profits — on the condition that they will not reveal that the picture will be shot away from Los Angeles under non-union terms.

“There are situations where you look at a picture and say it needs to be done non-union,” explains one top studio executive who wished to remain anonymous. “We do that, but we do it out of town. You try it here in Los Angeles and you’ll get organized and wind up with a grievance.”

In most cases, however, film unions have been forced to accept cuts in pension and health care benefits. Like other labor organizations, their members are faced with the dilemma of either giving up hard-won benefits or losing their jobs to the non-union South.

Indeed, the region’s greatest value to producers may be as a bargaining chip with the unions. By making a significant number of movies in Texas, Florida, and North Carolina, the producers have managed to weaken the unions on their home turf. Unions now routinely provide significant concessions for films made in Los Angeles and New York. They have revamped their roster system to allow producers to hire a wider range of people. They ignore work rules to make inroads with low-budget producers. And when films move from Los Angeles to other locations, the unions no longer require that entire crews be taken along.

Slowly, though, the unions have begun to fight back. When unions have found out about big productions outside Los Angeles, they have taken action to improve wages and conditions. On some

Southern locations, organizers have disrupted production by making noise and using mirrors to reflect sunlight into cameras. In September, the Teamsters disrupted filming of *The Real McCoys* in Atlanta to force the studio to recognize the union. In 1989, IATSE organizers chased *Robo Cop II* to Texas and managed to get some concessions from the producers.

“The idea is not to harass, but rather to get those film crews covered by union wages, working conditions, and ben-

“Everybody enjoyed it at first, meeting the actors and the big-name people,” says Hamlet Police Chief Terry Moore. “But as time wore on and the roads remained blocked, folks couldn’t come and go on Main Street like they wanted to. There was a lot of inconvenience, and local storeowners said it hurt their business because people couldn’t get to their stores.”

Townpeople were shocked by “how much money was wasted on the film,” Moore says. “It was just phenomenal.

Photo by Harry Lynch/New & Observer



PRODUCTION TIED UP THE MAIN STREET OF HAMLET FOR MONTHS. “THERE WAS A LOT OF INCONVENIENCE,” SAYS POLICE CHIEF TERRY MOORE.

efits,” says Bruce Doering of Local 659. “We got the film crew on *The Last of the Mohicans* in North Carolina to sign cards saying they wanted IATSE to represent them. It was like a scene from *Norma Rae*. Local television cameras came out to cover it. The producer tried to intimidate the crew by saying, ‘You’re not really for the union. Everybody who’s for the union, stand up.’ Everybody stood up.”

Moviemakers may also find that they are wearing out their welcome in small towns across the region. Local residents and businesses in towns like Hamlet earn little from Hollywood films like *Billy Bathgate* beyond the thrill of seeing movie stars.

They spent so much fixing up a hotel here — putting up period wallpaper and carpeting and building an entire miniature golf course — and then none of those things made it into the movie. It was too bad it turned out like it did. It was a tremendous flop.”

In the end, says Moore, few in Hamlet were sad to see the film crew pack up and go. “It turned out to be like anything else,” he says. “Once the excitement wore off, people grew a little tired of it.” □

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REBIRTH

Three recent films resist the Southern

OF A

stereotypes of D.W. Griffith, depicting a

NATION

technicolor region of black, brown, and **g(r)ay.**

Ever since D.W. Griffith released his cinematic masterpiece *Birth of a Nation* in 1915, most films depicting the South have projected a one-sided image of white and black Southerners. From *Gone With the Wind* to *Glory*, Hollywood studios have portrayed race relations in the region as a static exchange in which the villains and victims are black, and the saviors are white.

The film imagery has its roots in slavery. Most of the earliest plantation melodramas presented black women as maidservants to their white mistresses, meek victims of their rapacious white masters, and complacent breeders of another generation of enslaved black children. Black men were cast as manipulative, sexually violent, and selfish — as rapacious as their white male counterparts when left to their own devices, yet as meek as their black sisters in the presence of white men.

In *Birth of a Nation*, Griffith simply consolidated these already existing

stereotypes of the black community. The film portrays the black man as the epitome of criminality. A black matriarch — played by a white woman in black-face — tries to protect a white Southern belle from the lustful advances of an educated mulatto politician and an unruly black field hand. When the matriarch fails to domesticate the black brutes, the Klan rides to the rescue. The film garnered the praise of President Woodrow Wilson and provided the Klan with a recruitment tool to enlist members in the North.

Although the stereotypes in *Birth* date from plantation days, such images remain all too prevalent today. In real-life politics as well as make-believe movies, the black community is still portrayed as prone to sexual violence (consider the threat of rapist Willie Horton used by George Bush during the 1988 campaign) — and as best subdued by state force (consider the beating of Rodney King by Los Angeles police last year).

In recent years, film studios have churned out a series of nostalgic melodramas about civil rights. Unfortunately, these movies do little to reverse the stereotypes of earlier motion pictures. In most cases, the films show racial injustice as a solely Southern phenomenon. In *Mississippi Burning* (1988) and *Glory* (1988), Northern white men rescue blacks from the bigotry and violence of Southern whites. In *Driving Miss Daisy* (1989) and *A Long Walk Home* (1991), Southern white women overcome their prejudice and come to see their black servants as friends. The accusatory finger

never points to segregation in the North; the popular media condition audiences to accept racism and its murderous history as part of the rural Southern landscape.

Independent films like *Harlan County U.S.A.* (1976) and *Matewan* (1987) offer exceptions to this rule, depicting a landscape in which working-class whites join forces with blacks and women against their powerful employers. In the past year, however, three new films — including two produced by Hollywood studios —

BY

MARK A. REID

suggest that this alternative vision of Southern race relations is gradually finding its way into the mainstream media.

All three films — *Daughters of the Dust*, *Mississippi Masala*, and *Fried Green Tomatoes* — resist black and white stereotypes of the Southern melodrama, promoting a broader awareness of civil rights that encompasses women and gays. Two of the films focus on the bonds between Southern women; the third dramatizes hatred and bigotry between two different colored communities. Taken together, these films move beyond the static images of earlier movies to present a dynamic portrait of black, white, and brown Southerners.

RACE AND UTOPIA

Ibo Landing, one of a hundred sea islands off the coast of Georgia and South Carolina, is the setting of *Daughters of the Dust*. The year is 1902. The Peazants, an extended African-American family of Gullah people descended from West African slaves, are preparing to leave their ancestral home. Their imminent departure worries Nana, the 88-year-old matriarch who guards the Yoruba religious rituals and cures she learned from her West African elders.

Nana refuses to accompany the family to the North, fearing the move would break her connection with her African ancestors who lie buried on Ibo Landing. She knows that her knowledge of the family's oral history, her skillful use of the island fauna for medicinal purposes, and her wisdom and daily rituals cannot be transplanted. She is a root doctor and spiritual leader who rejects the temptation of modernism and a better life on the mainland.

Other members of the family consider Nana primitive and superstitious. Her most vocal critics, Viola and Haagar Peazant, embrace Christianity



IN *DAUGHTERS OF THE DUST*, NANA PEAZANT (RIGHT) PASSES ON RESPECT FOR AFRICAN TRADITIONS TO OTHER MEMBERS OF HER FAMILY.

and argue for Northern migration, saying it will improve their lives.

Ignoring their criticism, Nana seeks help from the spirits of her ancestors. She converses with her deceased elders,



IN *MISSISSIPPI MASALA*, THE LOVE BETWEEN MINI AND DEMETRIUS IGNITES HATRED BETWEEN TWO DIFFERENT COLORED COMMUNITIES.

asking them to guide the departing family members on their migration to the North. Throughout the film, the dead are given life through her voice-overs, which director Julie Dash uses to languidly guide the camera through the lush green vegetation of Ibo Landing and the lives of its yellow, brown, and blue-black inhabitants. By the end of the film, Nana has managed to instill in each family member a reverence for their Yoruba past.

Like the Peazants in *Daughters*, members of the East Indian community in *Mississippi Masala* experience culture shock when they are uprooted from their ancestral land and seek refuge in mainstream America. Expelled from Uganda by the dictatorship of Idi Amin, the family migrates to Greenwood, Mississippi. Ethnic rivalry soon erupts with their African-American neighbors in a community dominated by white townsfolk.

At first, director Mina Nair shows residents of different colors coexisting in peace. "Black, brown, yellow, Mexican, Puerto Rican — all the same," declares an East Indian character. "As long as you're not white, means you are colored. Honest people of color must stick together."

A split occurs, however, when Demetrius, the black owner of a carpet cleaning business, falls in love with Mina, the daughter of an East Indian motel operator. The interracial relationship brings underlying racial tensions to the surface. The East Indian community wants Mina to abide by their customs, which permit her father to arrange her marriage. "People stick to their own kind," her father tells her. "You're forced to accept that when you're older." Similarly, the African-American community wants Demetrius to be mindful of the unwritten law against interracial intimacy. "What's wrong with you, boy?" says his father. "Don't you know the rules?" Although the East Indians boycott Demetrius and white bankers foreclose on his business loan, the young lovers ignore the racial hatred of their elders and elope.

Two young lovers also buck the



IN *FRIED GREEN TOMATOES*, IDGIE AND BIG GEORGE CREATE A UTOPIAN COMMUNITY OF BLACK AND WHITE, STRAIGHT AND GAY.

status quo in *Fried Green Tomatoes* — except in this case the lovers are lesbians. At the Whistle Stop Cafe, Iddie and Ruth work alongside the black male cook Big George and his mother Sipsey to feed an Alabama town of black and white Southerners. Unlike the contemporary reality of *Masala*, the cafe is a Depression-era utopia where race and sexuality seem to evade the clutches of Southern determinism.

As in *Masala*, though, there are divisive forces at work. Iddie and Ruth are oddities in their rural Southern community, and some Whistle Stop residents do not condone their activities. Sheriff Grady and the local Ku Klux Klan chapter want the two white women to stop being so chummy with their African-American staff and patrons, but Iddie and her extended interracial family simply shrug off the warnings.

"It don't make no sense," says Sipsey. "Big old ox like Grady won't sit next to a colored child when he eat an egg shoot right out of a chicken's ass."

When Klansmen from Georgia arrive to intimidate the black staff, however, the sheriff sides with the women and prevents the hooded intruders from whipping Big George. Throughout the film, director John Avnet portrays a South in which racism and homophobia

are nearly absent until the Klan enters the frame.

JOINING THE STRUGGLE

All three films reject the Klan mentality of *Birth of a Nation* and its descendants, offering an enduring critique of racism. Even *Daughters*, with its absence of racism and inter-ethnic rivalry among the Peazants, makes clear the racism of the world beyond Ibo Landing. One character, Eli, maintains an interest in the anti-lynching movement of the early 1900s, and director Dash underlines its importance by ending the film with Eli's departure to join the struggle on the mainland.

Despite their awareness of the forces of hatred, all three films stress the strength of the central characters. Never do we see racism destroy the spirituality of the Peazant women, the love between Demetrius and Mina, or the interracial and lesbian camaraderie which enlivens the Whistle Stop Cafe.

In this way, each film fosters a feminist understanding of civil rights. All three develop interesting portraits of their female protagonists, and the two directed by women allow female characters to tell the story. An elderly Iddie narrates *Tomatoes*, and the narration in

Daughters alternates between an elderly Nana Peazant and a girl-child who is soon to be born.

Just as contemporary civil rights legislation provides us with remedies for discrimination based on race, gender, and sexual orientation, these three films provide us with alternative views of racism, sexism, and homophobia. The community depicted in each film represents the uneasiness of a society faced with emerging coalitions fighting the privileges of the status quo.

All three films resist beliefs, socio-cultural customs, and detrimental ideas and practices which would inhibit the growth of their central characters.

Nana Peazant struggles against the modernism and Christian fundamentalism that threatens her African traditions. Mina and Demetrius fight the prejudice that censures people of brown, black, yellow, and red complexions from loving those outside their racial and ethnic communities. Iddie and Ruth confront the racism and homophobia cloaked in Christianity that censure their love for each other and their friendship with black people.

At the end of *Fried Green Tomatoes*, after Ruth dies and Iddie moves on, Whistle Stop becomes a ghost town by the side of the tracks. "When that cafe closed, the heart of the town just stopped beating," Iddie concludes. "It's funny how a little place like this brought so many people together."

Like the Whistle Stop Cafe, the three films provide psychological escapes from small-town mendacity. Like Nana Peazant, Iddie and Ruth, and Mina and Demetrius, they create spiritual and loving places for a new generation of moviegoers. □

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THE LOST COLONY FILM

How North Carolina citizens used the
new medium of film to tell their own story

— without any **HELP** from Hollywood.

By
Tom Whiteside

Many years ago I was a guest at a Nags Head beach cottage, one of the lovely old family homes of the “un-painted aristocracy” poised on the easternmost edge of the continent. The house was filled with a poignant sense of history, and two pictures in the living room caught my eye. One was a large, colorful map showing the chief industrial and agricultural products of the United States by region. Published in 1953, the map boasted more than 100 symbols — an oil derrick in Texas, a wedge of cheese in Wisconsin, a fish and a tobacco leaf in North Carolina.

Way out West, next to Los Angeles, was a reel of motion picture film. The little symbol, I realized, represented nothing less than the cornerstone of the modern entertainment industry. As predictable as cars coming out of Detroit, movies came out of Hollywood.

The other picture that captured my attention was a grainy black-and-white photograph, a production still from a 1921 movie known as *The Lost Colony Film*. It showed folks from the nearby community of Manteo dressed in rather elaborate colonial costumes acting out the settlement and mysterious disappearance of the first English colony on Roanoke Island.

That film, however, was not made by Hollywood. It was made by the people of Manteo, Edenton, Elizabeth City, Hertford, and other neighboring communities. Lacking the powerful machinery of the emerging film industry, local citizens banded together, using the power of their community to tell their own story.

In 1921, Hollywood was barely 10 years old. Commercial radio broadcasts were brand new. Television, the invention that has dominated the second half of the century, was only a far-fetched idea. Yet in an isolated corner of North Carolina, a group of civic-minded enthusiasts undertook a film project that could be considered the beginning of independent media activism in the state.

MISS MABEL

Roanoke Island was a remote place in 1921. A few hardy folks vacationed in Manteo and Nags Head, but it was quite different from the condominiums and cottages that line the beach today. It was a rugged place. There were no bridges to the Outer Banks. The Wright Brothers had first flown at nearby Kitty Hawk just 18 years before.

The island had been among the first settled by the English, but the history of its two failed colonies had been overshadowed



IN HER ELEANOR DARE COSTUME, MABEL EVANS ORGANIZED REHEARSALS IN AN INDIAN VILLAGE SET DERIVED FROM THE PAINTINGS OF JOHN WHITE.

owed by the success of settlements in Jamestown and New England. The people of Manteo felt their heritage deserved to be more widely known. As early as 1880, civic pride had led them to organize programs in recognition of Fort Raleigh and its inhabitants, the colony that disappeared without a trace in 1590.

To popularize the story and gain a wider audience, a group of residents decided to use the new medium of film to tell their tale. No one contributed more to the effort than Mabel Evans, the superintendent of schools for Dare County. "Miss Mabel" scripted the film and traveled to Raleigh to secure \$3,000 in funding from the State Board of Education and the State Historical Commission. Bureaucrats were keen to use motion pictures as an educational tool, but they felt it might be more prudent to make the first film closer to Raleigh. Evans persisted, and the movie was shot "on location" in Manteo.

Shooting started in September. The

film had a professional crew of three — cameramen C. A. Rheims and Red Stephens of the Atlas Educational Film Corporation of Chicago, and director Elizabeth Grimball of the New York School of Theater. Mabel Evans organized a volunteer cast and crew of 200, and she herself played the part of Eleanor Dare.

When the film was in production, business in Manteo came to a standstill. Everyone worked on the movie. Rope was unraveled and dyed for Indian wigs. Men and boys made bows and arrows, women and girls made costumes. Oscar Daniels of Wanchese turned a shad boat into a 16th century galleon by constructing a canvas-covered frame that fit over the deck. The boat appears in an extraordinary 70-second shot in the film, sailing from right to left in the far distance. As not much more than a large dot on the horizon, the ship is convincing enough, and the long length of the shot helps convey the 67-day voyage of uncharted

seas that brought the first explorers to Roanoke Island in 1584.

Although little archaeological exploration had been done by 1921, the islanders knew the exact location of the original Fort Raleigh. They went there to film, and built a set on the site. More than two decades later, when the site was fully excavated, archaeologists discovered that a trench dug by the film crew crossed an actual wall of the original fort.

Many of the volunteers who worked on the movie had never seen a motion picture before, so organizers set up a projector and showed films to give everyone a sense of the project. All of the actors were amateurs. Though some had extensive experience on stage and in pageants, none had been on camera before.

There is more posing than acting, although Dr. W. C. Horton brings a high degree of histrionic gusto to the role of John White, governor of the colony and the one who discovered it "lost" in 1590. Horton, a dentist from Raleigh, emotes, gesticulates, and anguishes in fine fashion. What we fail to see him do, however, is paint.

Much of what we know of the original coastal inhabitants who greeted the first English explorers we know from the watercolors of John White. Engraved by Theodore de Bry and published in 1590, the images introduced Europe to this land and what grew here — not only tobacco and sassafras, but also the people and their culture. Today their language is unknown, their culture destroyed by contact with the whites. But from White's pictures we know something of their dress, their dances, the way they built their houses and canoes, laid out their towns, fished and farmed. It would be difficult to imagine the life of the coastal Indians were it not for the

records made by one of their visitors.

These images are re-translated in the movie. In the second reel, Captain Barlowe and seven men visit the village of Chief Granganimeo. In one of the film's most satisfying sequences, we see the stockade enclosure of the village, some buildings, and various activities such as grinding corn and broiling fish. All of these images come directly from White.

MEDIA POWER

After post-production work was completed in Chicago, the film premiered on November 7, 1921 in the Supreme Court chambers in Raleigh before an audience of 150 state officials and friends. State Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. E. C. Brooks was master of ceremonies and Governor Cameron Morrison was in attendance. Although the five-reel film suffered under the unwieldy title *The Earliest English Expedition and Attempted Settlements in Territory Now the United States 1584-1591*, it re-

ceived a hearty stamp of approval and was soon being distributed throughout the state to community clubs, colleges, and public schools.

The film toured the state for five years under the auspices of the Bureau of Community Service, a state office established "to improve the social and educational conditions of rural communities through a series of entertainments consisting of moving pictures selected for their entertaining and educational value." The bureau provided a projector and screen for showings, as well as a generator to supply power to locations that had no electricity.

The Lost Colony Film was intended to be the first in a series of state-funded films entitled "North Carolina Pictorial History." No other films were produced — a fact that attests more to the remarkable achievement of Miss Mable and her Manteo neighbors than to the lack of other deserving subjects.

After the film was completed, in fact,



C. A. RHEIMS, RED STEPHENS, AND DIRECTOR ELIZABETH GRIMBALL USED A HAND-CRANKED 35MM CAMERA AT THE FORT RALEIGH LOCATION IN 1921.

many members of the original cast continued to give live performances and pageants, always "on location" in Manteo. The grassroots effort led to the premiere of the "symphonic outdoor drama" *The Lost Colony* in 1937, a play which still runs each summer. The play has been seen by more than two million people, spawning the entire genre of outdoor drama.

But the film did more than inspire mosquito-slapping theater for tourists. Seventy-one years after it was produced, *The Lost Colony Film* still shines as an example of media arts activism in its pioneering use of the film medium for a purpose other than financial gain. Remarkably forward-thinking for its time, this early media effort can serve as inspiration to independents today. If the residents of Manteo and neighboring communities could overcome the challenges of their day and succeed in telling their story, then modern-day media activists should be able to do no less.

From raising funds to rounding up volunteers, the work seems much the same as it was 71 years ago.

The film also serves as a reminder of the importance of placing media power in the hands of ordinary people. To maintain a sense of identity, of community, of place, we must periodically reexamine our artifacts, our images, our memorials. This cannot be left to Hollywood, or Raleigh, or Washington. It must be done "on location," by those who know where the old things are and what they mean. It must be done in the language of the day. □

The Lost Colony Film is available through the State Film Library at all public libraries in North Carolina. Tom Whiteside is assistant director of film and video at Duke University and editor of the upcoming media arts newsletter *Workprint*. For more information contact Box 90671, Duke University, Durham, NC 27706.

JUST Here are Southerners who are DO taking the media into IT their own hands.

PUBLIC ACCESS

DURHAM, N.C.

When AnnRee Mitchell was growing up in North Carolina, her favorite television shows included *Howdy Doody* and the musical antics of *Liberace*. But when she got behind a camera herself, the Carrboro artist began producing very different kinds of programs — documentaries about the environment and community health.

Her series of shows entitled *North Carolina 1990 and Beyond* covered environmental issues ranging from right-to-know laws to recycling. Her documentary *Waste Wars* about a controversial waste incinerator in Caldwell County brought threats to her safety. And her insightful look at local organizing in *A Yard Meeting in Granville County* made the program a source of information for corporate and state government officials alike.

"When you put it on the TV set and people are watching and going through with their remote control, it's a great

equalizer," says Mitchell. "I'm right up there next to NBC and HBO, and viewers don't realize I'm just some little old mom in Carrboro."

A few miles down the road in Durham, David Merritt made a similar transition from watching mainstream TV to producing alternative programs. After he graduated from East Carolina University in 1990, Merritt went to work to broaden the role of minorities in the media.

"It's important that *our* people tell our own story, so there's no misrepresentation," he says. "History has shown that control of the media is very important in society. For African Americans to be represented in a respectable and honorable way, we must master that medium so we can control our representation to the masses."

Mitchell and Merritt share much in common. Both are African-American artists who turned to video for its potential to reach a broader audience. Both are committed to making a social statement with their documentaries. And both have found a forum for their work on the local public-access channel on cable television.

Public access first emerged during the late 1960s, when cable companies were required to provide local residents with free production facilities, train them in their use, and reserve at least one channel for the programs they produced. The result was an atmosphere of greater participation and empowerment that transformed viewers into producers. For the first time, the public had access to the airwaves that was unavailable on commercial networks or public television.

Mitchell and Merritt both produce shows on the public-access channel provided by Cablevision. As in most parts of the country, residents must attend a month-long series of training sessions before they can use production facilities. Participants learn how to operate equipment and become familiar with the jobs of studio personnel. Trainees must then volunteer for five hours in the studio, attend a location shoot supervised by a producer, and complete seven additional hours of advanced training in graphics, audio production, and editing.

Those who survive this media boot camp receive the equipment and studio time they need to develop their own projects — access that makes the expen-

sive world of television production available and affordable to the entire community.

"I meet people who have a very weird perception of what I do, and hardly ever is it accurate," says AnnRee Mitchell. "The general perception of producer is someone with money — but I do documentaries because it's the only thing you can do with a small budget."

"REGULAR PEOPLE"

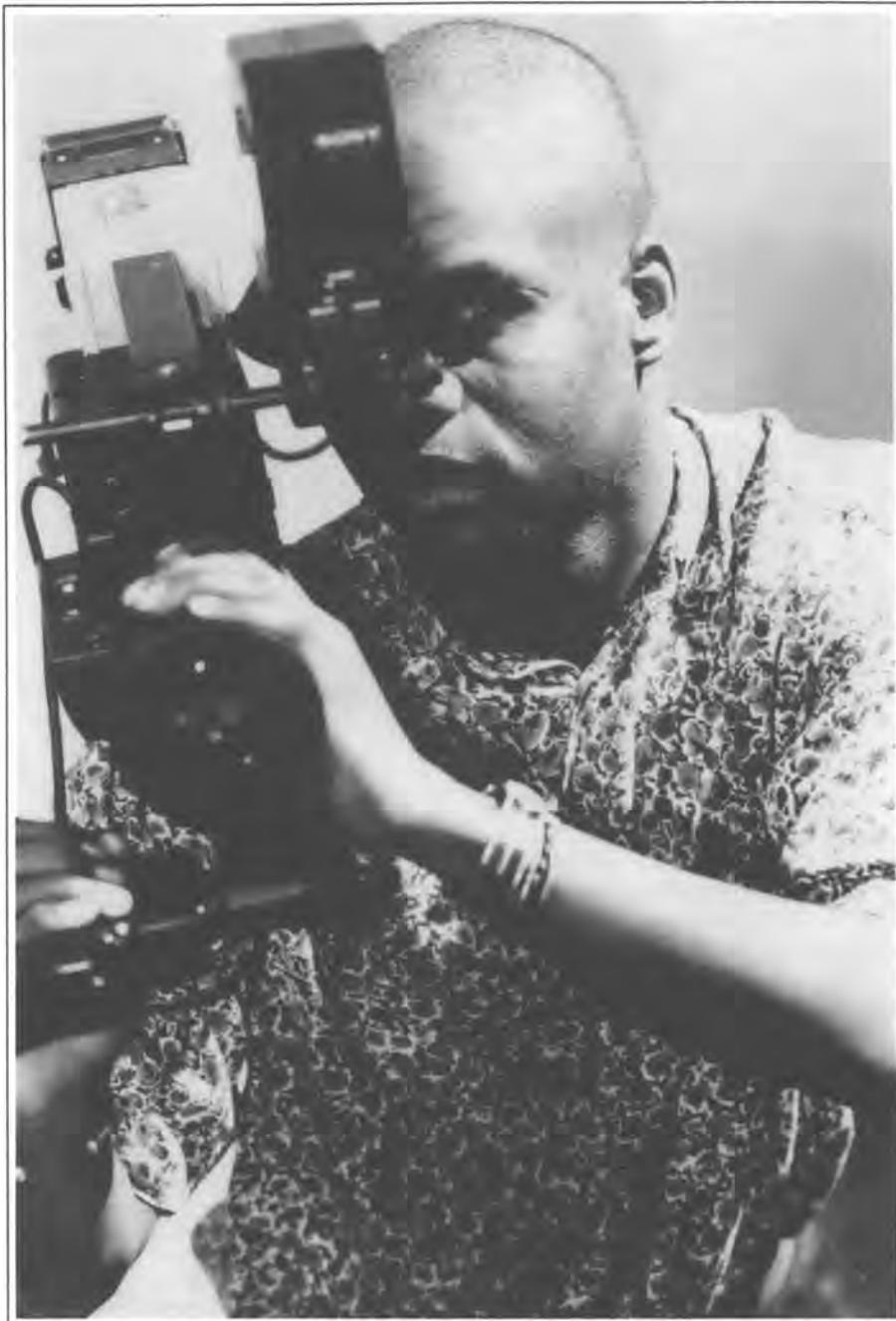
Mitchell was one of the first residents to take advantage of public access on Cablevision. During the late 1970s, she was working as a caterer to support herself as a painter when she met Corey Allen, who had directed episodes of *Star Trek* and *Hill Street Blues*. Allen expanded her vision of the potential of video and critiqued her work. Since then, many a station manager has come and gone at Cablevision, but Mitchell remains.

Mitchell says her background as an artist has influenced her television work. "Because I'm a painter, it really does affect the way I look through the camera. Look at this toy box, this paint box! That's light and sound and motion — and they call it TV!"

Mitchell sets high standards for her work. "There are some days I'm very proud of us," she says, "and other days I want to crawl under a rock." But being judged on the same technical level as commercial television has made it difficult for public-access producers like Mitchell to air their programs on the Public Broadcasting System.

Mitchell is quick to point out, however, that the major networks are growing accustomed to using real-life footage shot on home video cameras — such as the beating of Rodney King by Los Angeles police officers. "Don't look down your nose at my public access camera ever again," she says.

Such high standards have brought results. Officials at the Federal Communications Commission recently called Mitchell a "visionary," and she is the first producer in North Carolina to air her work over Deep Dish, a national network which broadcasts local public-access programs throughout the country. She is also the first producer to simulcast one of her productions over public-access stations in Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill.



"IT'S IMPORTANT THAT *OUR* PEOPLE TELL OUR STORY, SO THERE'S NO MISREPRESENTATION," SAYS INDEPENDENT PRODUCER DAVID MERRITT.

"The fact that public access is not censored is its greatest asset — besides being free of charge," she says. "It allows us to bring important issues to the community in a healing, open, honest way."

In addition to her work on environmental issues, Mitchell has produced music videos featuring local jazz, rock, and gospel artists. She is especially proud of her work with an alternative rock band called Flat Duo Jets. "It's not easy work-

ing with rockers if you're a woman," she chuckles.

Although she has spent over a decade in public access, Mitchell still marvels at the forum it provides. "If you think about what we're doing, it's amazing. A bunch of regular people — non-TV-trained, regular day-job kind of people — come together and often do live TV. People get all worked up over *Saturday Night Live*, but we do it all the time."



"I'M JUST SOME LITTLE OLD MOM," SAYS ANNREE MITCHELL, WHO MOVED FROM WATCHING *HOWDY DOODY* TO PRODUCING HER OWN DOCUMENTARIES.

INNER-CITY TV

David Merritt, like AnnRee Mitchell, views television as an outlet for his talents as an artist. "Media for me means art, all artistic mediums," says Mitchell, who can trace his interest in drawing back to the age of two. Through his sketches, he has been a storyteller.

"I used to make long storyboards of complicated fight scenes and things of that nature. So, I guess I've always been able to create things in my mind. When it came to doing videos and film, that was a great asset."

Merritt produced his first video as a sophomore majoring in art history at Eastern Carolina University, and he was struck by the creative potential of the medium. "There was something very immediate about video. It was very economical, and at the same time you could make a social statement."

Merritt first heard about public access from a friend. "As an opportunity, it was great. It was almost unbelievable that you could use all this equipment for free." He completed the initial training at Cablevision, and was soon helping others with their productions.

He also began producing documentaries of his own. *The Legacy*, which traces the history of African Americans through slavery and bondage, was broadcast nationwide over the Deep Dish network. "I wanted to make people think," Merritt says. "People do not have

a sufficient knowledge of the true heritage of African Americans. All scientists know that life started in Africa. We are the kings and queens of humanity."

Last March, Merritt and Chuck Davis of the African Dance Ensemble traveled to West Africa to record the performance and to document the meaning of traditional African dances. The project, entitled *The Definition of Dance*, was filmed on location in Gambia and Senegal. When he returned to Durham, Merritt used the public-access facilities to edit his footage.

"This is a very important piece," he says. "If it is done correctly, we will have an opportunity not only to go back to Gambia, but up and down the West Coast of Africa."

Merritt has also used public access to reach out to inner-city youth. He has taught video classes in local housing projects and produced a show called FGP 3 — *Fellows Gettin' Paid the Right Way* — to dispel myths about disadvantaged kids.

"There's a big stereotype out there that puts them in the category of criminal," Merritt says. "They just get into trouble like any other kids. The video shows these kids in their own environment, not gang banging, but being productive. They are learning how to get paid the right way through jobs and opportunities."

Such shows demonstrate how public access can provide a media forum for

those with a message. "I want people whose voice is seldom heard to use public access," says Merritt. "There's a lot of the majority already on network TV, so we need lot a more of the minority — different ethnic groups, different persuasions all together. Simply get your voice out there and let your story be heard. That's what it's all about."

—Kathrandra Smith

APPALSHOP

WHITESBURG, KY.

This is how the documentary *Fast Food Women* begins: It is dark outside, but lights are on at the Druthers fast food restaurant. The camera closes in on the kitchen, where the people inside are scurrying to prepare breakfast.

As the sun rises, Sereda Collier fills Styrofoam plates with bacon, scrambled eggs, biscuits, gravy. She is slightly built, with gray hair and a wrinkled face. She stops for a second, lifts up the corners of her apron and briefly fans herself with it. "Whew. It's hot."

Collier took a job at Druthers seven years ago after her husband, a coal miner for 17 years, was laid off and couldn't find work. She didn't want to talk about her low pay and lack of benefits.

"I'm real tired," she says. "My feet hurt, and I feel like I've got about five pounds of grease on me... If you stand over that grill all day, it feels like it's going to drip off of you."

When the documentary premiered on public television nationwide last summer, it offered a moving profile of the growing number of women like Sereda in eastern Kentucky who have found themselves trapped in low-paying jobs without pensions or health insurance. But a look behind the camera provides a glimpse of a group of people from the Southern Appalachians who have found a way to tell their own stories, producing independent media to provoke debate about important issues.

Fast Food Women was produced by Appalshop, a media center founded 23 years ago to examine regional issues and document the traditions and art of Appalachia. Through film, radio programs, photos, records, and theater productions, the center strives to show the people of the Southern Appalachians "pursuing that which is important to all of us: a chance to work, to live in health and

peace, to share our lives with those we love, and to create and sustain that which is beautiful.”

Anne Lewis Johnson, the producer of *Fast Food Women*, is eating lunch with Mimi Pickering, another Appalshop filmmaker, at the Courthouse Cafe in Whitesburg. During the meal, they discuss the importance of independent media — and some of the difficulties in getting people to watch or listen to thoughtful work.

“I want to see people get involved in social change, and get a handle on what I see as really horrible things going on,” says Johnson. “That’s why I do what I do.”

“I don’t think there is a mass audience of people interested in social change,” Pickering says. “It’s hard to get challenging work watched by a lot of people. People watch television to relax, to vegetate. After a hard day at work, they don’t necessarily want to see children killed in India, or problems in the inner cities.”

“I think Mimi is right,” Johnson says. “People are real apathetic. They think that what they do isn’t going to matter. But I’m constantly thinking we all need to be smarter. The demands are so much more now. We’ve got to figure these problems out or there are going to be a lot of people who just don’t make it.”

KNOWING PEOPLE

The problems of “people who just don’t make it” are evident after lunch, as Johnson and Pickering walk the four blocks to Appalshop — all the way on the other side of town. They pass empty storefronts, an indicator not only of a slack economy, but of the presence of a Wal-Mart on the edge of town. Because the coal economy has been so erratic, the area around Pine Mountain has never been an easy place to find stable work.

For most, it is not an easy place to live. The region lacks clean water, decent schools, and adequate health care. Many local officials are in the pocket of the coal companies. Outside corporations own more land than local residents. Such conflicts between how life should be and how it really is have provided the focus for many Appalshop documentaries:

▼ *On Our Own Land* documented abuses of the broad-form deed, drawing intense criticism from coal company representatives.

▼ *The Big Lever* exposed corrupt



“WE ALL NEED TO BE SMARTER,” SAYS APPALSHOP PRODUCER ANNE LEWIS JOHNSON. “THE DEMANDS ARE SO MUCH MORE NOW.”

political practices in Leslie County, Kentucky.

▼ *Buffalo Creek Flood* investigated why Pittston Coal Company didn’t act to fix a dam before it burst in 1972, killing 125 people and destroying entire towns.

Appalshop resides in a cedar-sided, three-story building that in the past has served as a Dr. Pepper bottling plant, a laundromat, and a pizza parlor. Reno-

vated in 1980, the building now holds an art gallery, conference room, 150-seat theater, film and video editing rooms, radio station, recording studio, and offices.

On the second floor, Herb Smith is preparing a cup of tea before he begins editing his new film about the economic history of Appalachia. Like most of Appalshop’s 32 full-time employees,

Smith is from the region. He grew up in Whitesburg and helped found the media center in 1970.

Smith says he has encountered little suspicion from local residents about his independent status. "It is actually pretty acceptable here to be alternative. The notion that you've got to be with a television station or in the structures that exist, I don't find that being too much of a problem around here. The populace is outside of established structures, so they kind of expect you to be. In fact, if I were traveling as the local CBS affiliate or Kentucky Educational Television, I actually think it would be more of a problem dealing with the people we deal with."

Living and working in the same area also gives Appalshop an advantage over outside, better-financed commercial media, Smith says. "By living and working here, we are able to spend a lot of time with people. If you fly a crew from New York to Whitesburg, you are talking about shelling out several thousand dollars a day. If you sit around on the porch and talk to the people you're interviewing, it's money. The most expedient thing is to not get to know the people. The heat is on most producers to arrive, rip off the footage, and get the hell out."

"Recently, I went up to the head of Cram Creek to interview this woman who was 90 years old. When I got there, she said, 'Herbie, I just don't feel like it today.' I had the camera, I had everything in place. We talked a little bit. She talked about what was going on in her family. We didn't shoot anything. Then, when we came back, it was a wonderful interview. I know if I really pushed it, that it would have been horrible for both of us. I think that is the main advantage of being alternative."

RADIO FREE APPALACHIA

Down the hall in the recording studio, Maxine Kenny edits a feature for *Mountain News and World Report*, a weekly news and cultural program produced by WMMT, the community radio station at Appalshop. Kenny, who serves as public affairs director for the station, moved to eastern Kentucky from New York in 1969 to help improve health care in isolated communities. She recalls her frustration at trying to inform people in mountain hollows about public meetings.

"One of my fantasies at that time was to have a radio station. I thought, 'Wouldn't it be great to have a guerrilla radio station that we would just put in an old van, drive throughout the mountains, and get into somebody's frequency?' It wasn't a realistic fantasy, but we used to joke about it. Never in my wildest dreams did I think that 23 years later I would be working on something that probably is the closest thing one might call to Radio Free Appalachia."

Kenny is one of five staff members and 45 volunteers who provide programming for WMMT. They produce in-depth news reports, live shows, call-in programs, remote broadcasts from surrounding communities, and a range of music from traditional mountain music, to blues, folk, jazz, pop, rock, rap, and international.

"A lot of the public radio stations you listen to could be anywhere in the country," Kenny says. "There is a real sameness on public radio. We don't suffer from that. We don't try to hide the regional flavor of what we are talking about here. We don't try to fix people's language up. We're really minimalists when it comes to narration and analysis. That is in keeping with Appalshop's purpose of allowing people to have a voice here in the mountains."

The straightforward, no-gimmicks style distinguishes all of Appalshop's work from most media. Anne Johnson, the filmmaker, uses an unnarrated style for the programs she produces for the *Headwaters* television series broadcast by Kentucky Educational Television.

"In some ways, *Headwaters* is very alternative because of the unnarrated style," she says. "It is experimental in some ways because it is just ordinary people, like somebody who works in a fast food restaurant. But it seems less alternative than having people with polka dots on them dancing around the stage to some kind of electronic music. I don't think that alternative media has to have a wild and woolly aspect to it. It can be fairly accessible and still be alternative because of the subject matter, the people, and the way it is made."

Despite differences of style and content, Appalshop shares two major hurdles with other media: finding money to produce its work, and finding an audience to watch it.

Appalshop has always had to scramble for money. The media center evolved from the Appalachian Film

Workshop, started in 1970 with funds from federal War on Poverty programs. The name was condensed to Appalshop as it expanded to include June Appal Recordings and Roadside Theater. In its first decade, the center was fortunate just to meet the payroll. At one point, Appalshop employees went without a paycheck for several months.

Appalshop now boasts an annual budget of \$1.7 million. It raises money by performing plays, selling its records and films, and applying for grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, state arts councils, and private foundations. "Our track record helps us a great deal," says Ray Moore, financial administrator. "Our work is not too terribly controversial. We have a record of doing good work."

The center has also found a broad audience for its work. Public television stations throughout the country have broadcast its films and videos. Film festivals throughout the world have honored its documentaries. Colleges, universities, libraries, and community groups use its programs to educate people about the region and to spur debate. Audiences nationwide attend its touring plays and workshops.

This past summer, *Fast Food Women* was broadcast nationwide by public television stations as part of P.O.V. (Point Of View), a series featuring work by independent filmmakers. The previous season, P.O.V. included another Appalshop production, *Chemical Valley*.

"The quality of their work is extremely high," says Ellen Schneider, executive producer of the public television series P.O.V. "The issues they deal with are critical. They have the ability not only to focus on a story, but to engage national attention with a far broader appeal. That's unusual. Appalshop is the epitome of what regional work can do."

Dee Davis, executive producer of Appalshop Films, agrees. "There are always the problems of developing the audience and funding, of getting by in a place that is as economically hard-hit as this area," she says. "But the most difficult thing in the world is to do good work. If we are able to do good work, then these other challenges aren't as daunting. The continual challenge is that the work we produce will speak to people around the country, in ways that people will understand, about issues that are important."

—Nancy Adams

TAMPA, FLA.

When a handful of local residents got together back in 1977 to start a noncommercial, alternative radio station in Tampa, few people gave it much chance of succeeding. Even those sympathetic to the effort doubted that a station offering diverse and progressive programs on politics and culture could survive in such a conservative Southern town.

"It'll never work," people said. "Somewhere else, yes; Atlanta, maybe. But not here."

Yet in this coastal haven of powerful Southern families and transplanted Northern executives, WMNF has flourished. The non-profit station aims its programs at low- and moderate-income people — women, blacks, blue-collar workers, senior citizens, and college-educated professionals. At 88.5 FM — "the extreme left of your radio dial" — the station has become an institution of alternative voices for 100,000 listeners a week. More than 5,000 contribute to the station each year to keep it on the air.

WMNF goes beyond the classical music of many public radio affiliates, providing a model of truly *community* radio. The station trains local residents to do their own shows, and local news reports invariably include the voices of environmental activists, union representatives, farm worker advocates, and others whose views are typically excluded from traditional newscasts.

Indeed, the success of the station has made it a focal point for the progressive community in Tampa. "Any event you go to, if there's a group of people who are politically or socially aware, you'll find someone from WMNF there," says staff member Mercedes Skelton. "I was able to find people of like mind here."

WMNF was born in rebellion 15 years ago, when the president of the University of South Florida ordered its student-run public radio station to cease playing rock 'n' roll. It was bad for the school's image, he told them. Play classical music.

Instead, one student began researching what it would take to start up an independent station. He contacted the Association of Community Organization for Reform Now (ACORN), and they sent an organizer to help raise money. WMNF went on the air a few hours every night starting in 1979.



COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS LIKE CHARLES VANN HOST SHOWS ON WMNF.

Today the station is on around-the-clock. Its 100 volunteers far outnumber the seven paid staff members and exercise a great deal of collective power despite their diversity. They include retirees, teachers, an airport shoe shiner, doctors and lawyers, city workers, architects, post office employees, advertising executives, United Parcel Service delivery people, and college students. Young and old, black and white, married and

single, gay and straight, feminist and Young Republican — all work together to run the station from an old house amidst posters of musicians and revolutionaries, a homemade plywood box housing an Associated Press machine, three recycling bins in the break room labeled for glass, metal, and paper, and a couple of dogs by the transformer out back, waiting for the end of a volunteer's shift.

Some volunteers have been coming in for more than a decade to do the same programs every week. The regular schedule includes reggae, polka, Jewish folk music, bluegrass, Latin jazz, Dixieland, electronic music, Sixties and Seventies psychedelia, world beat, gospel, Celtic and British folk music, rhythm-and-blues, and new music.

"It's the only radio station in the area with a serious commitment to music as an art form instead of just selling tires and gas," says Logan Neill, a long-time volunteer and co-owner of the State Theater in neighboring St. Petersburg.

The station also offers volunteer-produced public affairs programs, including some aimed specifically at women and African-Americans. Volunteers are currently planning "Out in the Open," a public affairs show for gay, lesbian, and bisexual listeners.

"Radio as it's practiced now in most big cities is very narrow cast," says Lynn Chadwick, president of the National Federation of Community Broadcasters. "WMNF has a broader target and they seem to be hitting people in a wide range of groups."

There have been some notable failures, like the attempt to expand Latin music programs. Negative audience reaction — in this case, death threats — prompted WMNF to drop its forays into Cuban music and to quit playing the folk music of a Chilean killed in the 1973 coup. "We backed away from that and just played Puerto Rican salsa, but nobody donated to it," recalls news director Rob Lorei. Programs without listener support disappear. Latin music is now down to a one-hour weekly show of Brazilian jazz.

The biggest controversy in recent years came when a former station manager tried to boost donations from local businesses by emphasizing their financial sponsorship on the air. Volunteers and listeners — ever alert for signs of commercialism on the advertising-free station — feared that companies might exert unseemly pressures if given the upper hand over listeners. Their view prevailed.

Business contributions to the station now total less than \$5,000 — a fraction of its \$600,000 annual budget. Most of the money comes directly from listeners. "That's the safest way to make sure there's no taint on our programming," says Lorei.

—Linda Gibson



NEW ORLEANS, LA.

Hazel Schleuter acknowledged National Mule Day in October by devoting her popular Sunday morning radio show to songs about mules and donkeys.

It is the kind of thing devoted listeners in the New Orleans area have come to expect during the 12 years that Hazel has been on the air, sharing her vast knowledge — and equally vast record collection — of old-time country and bluegrass music.

And it is the kind of thing that has made WWOZ-FM one of the most unique community radio stations in the country.

The station debuted in early 1980 in cramped quarters above Tipitina's, a bar in Uptown New Orleans at the intersection of Napoleon Avenue and Tchoupitoulas Street. A group of people who had donated money to start the bar applied for a radio license, and before long the airwaves were filled with a rich gumbo of New Orleans rhythm and blues, traditional jazz and brass band music, and Caribbean melodies.

"Not only do we seem to be effectively fulfilling our mission to protect and preserve the musical heritage of New Orleans," says station manager David Freedman, "but WWOZ inherits the magic of the city — the musical magic of one of the world's greatest musical cities. It is a heady and challenging mission."

The challenge is not an easy one. When Freedman took over in September, he became the tenth manager of the station since 1987. WWOZ has been plagued in the past few years by internal bickering and by outside studies recommending more mainstream programming.

"We are not going to go mainstream," Freedman declares. "That is not what we are about. I have not made a single on-air personnel change

since I have been here. From the audience response, that is not what we need to do. We need to fine-tune some programs, but mostly we need to establish stability in the role of station manager. I hope to be here for a long time."

A native of New Orleans, Freedman has more than two decades of experience in community radio. In 1972, he founded the pioneer community radio station in the nation — KSUP in Santa Cruz, California — which later served as a model for WWOZ.

Freedman says he is determined to keep alive the rich gumbo of volunteer programs that makes the station distinctive. One of the first volunteers was Vernon Dugas, who died last January at the age of 56. Dugas, who supported his family as an iron worker and over the years collected thousands of New Orleans rhythm and blues records, tuned into the station one night shortly after it went on the air and immediately volunteered to share his rich legacy of music. Known as the Duke of Paducah, his strong Ninth Ward Yat accent, and his unflagging love of New Orleans music and those who make it, made him a local celebrity.

In 1984 the station relocated to more spacious quarters in Armstrong Park, just outside the French Quarter and a few blocks from the old Cosimo Matassa recording studios where everyone from Fats Domino to Little Richard to Ray Charles cut some of their earliest records. In classic New Orleans style, the cross-



town move was accompanied by a Mardi Gras parade complete with brass bands, second-lining, and street chanting.

According to Freedman, the station has benefited from the Blueprint Project, a program put together by American Public Radio and the National Federation of Community Broadcasters to support stations like WWOZ, WRFG in Atlanta, and WDNR in Miami. Experts with the project who studied WWOZ zeroed in on its major problem: the inability to keep a station manager. Managers came and went over the past four years, mainly because each seemed to have a different concept of how to change the station.

"My concept is not to change the station, but to improve it," says Freedman. "I want to strengthen programs that might not be as strong as they should, but I also want to retain the major mission — to give the audience the rich diversity of New Orleans music."

Since the move in 1984, the station has been run by the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation, the guiding force behind the world famous New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. On the air seven days a week, WWOZ offers a rich brew of contemporary and traditional jazz, New Orleans music, blues, gospel, Irish music, Latin music, country, bluegrass, Cajun, women's music, swing, African and Caribbean, Brazilian and reggae.

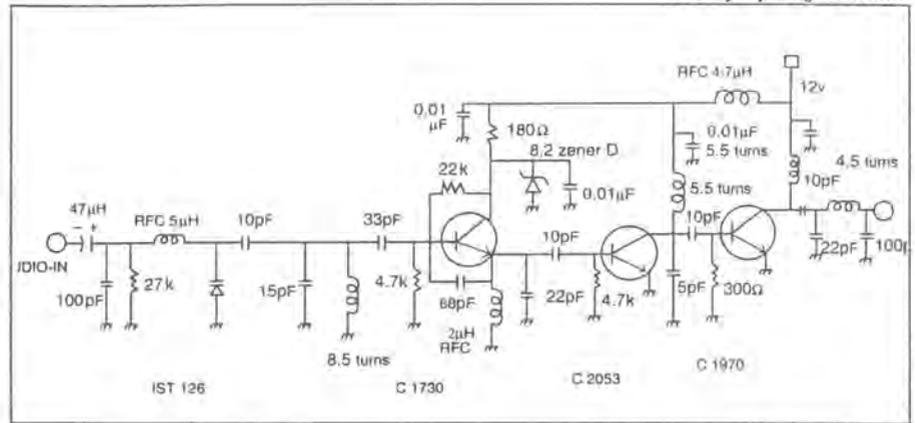
The diverse programs create broad support. When the station conducts its annual on-air fundraising drives, guests like Dr. John and Irma Thomas drop by to sing and encourage listeners to contribute to the station. And just in case someone's favorite music has been missed, the station broadcasts an eclectic two-hour show each weeknight called — what else? — The Kitchen Sink.

—Richard Boyd

PIRATE RADIO

EVERYWHERE, U.S.A.

The sign in the front yard along Cornwallis Road read, "Tune Your FM Radio to 98.1." Motorists in Durham, North Carolina who tuned in to the new station heard Christian programs. They also heard a station that was operating without a license.



A SCHEMATIC FOR A "BLACK BOX" THAT CAN BE USED TO MAKE A PIRATE RADIO TRANSMITTER.

The station was one of dozens in communities across the country that broadcast on the FM dial using small, unlicensed transmitters. Known as pirate radio — or the free radio or micro-radio movement — they are run by individuals or groups who bypass the Federal Communications Commission and go on the air without regulatory approval. Like the Durham station, many reach only half a mile, last only a few weeks, and don't attract much attention.

But not all unlicensed stations are so innocuous. Mbanna Kantako, a 33-year-old public housing resident in Springfield, Illinois, operates WTRG-Black Liberation Radio from his home using a one-watt transmitter, a cassette deck, a telephone, and a few odds and ends. Kantako, described by one of his colleagues as "black, blind, and broke," broadcasts a mix of music, political speeches by activists, interviews with local residents, and reports of police activity in the community.

Not surprisingly, the station has had its share of trouble. Three years ago Kantako was fined \$750 and ordered off the air by the FCC. When he refused to pay, the commission took him to court and won an order shutting him down. Kantako defied the order, however, and continues to broadcast. So far, the FCC has not enforced the ruling.

WTRG is not alone. Another affiliated station went on the air in Decatur, Illinois in 1990, and others are planned for Richmond, Virginia and Birmingham, Alabama. Kantako estimates that there are as many as 4,000 micro transmitters in operation, most broadcasting commercials for local businesses.

Nevertheless, micro-radio is far from constituting a popular movement. King Hall, an FCC Field Operations Officer,

says a few unauthorized stations are reported from time to time, but "the reports are rare." Penalties for unauthorized broadcasts can be as high as \$10,000. Enforcement, however, does not appear to be aggressive.

For most people, the cost of operating a legal station is prohibitive. Starting the smallest broadcast station available — 100 watts — costs at least \$50,000, if an uncontested frequency is available. Buying an existing station costs at least \$500,000. Starting a first-class micro-radio station, by contrast, costs less than \$1,000.

There is no shortage of information about how to do it. A recent meeting of the Union for Democratic Communications, for example, experimented with a small transmitter made from scratch for about \$30. The device could be heard more than a mile away. For the more technologically timid, a California company called Panaxis offers a transmitter kit and how-to-do-it books for under \$800. Paper Tiger Television offers an instruction book and a video on how to build a transmitter. Mbanna Kantako also has a video showing how to assemble a micro-radio station.

Some pirates have also considered micro-television, but the movement was stalled in 1986 when the FCC sued to stop the sale of an imported transmitter called WEE-TV. The small device, which sold for about \$150, could send pictures and sound from a video camera or VCR to a nearby television set. As with any transmitter, though, WEE-TV could be paired with a small antenna to reach much farther than "a nearby set" — broadcasting to TVs in homes throughout a neighborhood or community.

—Jim Lee



Best of the Press

When our panel of 42 judges selected the winners of our sixth annual Southern Journalism Awards this year, we noticed an interesting pattern among the first-place stories.

The top three stories honored for investigative reporting all deal with crime — but each reports that the real wrongdoer is the criminal justice system itself. The excerpts presented here from newspapers in Texas, West Virginia, and South Carolina examine the failure of the legal system to enforce the law and control abusive police, violent husbands, and overcrowding in juvenile prisons.

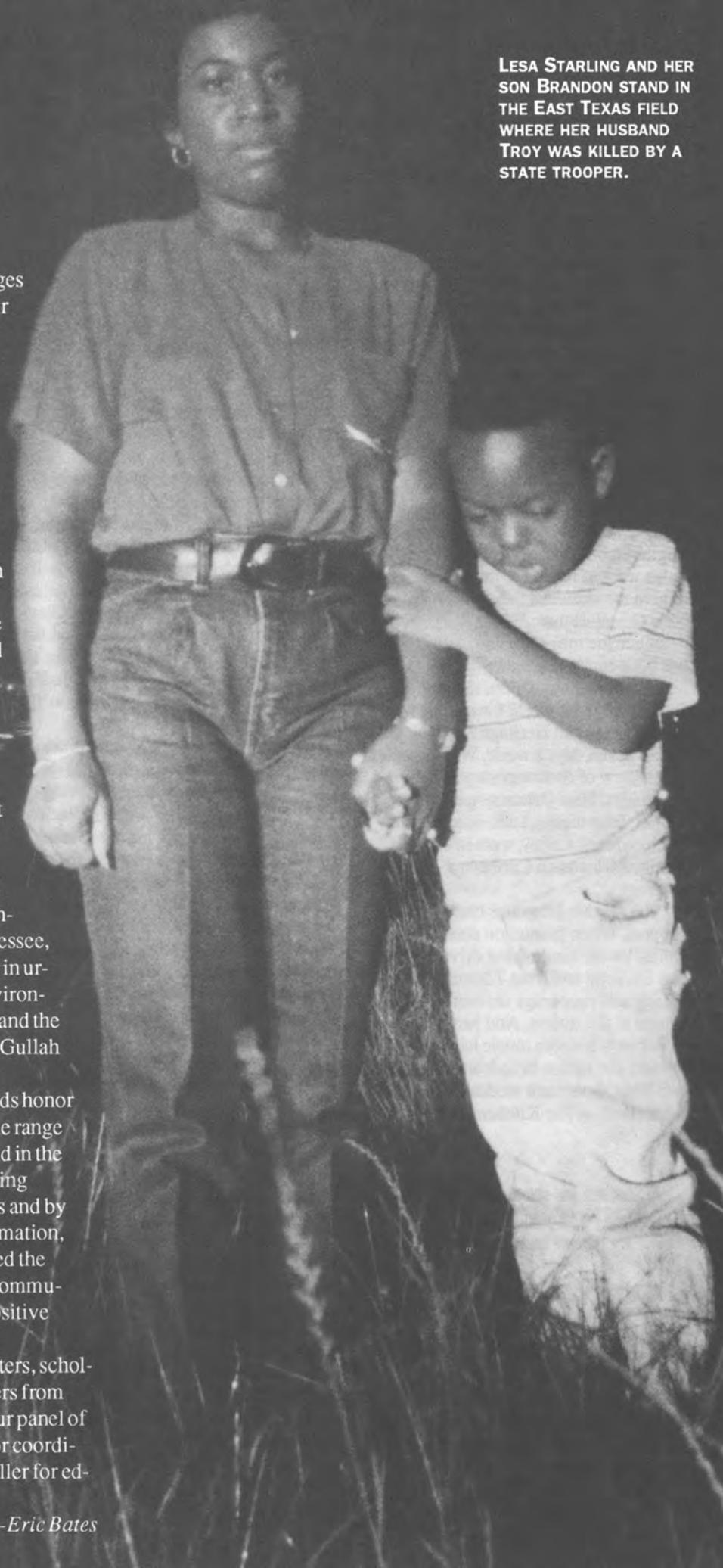
The top three stories honored for feature reporting about the changing South explore a different sort of crime: the failure of public policy to control private development and ensure a decent standard of living for all citizens. Award winners from papers in Virginia, Tennessee, and South Carolina look at the rise in urban poverty, the economic and environmental threat posed by chip mills, and the impact of sprawling resorts on the Gullah community of the Sea Islands.

The Southern Journalism Awards honor reporters whose stories broaden the range of issues, voices, and sources found in the region's daily newspapers. By asking tough, often imaginative questions and by probing untapped sources of information, these journalists have demonstrated the potential of the media to analyze community problems and contribute to positive change.

Our thanks to the editors, reporters, scholars, authors, and community leaders from across the region who served on our panel of judges. Thanks also to Bob Hall for coordinating the contest, and to Marc Miller for editing the excerpts presented here.

—Eric Bates

LESA STARLING AND HER SON BRANDON STAND IN THE EAST TEXAS FIELD WHERE HER HUSBAND TROY WAS KILLED BY A STATE TROOPER.



Abuse of Authority

Texas ranks first in police brutality. But what happens when citizens complain about officers who break the law?

By Lorraine Adams and Dan Malone

The Dallas Morning News



A year before the videotaped beating of Rodney King at the hands of Los Angeles police officers, Dallas reporters Lorraine

Adams and Dan Malone were investigating hundreds of civil rights complaints filed against officers entrusted by Texans to enforce the law.

Using the Texas Open Records Act and the federal Freedom of Information Act, they obtained hundreds of internal affairs files and personnel records of Texas police officers. They examined voluminous court records and tracked down witnesses and victims throughout Texas. Their ten-month series of articles revealed that complaints against the police span the penal code: from unwarranted killings and beatings of unarmed Texans to perjury, cover-up, and destroying official records.

DALLAS, TEXAS — Texas police have been investigated and prosecuted more frequently for beatings, torture, coerced confessions, rapes, and needless deaths than police in any other state. Records obtained by *The Dallas Morning News* show that Texas officers have been the subject of more than 2,000 such investigations since 1984.

Documents obtained from the Justice Department under the Freedom of Information Act place Texas — the nation's third most populous state — far ahead of population leaders California and New York in the number of officers investigated and prosecuted for civil rights violations.

Yet the bulk of the cases were closed without prosecution. Indeed, only about 50 cases, accounting for about 125 officers, were prosecuted in Texas between 1980 and 1989.

"We're a big state with a violent history, violent toward each other, violent toward the police," says Ronald DeLord, president of the Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas. "There have been police officers who have abused their authority."

The findings came as Attorney General

Richard Thornburgh announced that the U.S. Justice Department would review 15,000 civil rights cases for geographic patterns of police brutality. The announcement followed the videotaped beating by Los Angeles officers of Rodney King, which prompted members of Congress and civil rights leaders to push for an investigation into the extent of brutality among the nation's police officers.

Suzanne Donovan, director of the Texas Civil Liberties Union, says the records obtained by *The News* demonstrate the need to focus the review on Texas. "I would think, just given the volume, that Thornburgh should turn his attention first to Texas."

The records were obtained as part of a two-year inquiry into more than 600 Justice Department investigations of Texas police. *The News* also reviewed over 500 lawsuits, 200 reports filed with the Texas attorney general on people who died in police custody, disciplinary records for the state's 2,600 police officers, and thousands of documents obtained from more than 500 requests under the Texas Open Records Act.

The documents show that Texas has by far the worst record of any state. On a per-capita basis, however, four smaller states —

OTHER WINNERS

For investigative reporting in Division One (circulation over 100,000):

Second prize to Robin Lowenthal and Paul Pinkham of *The Florida Times-Union* for their well-documented study of racial bias in the prosecution of murder cases.

Third prize to Tom Loftus and Robert T. Garrett of *The Louisville Courier-Journal* for exposing illegal campaign fundraising in the governor's race, prompting convictions and much-needed reforms.

BRUTAL FACTS

The victims of civil rights crimes defy stereotypes. An elderly shuffleboard player. An 18-year-old suburban mother. A wheelchair-bound veteran. A squirrel hunter. A former Air Force sergeant. A pipefitter. A father of three.

These are the kinds of people who can be found in the 2,000 civil rights inquiries conducted in the last five years on Texas law enforcement officers. The following victim case studies were among those gleaned from a statewide examination of internal affairs files and court records:

▼ C.E.

"Smitty" Smith, 72, was driving his pickup truck home after

winning a shuffleboard tournament when the red lights swirled in his rear-view mirror. Two officers from nearby Seven Points stopped Smith for driving too close to the yellow center stripe.

Within minutes, the routine traffic stop turned into a roadside beating that eventually won Smith about \$100,000 in a civil rights lawsuit.

According to his suit, Smith was beaten to the ground by the two officers after he refused to take a field sobriety test. One of the officers "hit me across the head with a blackjack or a club, broke my glasses... knocked my hat off into the truck and hit me I don't know how many times."

Smith, a retired bait shop owner, was charged with

public intoxication and aggravated assault on a police officer, but a Henderson County grand jury refused to indict him. Another jury heard his case in 1985 and decided that the officers not only had violated his rights but also had a propensity to violence that was all but officially sanctioned.

"I done proved the point I wanted to prove — that they couldn't do that to

Photos by Irwin Thompson/Dallas Morning News



C.E. "SMITTY" SMITH RETURNS TO THE SITE WHERE POLICE OFFICERS BEAT HIM.

everybody and get away with it," Smith says. "I don't want to live in a country where there isn't any laws, but I want the police to be law-abiding citizens, too."

▼ Before he was pistol-whipped on a dirt road in East Texas, Rickey Lynn Butcher, already blind in one eye and missing a front tooth, had earned \$11 an hour as a pipefitter.

But soon after Trooper David Amos arrested him, he couldn't make any kind of living. Butcher was brain-damaged. Today, his speech is slurred, and he takes medications for seizures.

The pistol-whipping occurred on December 16, 1987 after a high-speed chase. Late that evening, Butcher was working on his car and drinking beer with his brother, Lester. They were on their way home when troopers Amos and Michael McClain put on the red lights and sirens.

Butcher and his brother took off.

The chase ended about 20 miles later in a deserted wooded area. Butcher says he got out of his car with his hands in the air. Trooper Amos handcuffed him and then started hitting him in the head with his .357-caliber revolver.

"I was on the ground on the side of the car," Butcher says. "He was on top of me, he pushed me down, everything in my sight was blurred and white kind of looking, like a fog."

In a sworn deposition, Amos denied hitting Butcher. But hospital records show that Butcher was unconscious when he arrived. Surgery was needed to remove bits of skull from his brain. Two doctors testified that his injury was caused by a blow to the head by a pistol, a flashlight, or a similar object.

But a jury found in favor of Trooper Amos, and he was not disciplined. Butcher never complained to federal authorities.

▼ Three Nacogdoches police officers stomped Roosevelt Deckard, an East Texan, so soundly on Thanksgiving Day 1986 that his doctor said his intestines looked like "you took a watermelon and hit it with a hammer."

Deckard, arrested during a domestic dispute, required surgery, more than 100 stitches, and a 10-day hospital stay. The officers said Deckard was injured when he fell on furniture.

The officers were never disciplined, but the city paid Deckard \$100,000 after he sued.

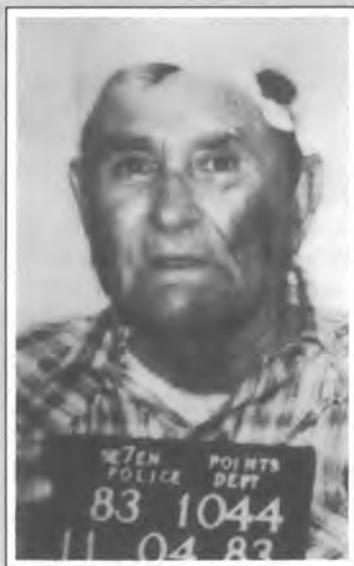
▼ George Kersh, a veteran of the Second World War, spent 51 days in the hospital after two Troup police officers arrested him in front of his watermelon stand. During a night in jail, they refused to let him wash Bermuda hay out of his eyes.

Their "deliberate indifference" left him blind in one eye, court records indicate.

"For 25 days I went through pure hell with hot drops of Atrophine ... put in my eye to burn out the fungus infection. The pain was so severe I wet my pants and tore at the bed ... this all put a shock to my body and system that I lost weight down to 126 pounds," Kersh said in a signed statement.

In 1987, a jury awarded Kersh \$132,500 for unlawful arrest and deliberate indifference to serious medical needs.

— L.A. and D.M.



A JAIL PHOTOGRAPH SHOWS THE INJURIES INFLICTED ON SMITH DURING HIS ARREST.

Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, and Rhode Island — have a higher rate of investigations into police abuse. Nevada is tied with Texas for the fifth worst per-capita record.

DeLord, president of the statewide police association, says Texas police suffer from inadequate training, education, pay, and background checks. "If you look at the whole state of Texas, we are still not putting the type of money into police to get the type of product you would like," he says. "I'm a big supporter of training and standards. I wish they were 50 times tougher than they are."

Bobby Gillham, special agent in charge of the Dallas FBI field office from 1984 to 1989, says that inadequate training is partly responsible for the state's poor record. "My guess is you had law-enforcement standards and training in a lot of areas in this country before you had it in other areas."

The News also discovered that few rural police agencies have internal affairs departments or resources to conduct extensive background investigations of applicants. The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education (TCLEOSE), the agency charged with licensing police, is not staffed to investigate complaints against officers. And civil rights complaints to the FBI must vie with priorities that include narcotics and white-collar crime investigations.

Although there is vast room for improvement, DeLord says it would be wrong to conclude that the state's approximately 50,000 law enforcement officers are out of control. "We've got some good, we've got some bad," he says. "We've got some movement toward better, and we're damn sure a long way from what we could be."

GUNS AND MACHO

Federal records show that in the past decade, the Justice Department charged more than 125 Texas law officers with civil rights violations — nearly 20 percent of all the cases filed nationally. Louisiana ranked a distant second in the number of cases filed against police, with 21 during the last decade — about eight percent of all cases nationally.

The high number of Texas prosecutions stands in stark contrast to the 15 states that had no cases filed against law officers. Nine states had only one case. In California, where national scrutiny has

focused since the Los Angeles beating, only nine cases were filed against officers between 1980 and 1989.

Although the number of California investigations is rising, Texas surpassed California. Between 1984 and 1989, 2,015 Texas officers were investigated. By contrast, there were 1,294 investigations of California police and 694 in New York during the same period.

"We have a very violent populace. We have large urban areas," says DeLord. "Aside from California and New York, we probably have more standard statistical metropolitan areas than anybody in the nation. We have three of the largest cities in America."

But the Texas figures mesh with a pattern of high numbers of investigations in Southern states, many of them predominantly rural. Such patterns contradict suggestions that police brutality flourishes primarily in high-crime, urban areas. Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia, all sites of some of the most intense civil rights battles in the nation's history, also have disproportionately high numbers of police investigated.

Nevertheless, Texas occupies a unique status among Southern states. "I think it's a tradition of independence, frontier attitude, guns, prevalence of macho," DeLord says. "We're one of the few states that shoot people for cutting them off in traffic. What's the life span of a convenience-store clerk in Dallas?"

Although civil rights complaints are investigated by assistant U.S. attorneys and FBI agents in the field, the decision to prosecute lies with the Justice Department in Washington. Federal officials in Texas currently have at least two ongoing cases against police officers.

One of those investigations focuses on

law enforcement officers in Wise County in North Texas. A federal grand jury is examining allegations that officers in Sheriff Leroy Burch's department violated the civil rights of men arrested at a roadside park on questionable sex charges.

In East Texas, U.S. Attorney Bob Wortham continues to present evidence to a federal grand jury on the 1987 beating death of a black man in Hemphill, a case that attracted national attention. Three former officers were convicted of murder last year in state district court in the beating of Loyal Garner Jr. Those convictions are on appeal before the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Under federal law, all three former officers could still be tried on charges of civil rights violations.

PROOF NOT ENOUGH

In such civil rights cases, *The News* found, proof of wrongdoing by a police officer is

sometimes not sufficient to take away his license. Most complaints against officers are "sustained" only when witnesses, medical reports, or polygraph tests confirm allegations by victims. Such standards are also required for criminal prosecution, but very few sustained complaints are referred to prosecutors for criminal action.

Criminal conviction for serious crimes is the primary way to revoke an officer's license. But in cases in which an officer is fired for violating civil rights, he remains licensed as a peace officer.

"There's a very good possibility that he's going to work at another law enforcement agency, especially in smaller agencies," says Amarillo Police Chief Jerry Neal. "I would personally like to see TCLEOSE require the investigation be

POLICING THE POLICE

Federal figures show that most police abuse in the 1980s occurred in the South — but few officers were ever prosecuted.

	Investigations	Cases Filed	% of all U.S. cases
Texas	2,015	50	19.2
Louisiana	1,050	21	8.0
Florida	497	7	2.6
Mississippi	472	5	1.9
Alabama	460	18	6.9
Georgia	448	17	6.5
Tennessee	408	14	5.3
N. Carolina	264	4	1.5
Virginia	184	7	2.6
Arkansas	171	4	1.5
Kentucky	149	4	1.5
S. Carolina	148	1	—
W. Virginia	117	4	1.5
TOTAL	6,383	156	59.0

Sources: U.S. Justice Department, Freedom of Information Act

submitted to them on any officer that's been terminated for civil rights violations, such as use of unnecessary force. Maybe TCLEOSE should set out guidelines pertaining to the events. Under certain conditions, individuals would have their license suspended or revoked."

That system does not exist today. The commission's main regulatory function has been "enforcing minimum entry standards, which include educational and training requirements and the provision that no person who has ever been convicted of a felony, or who has recently been convicted of driving while intoxicated may serve as a law enforcement officer or jailer."

It is up to local agencies to perform the second half of the regulatory function: setting standards of conduct, investigating complaints against officers, and conducting disciplinary actions.

In rural Texas, however, most small departments lack internal affairs departments and systems for filing citizen complaints. Officers are often underpaid and undersupervised. By default, policing the police in rural areas frequently becomes the responsibility of federal prosecutors.

"HIT AND MISS"

The U.S. attorney's office in the Southern District of Texas, the most active in prosecuting civil rights cases, is the only one of four in the state with a designated civil rights division. But that division, which five years ago had three attorneys, now has one. And that attorney has been pulled from trying civil rights cases exclusively to assisting in narcotics trials.

"The U.S. attorney's office in Hous-

ton has 45 counties in it," says former federal civil rights prosecutor Mary Sinderson. "There is no way that even 10 attorneys could possibly investigate each and every claim of civil rights violations to the hilt. You can't do it. It takes an enormous amount of manpower."

Along with the lack of resources, there



RICKEY LYNN BUTCHER UNDERWENT SURGERY TO REMOVE BITS OF SKULL FROM HIS BRAIN AFTER HE WAS ARRESTED BY TEXAS STATE TROOPERS.

is sometimes a lack of will. "It takes someone who really believes in the citizen's rights," says Sinderson. "You have to really believe what the police officer's job is — that he is not an executioner, that justice on the scene is not his role. You have to firmly believe in the Constitution of the United States. Those are hard things to adhere to when emotion is so prevalent in certain types of cases."

Few rural district attorneys in the last decade have brought civil rights charges against officers in their county, according to court records. "We know sometimes they would like to, but politically they can't," says Wortham, the federal pros-

ecutor for East Texas. "Most of the DAs are country boys. They don't have a civil rights division."

In those counties, standards can be lax or non-existent. Some have no written policies regarding deadly force. Some employ officers with misdemeanor convictions for assault and other crimes. Paperwork on arrests can be sketchy and record-keeping a nuisance.

"Little towns, that's the big question," says Brigid Sheridan, former assistant district attorney in Bexar County. "It's hit and miss. The FBI won't look at them. That's reality. They will review them, but they won't share any information with us."

Some federal prosecutors agree. "If we had the resources and availability of investigators and if the FBI really did the investigations and fleshed those out, we would probably be able to come up with a lot of cases that could be prosecuted and brought to trial," says Assistant U.S. Attorney Joe Porto in Houston. "But we have a lot of trouble with the agencies cooperating, and they know the FBI doesn't really want to do it."

FBI agents say civil rights investigations are a priority. "These are very sensitive investigations," says Ron Butler, an FBI spokesman in El Paso. "They're dealing with allegations of misconduct against officers — significant allegations. So be it good news or bad news, we want to get it resolved as quickly as possible."

Some prosecutors praise the FBI investigations, but others identify weaknesses in the system. An FBI agent who receives a complaint from a citizen has five days to notify Washington. The agent then has 21 working days to complete an investigation and file a report with headquarters. Agents in Texas say they receive about one to three complaints a week that merit investigation. "Part of what drives the agents crazy is they wind up doing a paper trail to justify non-action," says former federal prosecutor Fred Lawrence.

"What's heartbreaking," says former federal prosecutor Mary Milloy of the Houston office, "is having so few cases that you can actually bring to a grand jury because they're so poorly investigated or because the cloak of silence is so heavy, or because of citizen reaction being so sympathetic to the police."

"We have a very poor track record with convictions," says Wortham, the East Texas federal prosecutor. "It's not because we don't go after them with full vigor and conviction." □

Justice Denied

With family violence on the rise in West Virginia, many battered women find they are on their own.

By Jeanne Kennedy
The Herald-Dispatch



From listening to the police scanner and reading their own police blotter, the staff at The Herald-Dispatch realized that

reports of domestic violence were on the rise in Huntington, West Virginia. Yet court dockets showed no increase in the number of cases being prosecuted.

After weeks of analyzing more than 1,100 cases filed in the courthouse basement, reporter Jeanne Kennedy discovered that only five men charged with domestic violence had gone to jail. West Virginia, she also learned, is the only state in the nation that forbids officers to arrest batterers for probable cause.

Her stories prompted state lawmakers to pass a family-violence bill that strengthens the rights of victims and increases penalties against their abusers.

HUNTINGTON, W. VA.— Domestic violence accounts for more than one-fifth of all assaults in Cabell County, but few men are ever arrested, even fewer are tried, and almost no one goes to jail. When it comes to domestic violence, West Virginia's legal system looks the other way.

The Herald-Dispatch spent several weeks examining how the state and local courts respond to domestic violence. What emerged from the analysis of more than 1,100 assault cases was a pattern of inattention and neglect that women's rights advocates say must be corrected.

"Really, when it comes down to it, a woman and a bunch of kids aren't safe. The cops aren't there to protect you. There's nobody there. You're on your own," says Evelyn Ferguson, a 41-year-old Huntington woman who has taken out two protection orders against her husband since March.

Another battered woman who wanted help from the local court claims that Magistrate Ozell Eplin snored in a back room one night while she waited, bloodied and bruised, to file a domestic warrant. "I hope I never have to go back down there to press

charges against anyone again," says Diane Blankenship, a 30-year-old working mother of two. "It's just too messed up down there. The system doesn't work."

Here are the highlights of the newspaper's examination of court records:

▼ A man charged with beating up his wife or girlfriend has only a one-in-20 chance of being prosecuted.

▼ The number of people seeking temporary restraining orders against a spouse or lover almost doubled from 1989 to 1990, and the rate is even higher this year.

▼ Of the 228 misdemeanor domestic-violence cases filed last year, only 11 went to trial. Nine ended in convictions — and four of those were guilty pleas. Only five men went to jail.

▼ The circuit court suspended two of the three jail sentences for accused batterers who had appealed — and in the third case, the man didn't show up for his hearing.

Blankenship, who filed a complaint with the state Judicial Investigation Com-

OTHER WINNERS

For investigative reporting in Division Two (circulation between 30,000 and 100,000):
Second prize to Janet Olson of *The Wilmington Morning Star* for her in-depth examination of the factors behind North Carolina's choice of ThermalKEM to build a hazardous waste incinerator.

Third prize to the staff of *The Montgomery Advertiser* for piercing the "no publicity" shield surrounding many police cases, and for prompting an end to this form of censorship.

"SLEEP WITH ONE EYE OPEN"

One rainy afternoon last November, Kathy Lewis ended more than a decade of abuse with the blast of a 12-gauge shotgun.

The 26-year-old Greenup, Kentucky woman shot her husband, Johnnie, as he came at her with a lead pipe he had just used to smash out the windows of her car. With their three children safely in the house behind them, Kathy fired once at Johnnie, whom she had charged with assault and was supposed to testify against two days later. He fell to the ground, dead, but she got another shell. She says she wasn't convinced she'd hit him until she saw raindrops fall in his unblinking eyes.

"He always told me if something happened to him before me, he'd haunt me. He swore he would, and he is," says Kathy, who has nightmares about the shooting. She was sentenced in June to three and a half years in prison.

That's just one of a number of local domestic violence cases in which, some say, the legal system has failed. Kathy, for example, says she never got to tell a jury about the years of abuse that had sent her to the hospital, a women's shelter, and finally the courthouse for protection from her husband.

Her court-appointed attorney didn't think it would matter. "She gave as good as she got," Greenup lawyer Mark Hardy says flatly. "It really wouldn't have helped our case."

Kathy has hired another lawyer and is trying to get a new trial, but the tendency to blame a domestic violence victim for her situation runs deep in both the legal system and the public mentality. And Kathy, now with a felony conviction to her name, is far easier to blame because she pulled a trigger.

"Battered women are despised no matter what they do," says Karyl Spriggs of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. "If they stay, they're blamed. If they leave or try to protect themselves, they're

blamed. If the batterer follows her and she ends up hurting or killing him, it's no different."

The problem, women's rights advocates say, is that victims of domestic violence also become victims of the legal system. The courts don't recognize the established cycle of domestic abuse or the power it holds over its victims. The results, too often, are repeated attacks, few prosecutions, and victims like Claudia Young, who are forced to live in terror.



KATHY LEWIS DEMONSTRATES HOW SHE LEVELLED A SHOTGUN AND KILLED HER HUSBAND AFTER YEARS OF ABUSE.

Claudia, a 28-year-old Hurricane woman, spent an afternoon in June crying in the basement of the Cabell County courthouse. While clerks pulled a stack of records on her old boyfriend, she wiped her eyes, clutched her toddler, and spoke of a fear that won't go away. The man she helped send to prison for beating her unconscious and kidnaping her daughter is up for parole. Two of his friends say he plans to kill Claudia, her new husband, and someone else she fears is her four-year-old daughter.

"What am I supposed to do?" she asks. "They say sleep with one eye open. I've heard that from a couple of people in the courthouse. They don't mean it sarcastically — that's just all they could tell me. They don't have any way to protect me."

Claudia was rare in that she saw her case go through to trial. Usually, victims decide not to prosecute their abusers

and instead go back to them. Recent studies show they do that not because they enjoy the violence, but because they feel powerless to leave.

Victims often fear the batterers but tolerate their abuse because they love them, depend on them economically, and hope they will change. Researchers say others may be repeating what they've seen between their own parents or are simply trying to keep the marriage from failing.

At the core of every case, they add, is low self-esteem that causes the victims to confuse love with need. A

Photos by Charlotte Parsons/The Herald-Dispatch

file for one case now awaiting a grand jury, for example, contains a disturbing love letter of sorts from a 23-year-old Huntington woman to her 24-year-old husband. In it, the woman says that she still loves him but that she and their daughter are moving away.

"I tried to drop the charges on you, but I couldn't get the prosecutor to let me," she wrote. "They harassed me for days to testify against you, but I wouldn't. They even subpoenaed me twice. I just thought you should have a second chance at life."

The man she wants to give a second chance is charged with holding her bound and gagged for three days. Records say he hit her in the head with his fists and in the back with a hammer, all the while threatening to kill her.

— J.K.

mission against Eplin, was later told there wasn't enough evidence for an investigation. Eplin also denies that he did anything wrong.

"It was a disaster," Blankenship says. "I really don't know who's in charge of that system, but they really ought to do something."

CHARGES DROPPED

Such dissatisfaction is not unusual. So far, the county has prosecuted less than five percent of the misdemeanor domestic cases from last year; 24 are still unresolved. For felony charges, only two of 10 were pursued and sent on to a grand jury.

"The magistrate system is where we have most of our problems," says Sue Julian, co-director of the West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence. "In addition to attitudes that revictimize women, the magistrates interpret the law differently from county to county, even from magistrate to magistrate."

Cabell Magistrate John McCallister also faults the county court system. He says the number of domestic cases heard by magistrates has tripled over the last five years, leaving magistrates overworked and undertrained. But the problem, he says, also stretches from the police, who often squabble over who should serve legal papers in domestic cases, to the state Supreme Court, which fails to train magistrates on changes in domestic violence laws.

"The system definitely is failing," McCallister says. "Everybody has to do their job. If everybody doesn't do what they are sworn to do, it's not going to work."

Cabell County Prosecutor Chris Chiles says even the victims aren't doing their part, and he blames them for the county's low prosecution rate of domestic cases.

The Herald-Dispatch found that 45 percent of the women who brought charges against their husbands or boyfriends last year later dropped the cases, and another four percent failed to show up for their hearings. The prosecutor's office itself dropped the charges almost one-third of the time because the victims refused to cooperate, Chiles says.

"Just the fact that 45 percent of them withdraw shows what the victims are after," he says. "Sometimes I've had victims say, 'If I proceed with this, can you guarantee me he won't come after me again?' Unfortunately, I can't. I can say he won't do that while he's in jail and

hopefully he'll learn from his jail time, but I can't even guarantee that."

The victims aren't the only ones frustrated with the system. Huntington police officer Don Maynard remembers a call last August that demonstrated what he sees as the problem in the way the state responds to domestic violence. A Guyandotte man had smashed a .30-06 rifle over the head of his live-in girlfriend. A month later — after one hearing and one continuance — the felony charge was dismissed.

"No, it didn't surprise me," Maynard says. "I've seen this before, and I still see them together now. It's sad to say, but if

comes to domestic violence. "The message is that domestic violence isn't serious," says Karyl Spriggs of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. "Your state is saying domestic violence isn't as important a crime as other crimes. It's like the government is sanctioning domestic crimes, saying it really is okay to beat your wife or girlfriend."

Under current law, if police respond to a domestic violence call and find evidence of a struggle — furniture overturned, an injured woman crying, and a man rubbing his fist — no arrest can be made unless the woman goes to the courthouse and takes out a warrant. And even if



A SLEEPY HUNTINGTON BOY WAITS WHILE HIS MOTHER FILES AN ARREST WARRANT AGAINST HIS FATHER. SHE DROPPED THE CHARGES THE NEXT DAY.

the person who is injured wants to drop the charges in this state, there's not much we can do."

NO ARREST

West Virginia is the only state in the nation that leaves the decision to prosecute a domestic violence case almost entirely up to the victim.

Other states either encourage or require arrests even if a victim doesn't want to press charges. But in West Virginia, unless police witness an attack, the victim of a misdemeanor assault must sign a warrant before her abuser can be arrested.

That distinction, women's rights advocates say, practically forces the legal system to look the other way when it

she does, she still has the option to drop the charges later.

Thirteen states, however, have mandatory-arrest laws, which require officers to arrest an abuser without a warrant whenever there is probable cause. The rest have "pro-arrest" laws, which don't require a warrantless arrest but encourage it. The benefit of both, proponents say, is that they remove the burden of prosecution from the victim, who often fears retaliation, and places it on the state.

"It's the psychological key to the problem," says West Virginia lobbyist Conni Lewis. "It's the state saying, 'This is wrong. You can't do that.' That reduces the likelihood that the cop will be back at the same house again with the same problem." □

Kids Behind Bars

South Carolina has the most overcrowded juvenile jails in the nation, but community-based programs offer hope.

By Howard Buskirk and Melinda Gladfelter

Greenville Piedmont



When reporters Howard Buskirk and Melinda Gladfelter learned that South Carolina houses mentally handicapped

youths, runaways, and truants in the same facilities as juveniles who murder and rape, they decided to take a closer look at the system. Their series of articles prompted two state senators to push for \$1.8 million in extra funding for the youth services system this year.

GREENVILLE, S.C. — South Carolina police arrest more than 1,100 youths each month, often for increasingly violent crimes.

But if a judge orders these children into the care of the state Department of Youth Services (DYS), they will be shipped off to institutions that pack two youngsters into each space designed for one.

One national expert who toured the DYS Columbia complex called it the worst he has seen in visits to 12 states. Another said the facilities are as bad "as any I have seen anywhere in the country."

"What I saw in South Carolina I would have expected to see in 1940 or 1950," says David Lambert of the Center for Youth Law in San Francisco. "I talked to kids who were terrified — who didn't believe that their safety was being protected, who couldn't sleep at night because they were afraid."

Fourteen months after a lawsuit was filed against the DYS citing "inhumane" treatment at the agency's long-term institutions, experts agree the state faces a juvenile justice crisis.

How bad is the problem? Consider:

▼ The three long-term institutions at

the sprawling DYS campus on Broad River Road in Columbia were filled to 195 percent of capacity last year. On an average day, 584 juveniles crowded dormitories built to hold 299 at the Birchwood, John G. Richards, and Willow Lane institutions.

In 1989, South Carolina had the nation's most overcrowded youth prisons, according to a survey by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency. At that time, the DYS complex was at 154 percent of capacity.

▼ Police made 13,366 juvenile arrests in the state in 1990, a 38 percent increase from 9,655 arrests in 1980. Juvenile arrests for more violent crimes rose even more rapidly.

▼ Statistics show that 56 percent of youths committed to DYS facilities eventually end up in adult prisons. Seventy-two percent of 12- and 13-year-olds are arrested again before they turn 17.

"You take a 14-year-old kid and treat him like a criminal, treat him like dirt, the chances are when he is released at age 16 one can logically expect that he is going to continue to have problems," says Lambert, with the Center for Youth Law.

DYS Commissioner Rich McLawhorn acknowledges the problem. "If you house children in old, dilapidated buildings, under

OTHER WINNERS

For investigative reporting in Division Three (circulation under 30,000):

Second prize to Leon Lynn of *The El Paso Herald-Post* for his caring portrait of schools in poor neighborhoods, including the often-neglected voices of students, teachers, and parents.

Third prize to Beth I. Lebenson of *The Daily Commercial* for her civic-minded look at three proposed hazardous waste plants near Leesburg, Florida that prompted action by citizens and officials.

overcrowded situations, that can only affect their self-esteem," McLawhorn says. "They say, 'We can't be worth anything. Otherwise, why would they be treating us like this?'"

▼ Keeping a youth in a maximum-security institution costs \$30,500 per year, compared with \$1,808 for intensive probation.

▼ Money is so tight that DYS has only one recreation director for all three long-term care facilities, and the staff cannot replace broken television sets or tattered beds and linens.

THE LAWSUIT

Six youths, using only their first names and initials, filed suit in December 1990 against DYS, citing inhumane treatment at the agency's long-term institutions. The youths complained of overcrowding, inadequate facilities, "harsh and arbitrary discipline," and a classification system that lumps rapists and murderers with truants.

Before the lawsuit went to court last year, the coalition suing on the part of the six youths brought in experts in youth justice to examine DYS campuses. "Some of the facilities were as bad as any I have seen anywhere in the country," says Claudia Wright, professor of law at Florida State University.

The DYS facilities are "very, very grim," Wright says. "The living situation for many of the children was appalling. I even saw one child who had his bed set up in a shower."

DYS is "a system that was in complete disarray," says Ira Schwartz, former administrator of the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and now director of the Center for the Study of Youth Policy at the University of Michigan. "I could give you a lot of criticism about the South Carolina system — nobody is proud of it. I hope that the lawsuit will result in major improvements and restructuring of the system."

The first time DYS Commissioner McLawhorn saw the facilities, he was reminded of "the gulag in the Soviet Union." His efforts to change that image included requesting a \$9.96 million bond to build a new 150-bed unit on the main DYS campus. The bond was recently approved by the state, and building designs are under way.

However, the commissioner disagrees with critics who place the blame solely on DYS, since the agency has limited resources. "Every single witness who testified in federal district court said that we had very difficult circumstances, but we

were doing the best that anyone could expect," McLawhorn says.

DYS has been hit hard by budget cuts, which have forced the agency to freeze 90 staff positions, leaving nearly one in 10 jobs unfilled. Many of the Columbia dormitories have a ratio of up to 20 youths to one juvenile corrections officer.

In a dormitory at Birchwood, the DYS facility for violent offenders, as many as five bunks are placed in rooms built to hold two. Sixteen bunks crowd the common room, which is supposed to be set aside for recreation and watching television.

Some of the largest juvenile crime increases are in violent crimes, with rapes up 75 percent, robberies up 61 percent, and armed assaults up 113 percent during the last decade.

With more youths thrown into the DYS system, state courts, and probation offices, officials say the system is pushed to the breaking point. Statewide, juvenile probation counselors saw an average caseload of 62 youths last year, a 32 percent increase over the previous year. That's more than twice the caseload of 30 recommended by the American Corrections Association.

When overcrowding and understaffing lead to violence, officials often react with strict discipline. In 1991, DYS officers used a non-toxic tear gas on youths 83 times, usually to stop or prevent fights. Handcuffs and isolation cells are also commonly used to enforce discipline, officials say.

"It's just crazy to perpetuate a system where you're locking up kids behind five sets of locked doors," says Lambert of the Center for Youth Law. "These rundown facilities are extremely depressing. You pack these kids into them and that predictably produces violence, and in order to deal with the violence, they use these Draconian punishment cells."

COMMUNITY CARE

DYS officials concede the current system costs taxpayers too much and is ineffective in stopping repeat crimes. "The lock



YOUTHS CONFINED TO ONE SOUTH CAROLINA INSTITUTION SLEEP IN A TELEVISION ROOM CROWDED WITH COTS.

'em up and throw 'em away mentality does not work and will not work," McLawhorn says. He called it a tragedy that "over half of the DYS youths will be in an adult prison by the time they're 21 years old."

McLawhorn and other DYS officials point to community-based programs as alternatives to incarcerating juvenile offenders. Such alternatives are not only cheaper, DYS statistics show, but they often have much lower rates of future arrests.

The state has four marine and wilderness institutes that treat non-violent offenders by teaching them respect for life through water sports, hiking, and other outdoor activities. The average cost is \$13,000 per youth for an average of six months of treatment, compared with \$30,500 annually at DYS institutions. Only 24 percent of the youths sent to the marine institutes are arrested again within a three-year period.

The Family Preservation project in Greenville, one of 10 in the state, has also cut re-arrest rates for serious and violent juvenile offenders. The project sends counselors to the homes of juveniles to work with all family members — offenders, parents, and siblings alike — at a cost of \$2,800 per offender.

Family counselor Kristen Rowden remembers awaking at one a.m. to a phone call from a mother hysterical upon finding her 14-year-old son's bed empty. "I calmed her down," says Rowden, who had worked with the family for several weeks. "Then I asked her where he might be, and she said, 'He's probably at Grandmother's.' So she went over there

and brought him home.”

Without Rowden’s help, the mother would have called the police, and the boy, who was on probation for assaulting a teacher, might have landed back in the legal system for running away.

“It doesn’t take long for parents to see that this help is so much better than chaos 24 hours a day,” says Rowden. “I’ve just found that the parents have so many problems themselves. I try to work on their self-esteem, helping them get a job, help-

ing them get what they need. When they help themselves, it all just falls into place.”

Experts and DYS officials say such programs can be expanded, but it will take a major financial commitment on the part of the General Assembly before the reforms can be completed. “We’ve looked at innovative ideas and how we can carry our program to the community,” says Karole Jenson, chair of the state DYS board. “But we’re not going to

garner the kind of financial support to make any rapid changes.”

“The question is, will the political will allow change to happen?” says Ira Schwartz of the Center for the Study of Youth Policy. “I am encouraged by what I see now and by the enthusiasm of the state officials.

“That doesn’t mean that enthusiasm is going to stay there,” Schwartz adds. “I want to see how this really unfolds.” □

Feature Reporting, Division One

Decade of Neglect

Poverty, power and politics in an All-American City.

By Mike Hudson and Douglas Pardue

The Roanoke Times & World-News



When Ronald Reagan joked during the 1980s that the war on poverty was over—and that poverty had won—many people didn't

see the humor. Instead, they saw his pronouncement as a declaration of retreat from the fight against poverty, with devastating results for America's poor.

The impact was felt in Roanoke, Virginia. Over the course of four Sundays last summer, reporters Mike Hudson, Douglas Pardue, and Neal Thompson took a comprehensive look at rising poverty in the city—and at the failed public policies behind poor housing, jobs, schools, and health care.

ROANOKE, VA. — If you have to be poor, Herb McBride says, Roanoke is a great place. “You can find a job, a place where you’ll be treated decently. There’s

excellent public housing and very good social services.”

McBride has heard that from lots of poor people in the 10 years he’s run the city’s public housing program. “They can always get something to eat,” he says. “They can go to the Salvation Army. They can go to the soup kitchen. . . . They can go to the dumpsters — you might have to take one half of the banana and throw it away, but you can eat the other half.”

Welcome to Roanoke, an All-American City.

OTHER WINNERS

For feature reporting in Division One (circulation over 100,000):

Second prize to Edward Pratt of *The Advocate* for his disturbing and sensitive look at life with violence and distress for black children and their families in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Third prize to Randy Lee Loftis of *The Dallas Morning News* for his detailed yet highly readable examination of the deteriorating environmental quality in Texas.



CITY LEADERS BOAST ABOUT ROANOKE WHILE POOR RESIDENTS LIKE JANICE HASH AND HER GRANDCHILD KANDYCE STRUGGLE TO GET BY. "WHEN YOU'VE GOT NOWHERE ELSE TO GO, YOU HAVE TO TAKE WHAT YOU CAN GET," SAYS HASH.

Poor people eating out of trash cans isn't what Roanoke leaders want others to see. Instead, they boast about Roanoke's nationally ranked schools, health programs, and world-renowned anti-poverty efforts — qualities that have helped win All-American City honors four times.

They'd rather not dwell on the fact that more and more of the city's new jobs are low paying and part-time. And they'd rather not dwell on the fact that nearly half of Roanoke's children live under or near the poverty line. These children are victims of a decade of neglect — when Roanoke, a city of 96,000, polished its image but failed to make up for state and federal cuts in welfare, education, and housing.

Social workers say the cuts and low-

paying jobs have left the city's poor worse off than they were a decade ago. "The programs to assist people have just been demolished in the last 10 years," says Ted Edlich, director of a private agency called Roanoke's Total Action Against Poverty known around the world as a model for helping the poor help themselves. "Organizations such as ours — which were part of the real safety net — have just been decimated."

There's another side of Roanoke, Edlich says, one hidden by the blue "All-American City" signs and the leftover glow of once-imposing social programs. The other side includes struggling families like Janice Hash, 43, her three children, and two grandchildren.

Until a few weeks ago, Hash and her

family lived in a house with peeling pink trim. For \$500 a month, they got crumbling plaster, a furnace that conked out much of February, roaches that teemed over the pots and pans, and mice in the crawl space between the ceiling and the upstairs apartment. Hash's 11-year-old daughter, Cathy, says a mouse once fell through the living room ceiling onto her face as she napped on the couch.

Hash never complained to housing inspectors. And she never complained when the landlord raised the rent from \$365. She was afraid she'd be kicked out, end up homeless, and lose custody of her kids. "When you've got kids and nowhere else to go and you're on welfare and have no credit, you have got to take what you can get."

The city's leaders would rather not dwell on Janice Hash or the house on Fourth Street — or hundreds of other families trapped in decaying homes just like it. They want people to see what's happening along Campbell Avenue's west end, where construction workers are busy along a row of rotted houses, replacing shattered windows, splashing paint on dingy clapboard, and restoring sagging porches.

The project is one of Roanoke's latest efforts to bolster its All-American image. The city is investing \$600,000 in the West End, funneling grants and loans to landlords renovating some of the city's worst houses.

City officials are spending the money because they want to do something about shoddy housing. But they picked the West End for one reason — to impress commuters who drive in each day from well-to-do neighborhoods. City officials even checked to see exactly how many cars pass by — 12,710 a day.

CHEESE LINES

While the city tries to impress commuters along Campbell Avenue, it doesn't talk about what happened two months ago on another street. In a scene reminiscent of the Great Depression, hundreds of Roanoke families stood outside the National Guard Armory for hours for a chance to get free surplus food from the city welfare department.

Food started running out after 2,500 families trudged through the line. Fights broke out as men and women pushed and shoved to get inside for the few remaining packages of cheese, rice, flour, or peanut butter. Max and Treva Ayers stood in line for three mornings and got just two pounds of butter. "It looked worse than them guys giving the food away to the Kurds," Max said.

The food lines are a painful reminder that the recession and federal cutbacks have hurt many Roanokers, according to Mayor Noel Taylor. He says the city has not glossed over its poverty problem. There hasn't been a lot of public debate about poverty in the last decade, but many people have been working quietly to help

the poor, he says. "There is a need. I know it's there. And I know it's great. But how do you do more with less?"

Jim Ritchie, city director of human services, says, "Roanoke has everything it takes to make it work" — except the money. "I'm very pessimistic about the next couple of years."

The prices of life's necessities — rent, electricity, food, heat — have gone up while money for the poor has gone down, says Welfare Superintendent Corinne Gott. "It's been a bad decade. We're going to see some real tragedies happen to American families. See them marked, scarred, and damaged."

To hear the city's business, education, and political leaders, it's been a great decade. Their version of Roanoke can be seen in a report released this spring by the United Way and the Council of Community Services. Poverty is hardly mentioned in the 84-page document. One of the few times the report discusses the poor is in a paragraph linking poverty to rising crime. The report con-

centrates on Roanoke's low unemployment, its award-winning schools, its model social and health programs, its compassion for the needy.

LOW-WAGE HOT SPOT

Roanoke's boosters emphasize that unemployment is well below the rest of the nation — just 4.7 percent in May — but the figure hides the fact that more and more jobs pay barely above the minimum wage, which inched up to \$4.25 an hour in April. Welfare officials say it takes at least \$6.50 for a single parent with one child to be better off working than living on welfare.

Virginia Employment Commission figures show that well-paying factory jobs are being replaced by lower-wage jobs in the trade and service industries. The Roanoke Valley lost 1,500 manufacturing jobs in the past decade. Part-time jobs, which often offer no medical insurance or benefits, make up 60 percent of the Roanoke-area job openings listed

with the VEC — more than double the percentage of four years ago.

The civic leaders who wrote the report on Roanoke's future say the city has "every requisite for commercial and industrial success in the modern world." They say one of the city's main economic weaknesses is "a nagging problem of self-doubt, a feeling of somehow missing the boat." They deal with *underemployment* in a single sentence: "The other side of the coin, apparently, is that most new jobs created are in the service sector, and are relatively low-paying."

The other side of the coin is families like Tex and Marsha Kintyle, hard workers living on the edge of poverty. They drove into Roanoke last fall with their infant son Adam, \$5,000 in savings, and plans to start a business selling discount coupon booklets. They chose Roanoke because they heard it was a big retail center — a city that *Inc.* magazine calls one of the 100 business hot spots in the nation.

By December, their business had failed, and Marsha was standing in line at the Salvation Army to get Christmas toys for Adam. They had no money, couldn't repair their car, and discovered one of the many roadblocks for Roanoke's poor — a dollar for a bus ride is too much for people who barely have enough money to buy baby formula. As they scoured the want ads, the Kintyles survived on emergency food coupons and rental aid from the city welfare department.

Marsha got a job in January, making \$5 an hour as a nurse's aide. She almost lost the job before she started because she couldn't afford a uniform. At the last minute, Halmode Apparel donated two uniforms to her.

Tex, overweight and sickly, had even more trouble. He passed time clipping coupons, baby-sitting Adam, and dreaming of winning the lottery. He finally got a job in May as a telephone solicitor for the Roanoke Firefighters Association, making \$6 an hour.

The Kintyles have caught up on their back rent, but they still can't afford to get the car fixed. Most of their spare cash goes to pay Adam's sitter \$50 a week. They're a paycheck from disaster. If one gets sick or loses a job, it's back to welfare, Marsha says. "We're so sick of it here."

KIDS AT RISK

Roanoke's All-American image got a boost last year when *Parenting* magazine listed the city as one of the 10 best "Fam-

City officials are spending the money because they want to do something about shoddy housing. But they picked the West End for one reason — to impress commuters who drive in each day from well-to-do neighborhoods.

ily Cities" in the nation. The magazine chose Roanoke because of its low crime rate, the availability of jobs and day care, and efforts to improve the schools.

Statistics kept by the state Department of Youth and Family Services show another side of Roanoke. The agency ranks Roanoke as the seventh worst place for children among all Virginia localities — based on rates of juvenile crime, school drop-outs, reading failure, teen pregnancy, child abuse, and children on welfare.

Roanoke's reputation as a good place for children rests mainly with its schools, but critics say the schools spend too much time trying to prevent white flight and not enough helping the poor. City educators say they face a tough challenge. Increasingly, many Roanoke schoolchildren come from families and neighborhoods that are disintegrating.

Many are children like 11-year-old Jerome. He and his two brothers have different fathers. Jerome lives with his mother, who is on welfare, but he rarely sees her because she works days and is out a lot at night. One of his brothers deals crack and beats him.

Jerome last saw his father when they walked past each other at the Hurt Park public housing project. "I don't know if he recognized me," Jerome says. His father didn't remember his birthday, even though he had promised to take Jerome out. "For Christmas, he promised me a bike or a skateboard. He didn't come that day either."

Jerome's grades are bad. He was banned from an after-school program after he defecated on the floor. He stole Nintendo cartridges from a department store but got off with a judge's warning. "I learned," Jerome says. He slumps in a chair with his head down and squints at his homework. He has lost the free glasses he was given to help him read.

COLD COMFORT

Community leaders have long bragged that Roanoke has a good safety net for the poor. They say that reputation attracts low-income people from surrounding counties that don't offer the public housing, homeless shelters, and public transportation that Roanoke does.

This year, City Council contributed more than \$300,000 to private welfare agencies and spent nearly \$2.6 million on the city Department of Social Services. That sounds impressive, but it's less than the city spends on garbage col-

lection. The city actually spends little more on the welfare department than the minimum needed to draw in matching federal and state dollars.

A 1989 study found that 52 local governments in Virginia spent more per resi-

per resident), and Portsmouth almost \$589,000 (\$5.35 per resident).

Tight federal, state, and local budgets have left the city Department of Social Services struggling to respond to a growing need. In the past three years, applica-

Photo by Stephanie Klein/Times & World-News



MARSHA KINTYLE AND HER SON ADAM APPLY FOR FOOD STAMPS AT A CITY WELFARE OFFICE. POVERTY IN ROANOKE HAS GROWN TO 16.3 PERCENT — NOT COUNTING THE KINTYLES AND OTHER POOR FAMILIES WHO WORK.

dent in "local-only" dollars for their welfare departments — money above what the state requires. Roanoke spent less than \$30,000 in local-only money in 1988 — about 30 cents per resident. Fairfax spent nearly \$10.6 million (\$13.72 per resident), Chesapeake nearly \$1.5 million (\$10.36

tions for food stamps have soared; the number of families getting food stamps has grown from 3,400 to 4,600. The understaffed agency has been deluged with families that urgently need help because of layoffs or illnesses.

The families must often wait. Super-

intendent Gott says her agency takes an average of 30 days to process applications for welfare. That's much faster than many other welfare departments in the state, she says, but still not as fast as she'd like. Families who need housing help also must wait — often for years. The waiting list for the city's "Section 8" subsidized housing program has nearly 700 families.

Even when poor people can get help

who is fighting to stay off welfare, found a place she liked last summer, a remodeled five-room duplex. The housing authority approved it for Section 8 and began paying all but \$115 of her rent each month.

It seemed perfect — until the weather turned cold. Bullard says she would wake up in the night so cold she'd have to tie a scarf over her ears. She turned up the heat,

couldn't pay off her bill — which reached more than \$1,100.

On May 8, Appalachian Power shut off her electricity. A week later, Earl Saunders, who directs the Section 8 program, persuaded the landlord to let Bullard move — as long as another tenant could be found.

A CITY WITH HEART

Even people who say Roanoke's poor don't get enough help add that the city still has a big heart. "There's a lot of caring in Roanoke," says Ritchie, the human resources director. "It's one of the reasons I think it's the best place to live in the world." When Total Action Against Poverty's headquarters burned two days before Christmas 1989, Roanokers pitched in with money, office space, typewriters, artwork, a refrigerator, a postage meter.

Roanoke has not responded as well to more long-term social needs. The United Way of Roanoke Valley — the biggest fundraiser for private social agencies — takes in less per resident than many other United Ways. Last year, residents gave an average of \$19.14. People in other Mid-Atlantic cities gave more — \$41.71 in Winston-Salem, \$35.64 in Chattanooga, \$24.28 in Lynchburg, \$22.07 in Richmond.

Robert Kulinski, executive director of United Way of Roanoke Valley, says a free health clinic and other private programs have helped ease the effects of poverty and make it seem less obvious than it is in bigger cities. "It's not as apparent, but it's just as real."

A bit of that reality shook Roanoke last Christmas. On December 19, an unemployed construction worker searching for cans in a Southwest Roanoke dumpster found a whimpering newborn, wrapped in a blanket and stuffed inside a garbage bag. As the child — dubbed Baby Isaiah — lay in intensive care, Roanokers donated money, clothing, toys. Some offered to adopt him. When he died on Christmas Eve, people offered grave sites and tombstones.

Ritchie, a social worker for four decades, is frustrated that people don't realize Roanoke has many children like Baby Isaiah, cast off because of poverty and social decay.

"They're not in garbage cans. They're alone in apartments." □

Photo by Cindy Pinkston/Times & World-News



"PROGRAMS TO ASSIST PEOPLE HAVE JUST BEEN DEMOLISHED," SAYS TED EDLICH, DIRECTOR OF ROANOKE'S TOTAL ACTION AGAINST POVERTY.

from programs ravaged by budget cuts, they may not get much. Henry Woodward of the Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley says many landlords who renovate old houses and try to get them into the Section 8 program cut costs by putting in electric baseboard heat. Electric heat is cheaper to install, but it often creates appalling bills for tenants in older, poorly insulated homes. The Redevelopment and Housing Authority provides loans and grants to these landlords, Woodward says, but it doesn't care what kind of heat the landlords install — or how much it costs the tenants later.

Gail Bullard, a single mother of two

but it did little good. Her youngest child, three years old, stayed sick with throat and ear infections. Then the electric bills began piling up like freight cars in a derailment: \$181 for the first month, then \$225, \$265, \$228, and \$242. For Bullard, the heat bills — during one of the city's mildest winters — meant Section 8 housing was no longer affordable. "They shouldn't move low-income people into these places," she says.

Bullard wanted out. Her landlord wouldn't let her break her year's lease. The housing authority repeatedly told her it couldn't help her. Bullard, who makes \$4.95 an hour as a part-time nurse's aide,

Two Shades of Green

Money and trees are at the center of a struggle over the chip mill industry.

By Pam Sohn

The Chattanooga Times



Several years ago, the Tennessee Valley Authority began marketing the forests of the tri-state region around the Cumberland Plateau. By early last year, four companies had applied for TVA permits to operate chip mills along a 12-mile stretch of the Tennessee River.

A growing number of citizens protested, saying the agency was ignoring how timber harvesting would destroy local forests. In a five-part series, reporter Pam Sohn visited chip mills in Mississippi and revealed what happened to saw millers and other family businesses there when the wood ran out. She looked at the proposed Tennessee mills, examining the conflicting goals within TVA as it tries to decide how to both promote and preserve land.

CHATTANOOGA, TENN. — One measure of the controversy surrounding the cutting of trees within the 42-county, tri-state area may be the letters TVA has already gotten from the public.

“Letters? I’ve got trees — at least two trees worth of letters,” says Paul Schmierbach, director of the TVA Office of Environmental Quality. “Mostly con” — against the chip mills.

And while TVA completes its report on the environmental impact of allowing three chip mills to begin operations on the banks of the Tennessee River and to cut 1.9 million tons of hardwood timber a year within a 75-mile radius of Nickajack Lake, the tenor of the arguments grows louder.

A chip mill is a plant that employs about 10 people to make quarter-sized chips of wood, usually from hardwood tree trunks at least 25 feet long and as large in diameter as 26 inches inside the bark at the largest end. Chip mills usually buy timber from individual landowners and hire independent loggers to clearcut the property. Reforestation is at the option and expense of the landowner.

Paper mills use the chipped wood as fiber to make pulp. As the demand for high-grade, slick paper has increased, paper mills have switched from pine to hard-

wood to provide more fiber. Hardwood is also less expensive and more available. At least a third of the hardwood chips made at the plants seeking to locate here would be exported to Japan and Korea as raw materials for paper mills there.

But there is not a hearty welcome for this new industry — even from those who usually aggressively promote Chattanooga, say local development officials privately. Instead, some seem to be raising a caution flag against TVA permitting the mills to operate along a 12-mile stretch of the Tennessee River between South Pittsburgh, Tennessee, and Bridgeport, Alabama.

Some elected officials publicly question the chip mill industry’s benefit to the area. The City Commission of South Pittsburgh voted to oppose Boise Cascade, which plans to locate across the river from Parker Towing’s proposed mill. “Two mills would be twice as bad, don’t you think?” says Mayor John Thompson.

Chattanooga Councilman David Crockett has recently asked several local clubs to take a hard look at the chip mills in light of the area’s tourism and recreational needs. “Tourism is a big industry here — the second largest in Tennessee. How many people will want to come back to see a Color Cruise if they see big clear-cuts on the ridges

OTHER WINNERS

For feature reporting in Division Two (circulation between 30,000 and 100,000):

Second prize to Michael Gordon of *The Anniston Star* for his survey of college athletes and race relations in Alabama, tracing the lives of individual players and the social impact of sports.

Third prize to Sharon Eber, Kat Bergeron, Nan Patton Ehrbright, and Jim Hannaford of the *Biloxi Sun Herald* for their provocative depiction of Mississippi Gulf residents whose way of life is threatened by population growth, over-fishing, and pollution.

and mountain tops?" Crockett asks.

"Beyond that," he adds, "we have a strategy to become an environmental city and a sport fishing center. How would this square with that?"

TVA holds a crucial ballot. The mills, proposed by Donghae Pulp, Boise Cascade, and Parker Towing, must obtain permits from the agency to build and use barge terminals on the Tennessee River. In addition, Parker Towing needs a permit to locate in an industrial park, Boise Cascade and Donghae are seeking property ease-

Photo by Louis Sohn/Chattanooga Times



LOGGERS ARE CLEARCUTTING THOUSANDS OF ACRES OF PINE TO FEED THE GROWING CHIP MILL INDUSTRY.

ments, and Donghae wants TVA to build it a new delivery point for electrical service.

Each mill is expected to cost between \$5 million and \$10 million to build. At full capacity, Parker and Donghae propose to produce about 600,000 tons of chips yearly and Boise Cascade proposes to produce about 700,000 tons yearly.

TVA has many goals: bringing in new industry with low power rates, providing access to waterway commerce, providing income to individual landowners, improving management of forests and natural resources, and playing watchdog to the environment.

TVA officials admit that chip mills are a sticky issue, complicated by the agency's inner workings and federal environmental guidelines — so complicated that what's begun may be impossible to stop, even if TVA rejects the permit applications. But whatever the outcome, the situation is almost certain to set a precedent in how environmental impacts are studied.

SELLING FORESTS

TVA's Office of Natural Resources and Economic Development began marketing the region's timber, low power rates, and easy, inexpensive river transportation several years ago. Like farmers with a good crop, it promoted the Tennessee Valley, particularly the Cumberland Plateau area, as a hardwood basket from heaven with easy access to water transportation to the Gulf of Mexico.

"TVA's strategy will be to work through the marketplace to create demand, providing the landowner an incentive for better management without subsidy," according to *Forestry in the Tennessee Valley*, a resource management plan prepared by the office in 1984. "TVA will seek opportunities to promote demand for the region's forest products through both domestic and export markets."

The marketing worked. In addition to the three chipping firms seeking permits locally, seven or eight more permit applications are contemplated or pending along other stretches of the river.

The onslaught — and in fact the marketing effort itself — caught the rest of TVA by surprise. Not only did the agency not expect so many chippers, it also didn't expect so many environmental concerns to be raised. Senator Jim Sasser's office, for instance, reports receiving about 1,100 letters and another 600 or so calls about the issue.

The furor has created a public relations headache for TVA, as well as a maze of legal questions about how the environmental impact statement and permitting process must be handled. Should TVA study environmental impacts, even at a regional level, on private property? Can TVA require that certain conditions be met — even on private property — by loggers and chippers? Can TVA prohibit wood stands to be cut? Could TVA even enforce such conditions if it chose to offer them?

No one knows. And those issues could lead the agency into a courtroom if either the chippers or concerned citizens challenge the outcome of the review or permitting processes.

The federal guidelines for preparing environmental reviews are confusing. They require consideration only of site-specific impacts, such as storm runoff on a proposed chip mill site. But the guidelines allow consideration of secondary impacts — such as the possibility of erosion or endangered species at a logging site on private land — if public concerns are voiced.

TVA initially prepared only what's

known as an environmental assessment — a site-specific look. Public concern that the agency was rushing the permit process, plus efforts by an outspoken U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service official, prompted the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to urge TVA last spring to expand its impact statement and look at issues such as how clearcutting would affect the habitat of endangered species.

More recently, however, a forestry products association wrote TVA a letter charging the agency with overstepping its bounds in looking at non-site-specific concerns.

TVA says it's working hard to find a middle ground. "It's more than a PR nightmare, though obviously it is that," says Jon Loney, project director of the environmental impact statement. "We're catching a lot of grief from both sides. For people concerned about the environment, anything short of denial may not be enough. And the forestry people feel like we're dabbling in their territory — like we stopped preaching and started meddling. But we didn't have a choice. The applications were made and now decisions are going to have to be made. We want to do what's right."

Loney says TVA also sees itself as caught between citizens who might want to sell their timber to the mills and citizens who are concerned about preserving Cumberland Plateau woodlands and environs.

CITIZEN PRESSURE

Mill opponents like Councilor Crockett say they want to see local government take a position to sway the argument — and possibly TVA's stance.

The pressure may be working — at least on the chip mills themselves. One of the initial four mills requesting permits withdrew its initial request: Canal Chip Corp. opted to join forces with Parker Towing. The two together submitted another permit request, proposing to cut less wood than initially sought.

TVA insiders say they suspect the chippers realized the permitting process would be longer than first expected, but suspicious chip mill opponents don't agree. They speculate a deal was made because three chip mills had a better chance than four. Some opponents — particularly those connected to a recently formed network called Tennesseans, Alabamians, and Georgians for Environmental Responsibility (TAGER) — think a shotgun approach, in which many mills are touted but only one is permitted, is a strategy to make concerned citizens feel they won in the end.

Officials with Parker Towing and

Donghae say their companies will be here with or without TVA approval. "We still will be at the port, and we don't believe that the chip mills will be denied," says Larry Otis with Parker Towing. "TVA does not have the authority to deny this activity. The timber is being bought from private landowners. To put restrictions on a company as to where a private individual can sell his product is getting over

into controlling the private ownership of land."

If TVA should deny barge permits or land easements, Otis says, the companies could still build somewhere else nearby. "And if you check, you'll find out that if we were to move the chips by rail car or by trucks, there would be no permits required. And that is an option for us to do."

Would the companies persist in locating

here if public protest grows? "We'd have to evaluate that," says Otis.

"I'm sure that whether we do it or somebody else does it, the wood will be purchased," Otis adds. "The landowner will be selling the timber, regardless of whether we buy it or another company buys it. It's being bought and sold today as we speak." □

Feature Reporting, Division Three

Black on Hilton Head

As whites develop luxury resorts on a South Carolina island, black residents struggle to save their land and heritage.

By Frank Morris
The Island Packet



For years, the staff of The Island Packet had been reporting on a simmering racial conflict on Hilton Head Island. Threats of a boycott of resort hotels. Battles over whether to

keep black-majority voting districts. Anger here. Dissatisfaction there.

"Those stories always left a bad taste in our mouths when they hit the front page, on deadline," editor Frank Smith wrote. "They raised issues without raising consciousness. Our fear was that they did more harm than good."

To provide some context and history to the racially charged debate, staff members prepared a special six-part report on what has happened to native black residents since white development began in the 1950s.

HILTON HEAD, S.C. — Juan Byars speaks with a quiet and collected, yet angry, voice. Driving down William Hilton Parkway, he says he feels excluded from vast sections of an island that "was built in the sweat and blood" of his slave ancestors, was farmed and fished and hunted by them as freedmen, and now is being swallowed by development.

Byars, a sixth-generation black islander, finds that he has to seek permission to pass through Sea Pines Plantation gates to visit his family's pre-Civil War cemetery. He refuses to pay the \$3 gate fee required for non-residents to enter the development.

This day, when Byars tells a security guard the nature of his visit, he's waved in without a request for payment. Still, Byars says, "the message is clear" to

black islanders: "Don't make a left, don't make a right off Highway 278, because you're not green enough." On Hilton Head, "money is the law."

When Byars arrives at the small cemetery, he says that like almost all the island's black burial grounds, it used to sit near the water. This is in keeping with a Sea Island belief that the open water is the pathway to Africa for the spirits of the dead.

Now the graves are separated from Calibogue Sound by the 18th hole of the Harbour Town Golf Links. Bordered by a rail fence, the cemetery sits in the shadow of tall condominiums. A tourist takes a snapshot of it.

The issues facing Byars and other members of his community comprise a rainbow of facts and feelings. Their hopes and fears, attainments and frustrations,

OTHER WINNERS

For feature reporting in Division Three (circulation under 30,000):

Second prize to Tom Morris of *The Daily Reflector* for his moving portrayal of the lack of health care for impoverished residents of eastern North Carolina.

BIRTH OF A MOVEMENT

A small band of black workers have formed a support group on Hilton Head Island that — like its namesake — has stayed out of the light. The group, which began building steam last Martin Luther King Day, is called "The Underground."

The Underground is a name "from slavery," says member Johnnie Mae Dopson. It recalls "the underground railroad" by which fugitive slaves — before the Thirteenth Amendment abolished involuntary servitude in 1865 — escaped from the South to safe havens in Northern states and Canada.

"We're saying we're really not out of slavery now," says Doris Grant, a founder of the group. "We're still in slavery, but in a modern-day sense. We still have those shackles on our feet."

Underground members are not running to find freedom elsewhere. Their mission is to gain new freedoms

— through better pay, job security, and opportunities — to improve their lives in Hilton Head's resort-and-retirement economy.

"We have 18 members strong,"

says Grant, adding that white workers sometimes attend the meetings. "We don't discriminate. It's not just a black issue. It's a black and white issue. There's more blacks in low-pay jobs. But if white workers are on that same low level as we are, they're catching the same hell."

Grant, a 38-year-old native islander, recently quit her job as a waitress at a retirement home. "Management just wants to play games," she says. "Stupid, childish games."

She has worked as a waitress at many island hotels and as a housekeeper in what she calls "millionaire dollar homes." She is not afraid to work, and has sometimes held two jobs to get by.

One desire of workers, Grant says, is to be respected for doing their job — not to be treated like a "jackass with two feet. It's just

like you're the mule and they've got the whip."

Grant plans to reenter the job market soon, but says, "I'm working for the people now."

Photos by Jay Karr/The Island Packet



DORIS GRANT FOUNDED THE UNDERGROUND TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF HILTON HEAD WORKERS.

cannot be painted in simple blacks and whites, cannot be stereotyped. But on an island that not so long ago was rural and had a predominantly black population of farmers and fishers, rapid white population growth and economic expansion over the past 30 years has built into a growing sense of isolation and victimization.

BREAKING POINT

According to established, black community leaders in their 40s and older — and according to a new and upcoming generation of organizers — the situation may be reaching a breaking point. They say blacks who feel excluded from benefits of development want to find ways to work with the establishment to share the wealth while also preserving their Sea

Island and Lowcountry cultures.

Unless serious efforts to find solutions on both sides begin soon, they say, it might become too late to make a difference — permanently harming not only the black community but the island business and social community as a whole.

This picture has emerged over the past year and a half, from interviews and from various meetings of black community members — including forums of the Native Matters Committee formed by Mayor Jerry Barkie to enable black islanders to bring their concerns to him.

Black islanders — from young to old, from blue collar to white collar — agree that they face common problems. They say their community's troubles are with local government — from taxes to zoning to lack of services. Their troubles are with

the resort- and tourism-based businesses, which are perceived as exploiting workers through low pay and few benefits.

Their troubles are with the "plantation" developments and their gates — behind which few local blacks can afford to live, and through which few pass, save for service jobs. And their troubles are with an apparent lack of concern for the Gullah tradition — a mixture of African and American cultures they want to preserve in day-to-day life rather than on museum shelves.

Simply from the patterns of migration to Hilton Head, local history for most white island residents and businesses begins with Charles Fraser's discovery of the island's development potential in the 1950s. "The problem is that a lot of people who are key in policy-making positions now don't know the history of native blacks on Hilton Head," says native islander Thomas Barnwell Jr., a black landowner and a rental-housing developer.

"They don't give a damn," the 56-year-old Barnwell said in an interview before his recent appointment by Town Council to the Planning Commission. "If they did, the corporate structure would take some time out and say: 'Hey, there are some species here that are tipping on the endangered area.' They would take some time to understand how to deal with that because it would help them to have friends."

Black landowners — many of whom hold property gained by forefathers freed from slavery — say a combination of low wages and high taxes makes it hard to hold on to property they can't afford to develop. And some black laborers — including many who commute from elsewhere in Beaufort County or from neighboring Jasper, Hampton, Colleton, or Allendale counties — say they earn inadequate pay and appreciation for making the island's tourism-and-retirement economy run.

Census reports show that the black population on Hilton Head has grown by 70 percent to 2,259 residents since 1975, while the white population has jumped by 307 percent to 21,208 residents. In the past five years, the white population has grown 22 times faster than the black population. Poverty levels among blacks on the island run three times higher than among whites.

The census figures omit an even more important factor: Black islanders have their roots in the land, and their land-holdings

have decreased. On an island of about 42,000 acres, blacks hold an estimated 3,000 acres, almost all of it undeveloped.

RACE AND ECONOMICS

They can't prove it, but members of the black community sometimes wonder if — in the areas of both land and jobs — problems are compounded by a subtle form of "institutional racism," according to Emory Campbell, a black Hilton Head native who directs Penn Community Center on St. Helena Island.

From black community leaders to office secretaries to waitresses, talk about cultural and social pressures always circles back to economics. Island and other Lowcountry black residents, they say, are dealing with economic difficulties that put a disproportionate share of their race at a disadvantage. They talk of a widening gap between rich and poor and say affluence on Hilton Head makes the poor feel poorer.

"This whole business of race relations in the United States and on the island has to do with economics," Campbell says. "It has to do with how much opportunity there is."

Island blacks today find themselves in a society that emphasizes "rugged individualism" and independence, he says, instead of their old ways of working together on the land and sea. Before, "you plowed your land and grew crops. Today, the town says, 'you've got to do A, B, C, and D to use your land.'"

Black islanders opposed formation of the Town of Hilton Head in 1983, saying it would bring over-regulation of their land and — with a plan to provide only a "limited-services" government — offer no benefits in return. Today, many say those fears came true. For example, Campbell says, "it's a sin" that the town has not required or provided a means for non-plantation communities to get infrastructure — such as public water service, which has been left in the hands of private utilities and public service districts.

If the town has been a sinner, it made at least one attempt at redemption in the 1980s. Town Council helped the Rural Water District get grants and loans for a \$1.24 million project to bring two wells, 6.2 miles of water mains, and 332 fire hydrants for 225 customers in the Squire Pope community, where many of the residents are black. Water began flowing in 1989 and reaches most, but not all, in the area.

But Campbell, who was the water district's chair when the project began in the late 1970s, notes that "we didn't need a town to get water there." In fact, the town's formation delayed the project by several years: "Ironically, the establishment of the town disqualified us from getting Farmers Home Administration grants as a rural community."

Both Campbell and Barnwell, current chair of the Rural Water District, complain that residents of the Spanish Wells community are paying property taxes to Hilton Head Public Service District No. 1 for water they don't receive. Residents of the Chaplin community and businesses on the west side of William Hilton Parkway also are without public water.

Since "mainstream America has come and imposed things on this tradition" of living off the land, Campbell says, blacks require infrastructure to change their land from traditional to modern-day uses.

GROWING CONDOS

When the civil rights movement of the 1950s was growing in other parts of the South, Campbell recalls, it didn't become an issue on undeveloped Hilton Head. "We didn't have segregation on Hilton Head, except for the schools," he says. Hilton Head blacks and the few white families who had lived on the island so long that they, too, considered themselves native to the island, got along like family.

But 27 years after passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, some island blacks feel more socially and economically segregated than ever. "All these things are new," says Campbell, who literally walks into a part of black history when he goes to work each day. The Penn Center, founded in 1861 by two Pennsylvania



COMMUTING WORKERS — MOST OF THEM BLACK — WAIT FOR A HILTON HEAD BUS TO TRANSPORT THEM TO LUXURY RESORTS OWNED BY WHITE RESIDENTS.

Quakers, was the nation's first school for freedmen. Converted from a school to a community center in 1948, it now works to preserve Gullah culture and to meet social and educational needs of area blacks.

Campbell bristles at the suggestion — made by critics of a CBS *60 Minutes* segment on Beaufort County titled "The New Plantations" — that development has provided jobs and services that would have been unavailable if "growing butter beans" had remained the economic base.

"That's an insult. We done pretty good with the butter beans," Campbell says. "We had just gotten out of slavery" and were taught how to farm vegetables. "Who's going to teach us how to grow the condo?"

To people who say that black islanders can take that responsibility, Campbell replies: "We ain't been free that long.

"I'm not saying that anybody owes me anything," he says. But, he adds, island blacks would welcome some help to make better lives in the new economy. "Look, we all want to rise together." □

New Snow

By Darnell Arnoult

In 1935 I was nine years old. For some reason, I can remember vividly the events of that year. This is strange to me because I cannot say today for certain what dress or what shoes I wore a week ago Monday. The brain is a funny thing. I remember the exact shade of red of my brother's scarf, the way the same wisps of hair fell from my mother's top-knot by the end of every day, the odor of my father's suits, the feel of powdery snow against my face and fingers. I close my eyes and see the view from the end of Church Street where we lived, the ice-coated vista that I committed to memory while I waited like a sentinel for my father to return from his trip to Richmond. I remember the rhythm of scallops which crested the brick wall that surrounded Oak Ridge Academy like the long tail of a giant dragon in the distance. Oak Ridge was a mysterious place full of young boys and old white-haired men, and a black cook named Bertha who ordered groceries for "my boys," as she called them.

That year I did something that upset my brother a great deal. Afterward, he yanked my wrist as he dragged me home from the mercantile, saying I was queer and had embarrassed him for the last time. He said he wished I would join a circus and leave the mountain to go live in the

low country where no one else would know we were related. What I had done fairly tortured him, and he threatened to spit on me if I ever did it again.

That was also the year my father decided to expand his mercantile business to include a small department store with ready-made items like dresses and hats and fancy cigarette cases with engraving on the fronts. He even brought mannequins for the window, at first just a man and a little girl.

My mother didn't approve of the ready-made merchandise. She said privately that she could have sewn more practical dresses, knitted sturdier socks, tatted more elegant lace. But her attitude came more from a fear of the unfamiliar than any standard of quality.

My brother was like her, judgmental, suspicious. But the good thing about them was that they had no envy. They were truly content with what they had and what they expected to have. In moments of soulful agony or simple frustration I used to think how lucky they were to be so content.

I loved my father more than my mother simply because he was so willing to launch into anything that might bring about change. My father and I were afraid of inertia. He once said to me, "You and I pale at the familiar, Mary, because we are afraid that's all there will be."

He carried a piece of paper in his wallet, a verse torn from

In moments of soulful agony or simple frustration I used to think how lucky they were to be so content.

a letter someone had written to him. The folds were creased to fragile cracks and worn brown by his fingers. He read the words out loud to me or silently to himself. A verse from the Bible, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, of love, and of a sound mind." II Timothy 1:7. I have it in a drawer. It was his shield.

Of course he had memorized the verse years before. And on that day he came back from Richmond, and had to hear my brother's embellished fitful recounting of how I had lain down in the snow, he asked to be alone with me. My brother thought my father was going to spank me, so he smugly left the room.

When Father and I were alone he had me hold the fragile paper and read the Bible verse to him. Then he said, "It isn't always enough to know important things. Sometimes you must touch them."

I knew this. That is what had upset my brother. That is why my wrist was bruised. That was the very thing I had tried to do.

The thing I did came about as part of a normal day. My mother ran out of white thread for quilting, so she sent me to the mercantile for another spool. I was across the street from the store when I heard the boys from Oak Ridge coming, shuffling through the new snow to pick up their order of groceries. Six of them, happy and jolly with laughter puffing clouds from their mouths into the bracing air. They were a little younger than my brother, maybe fourteen. Some of them had hats and others earmuffs. Their faces were red from the cold. They wore drab gray coats and black gloves. They looked alike, ordinary, except for one boy who had red curly hair and freckles on his face, and a new boy with black hair and eyes as green as summer grass. I had seen the green-eyed boy three times before. I thought he was quite



handsome. Once he had waved to me. That day he saw me he winked at me and then threw a handful of snow at one of his playmates.

I stopped.

The green-eyed boy was in the middle of the moving huddle, all of them coming down the street, one amorphous body with twelve legs and six heads. Then the green-eyed boy's head lurched back-

ward and his gloved hands drew toward his chest in a counting motion, one, two, three, faster, four, five. His knees buckled beneath him and he began to lean toward the snow.

His friends turned and helped him to the ground at the foot of the boardwalk, clear of the steps. They surrounded him, vigilant, warning people on the street to stand back.

"Don't touch him!" one boy shouted to a woman who moved to comfort the boy on the ground.

"Don't you touch him either, Mary!" my brother shouted. "You might catch something." He stood in the doorway of the store with his white apron over his sweater. I knew he was there, what he looked like, the way his lips formed the words he yelled at me. But I didn't see him. I couldn't look away from the boy in the snow.

One of the Oak Ridge boys threw a stick at the shop door. "Be quiet, you idiot!" he shouted at my brother. My brother quickly closed the door. I heard it slam.

The green-eyed boy continued to move in short jerks, slicing his feet into the snow, his head back into his shoulders pulling to the left. His mouth was open and only crescents of his green eyes cupped beneath his half-closed lids.

I was transfixed. I had witnessed this thing from its beginning and I stood there watching, staring. I didn't think about being rude, I didn't think. I watched.

Within minutes, I don't know how many, he stopped almost as quickly as he had started. His body slid limp and

sprawling into the wet powdery snow and then was motionless, his eyes closed and his breathing labored.

"You all right, Roddy?" the red-haired boy asked. The green-eyed boy nodded.

"Help him," said a lady to her husband.

"No," said one of the boys. "We know how to take care of him. Please. Let him alone."

The woman looked at them, disbelieving. Then she took her husband's arm and they walked on.

The boys waited, and I waited. I did not know for what, but I did not move. I did not pray for him or move to help him. I did not ask questions or cry. I only waited.

In some minutes he sat up, putting his elbows on his knees, his head on his folded arms.

"All right, boys." He extended his hands. His friends helped him to his feet and brushed the snow from his coat. "Don't tell Cook," I heard him whisper to them.

"Do you need to change?" one of the boys asked.

"No," he said.

Three of the boys, including the red-haired one, went into the store to pick up what they had been sent for. Two others stayed outside. The green-eyed boy looked at me.

"I'm sorry if I scared you," he said. "This just happens to me sometimes."

He was the handsome boy again, color coming to his face,

his eyes centered and intense. I smiled at him. I waited.

"How old are you?" he said.

"Nine," I said.

"I haven't been nine for six years," he said.

The other boys came out of the store carrying packages and a salted ham. The boys walked away still jovial, less swift, less raucous. Five favoring the one. Soon they disappeared behind the bricks of Oak Ridge Academy.

I stood in the street looking at the spot where he had fallen in the new snow. Then I lay down beside that place, putting my bare hand where his had been, and moved my arms and legs.

"Get up from there, dummy!" my brother shouted. "What are you doing? Don't lay there where that fellow was! I'm telling on you. You'll catch it."

He jerked at my wrist, careful not to touch my hand, pulling me up from the snow and down the street toward home. When we were at the top of the hill I resisted him just long enough to look around, over my shoulder. I saw there, on the ground near the mercantile, just what I had hoped to see — two figures connected, one slightly misshapen, the other seemingly perfect, two angels-in-the-snow. □

Darnell Arnoult is a poet who grew up in Henry County, Virginia and now works at the Center for Documentary Studies in Durham, North Carolina. This is her first published short story.

At the Fiddle Contest, 1926

By Lynn Druett

Church is different," Pa said. "Everybody's got their mouth open and everybody's looking at God."

I put a slice of cheddar on top of his peach pie. "Remember Leola got stranded by the war."

So here we are, viewing the prizes on stage, a pair of cotton socks, big, Pa's

size, a sack of flour, and two green dollar bills clipped together like husband and wife. Pa holds my hand. They never let a girl sing before. The crowd will love Leola like Pa and I do.

I hope there's a mirror backstage. Leola's hair's wild and yellow as dandelions. Mine's silver strands among the gold. Pa's is all gray. It looks like combed metal.

If we win the two dollars, if Leola wins the two dollars, Pa

can drop it in the collection plate on Sunday. But I don't say this right now. I don't want to jinx Leola.

Two boys are playing guitars but I like a whole band.

I usually dream of Leola being swept toward the altar on a hymn, stepping free of Pa's arm, me and the kinfolk smiling. Just like Mellie Ivy is smiling way up front strapped in a new calico, prowling.

The boys are singing high harmony:

Two old maids playin' in the sand

Each one wishin' the other'n was a man

I like a whole band like Leola has behind her, a banjo, the fiddle high and slow and mournful, a bass to thump like frogs in the spring. A guitar strumming, strumming like the twang against my fingers when I hang clothes to dry. I make the line shiver, the string on a fiddle. Shirts bow to pink petticoats. Clothes swing to my music. Britches throw a leg over like they're climbing a fence.

*Two old maids done lost their style
If you want to be lucky you got to smile*

Mellie Ivy's slim and has nice wavy hair, brown but there's something about her that makes me think of a birch when it's peeling, all that white papery bark curling away from something thick inside, something that's not white or papery at all. She puts the rouge on thick. She's Leola's friend, stranded, too.

I'll clap for the guitar boys, but soft as if I'm wearing gloves.

There's Leola's band. Grundy, Andrew, Jake, but no Leola. Probably waiting to bring her on like the queen of surprises. It's a new

*I like a whole band
like Leola has behind her,
a banjo, the fiddle high
and slow
and mournful,
a bass to thump
like frogs
in the spring.*

*A guitar strumming,
strumming like
the twang
against my fingers
when I hang
clothes to dry.
I make the line
shiver, the string
on a fiddle.*

fellow going to sing. But the voice — Leola.

In a man's suit. In her dead brother's clothes. His boots that I blacked and blacked, kept ready for him to come back across the waters and take up the plow again. Leola's chance blown up like Arthur's last view. A land mine, jagged light, then sweet blue air, warm, like the morning he first took a step, careful already around the mud hole where the hound dog slept. His shoes dancing on the stage.

It's all I can see.

Them black boots, big humped-toed grins stomping the boards. Him. Arthur. And everybody laughing. The whole hall laughing and Leola a grin bigger than the boots as she sings, the pants tight and slim around her legs, the shirt starched just so, her hair hid in a bowler.

Pa's fidgeting, laughing to go along with the crowd, his hand weeping in mine. At home it will harden against me.

Gone. I should be gone. Each song long as cancer.

My fool girl.

Singing and dancing and hallooping all over the stage like a

stable boy. I crisped the eyelet, crisped her hair, sewed the edges of the rags to hold her curls.

Mellie Ivy pink as a chigger.

Pa about to explode, about to walk up to the stage and jerk Leola from it, knock down the hat, pull off the pants and starched shirt and her dead brother's boots and make her

stand up there like that, make her understand what she is.

I pray that he's too old, my hand in his vise, my hand crushed and swelling. □

Lynn Pruett is a writer who lives in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.



Hurricanes

By Mary Lee Kerr

Caribbean islanders called them evil spirits. Mayans worshiped Hunraken, the storm god. The National Weather Service prefers "Andrew" or "Bob." Whatever the name, people living in the Southern regions have long feared and revered the hurricane.

Throughout history the South has been blasted by the furious storms. As early as 1667, English settlers in Jamestown recorded a "dreadful Hurry Cane" of "such violence that it overturned many houses, burying in the ruins much goods and many people."

In the past century, 141 of the 148 hurricanes that hit the eastern United States swept through the South. Florida and Texas, with their long coastlines, have suffered the most. Fifty-three hurricanes have struck the Sunshine State since 1900, and 34 have pounded Texas.

Although hurricanes are not uniquely Southern, they are born in the warm waters of the deep tropics. "The further south you go, the better the chance you're going to run into one," says meteorologist Jack Beven of the National Hurricane Center.

The storms originate, explains Beven, when winds of tropical thunderstorms above 35,000 feet reach a certain speed — strong enough to blow upwards through the storm, yet light enough to remain around the low-pressure center, or eye, without shearing off. The result is a chimney-shaped storm with winds of more than 74 miles per hour. The average North Atlantic hurricane lasts eight days, and the hurricane "season" runs from June to October.

The South has borne the brunt of some of the nation's worst hurricanes. In 1900 one of the violent storms leveled Galveston, Texas with 20-foot waves. About a third of the town's residents — 6,000 people — were killed. A 1933 hurricane left 40 people dead and destroyed \$12 million of property in Brownsville, Texas.

Winds of 200 miles an hour were recorded for Hurricane Camille, which cut a devastating swath through Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama in 1969. The storm killed 144 people and left 500 miles of road impassable.

Such ferocious natural history has also inspired regional writers. In *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Zora Neale Hurston



A FLORIDA COUPLE SITS IN FRONT OF THE WRECKAGE OF THEIR HOME AFTER HURRICANE ANDREW.

Photo by Linda Rosier/Impact Visuals

describes the helplessness of Florida migrant workers unable to escape a 1928 hurricane that their wealthier neighbors fled: "If the castles thought themselves secure, the cabins needn't worry. Their decision was already made as always. Chink up your cracks, shiver in your wet beds and wait on the mercy of the Lord." The hurricane broke dikes around Lake Okeechobee, flooding migrant communities and drowning 2,000 people.

Although modern-day hurricanes destroy the homes of rich and poor

alike, folks of lesser means have a harder time escaping the storms — and recovering from the damage. "People who have money get into a mad scramble to find some kind of temporary housing," says Don Cameron, a member of the Disaster Task Force that is still cleaning up Charleston, South Carolina three years after Hurricane Hugo. "Poor people don't have that luxury because they generally don't have transportation, they don't know where to look, they don't know how to look."

When Hurricane Andrew leveled southern Florida last August, most of the 85,000 homes that were damaged or destroyed were occupied by people of low or moderate incomes. Four months later, many homes were still covered with plastic tarps, and debris remained piled on street corners. The insured damage is estimated at over \$10 billion, a record for a natural disaster.

"There are people who are living in homes that are destroyed, with no roofs, open walls, no power," says Gus Dominguez, assistant director of an affordable housing organization called Greater Miami Neighborhoods. "It'll take years to rebuild."

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of any hurricane is the fear it produces. Don Cameron stayed in his house with his wife and children during Hugo, but if another hurricane came, he says he would send them elsewhere.

"It's a really traumatic situation," he says. "It was like freight trains — it was awful." □

Mary Lee Kerr is a research associate with the Institute for Southern Studies in Durham, North Carolina.



There's No Such Thing As Safe Chicken

Eight out of ten USDA-approved chickens are contaminated with salmonella and campylobacter bacteria . . . Each year, these bacteria sicken at least 4 million Americans and kill 2,000. Raw poultry is now the most common source of these bacteria . . . Poultry producers say cleanliness is the consumer's problem . . . But should we have to treat chicken like hazardous waste?

Senator Howard Metzenbaum, USA Today (6/28/91)

The final product is no different than if you took a bird . . . stuck it in the toilet and then ate it . . . (p. 236*)

*Gerald Kuester
Former USDA Microbiologist*

The first thing they go through is the scald tank. There it's nothing but boiling fecal soup. . . . It's a mass accumulation of bacteria on top of bacteria.

Today, basically, the consumers eat it. (pp. 341-342*)

USDA Poultry Inspectors

Workers get sick to their stomachs in the drain. The drain is a lot less sanitary than anyone's toilet. The Perdue inspectors told us to take (chickens that fell) out of the drain and send them back down the line . . . (p. 70*)

Former Perdue Worker

The waste is not always even from the chickens . . . (workers) sometimes have to relieve themselves on the floor. Chickens regularly fall off the line and into all the muck . . . supervisors have workers put them back on the line . . . (p. 70*)

Former Perdue Worker

. . . cancerous birds come through with tumors regularly, sometimes all day long . . . right after I'd put them in the condemned barrel foremen have the floor workers hang

the birds back on the (processing) line . . . (p. 61*)

Former Perdue Quality Control Inspector

I've heard that Frank Perdue ads talk about how tough his quality control inspectors are. He wouldn't dare run those ads in North Carolina . . . (p. 71*)

Former Perdue Worker

Can you imagine Frank Perdue's face when you go to him and say, "I want to put a warning on your chicken that says 'This chicken may be contaminated'?" (p. 346*)

*Jim Vance, Co-anchor
News 4 WRC-TV (NBC) (4/26/91)*

You are risking more than your health every time you eat chicken. You are supporting an industry which cripples workers, destroys the environment and creates an unending horror for birds. Twenty-five thousand birds at a time, are crammed into a dark warehouse, with less than one square foot of living space per bird, choking from accumulated ammonia fumes.

Perdue workers, mostly poor minority women, have to cut up to 90 chickens per minute, for minimal pay. When this unnatural speedup cripples the workers' arms and hands, they are fired and left to fend for

themselves. The government has fined Perdue for deliberately concealing worker injuries and for polluting the Virginia waterways. Perdue is a pioneer of intensive chicken confinement, which means misery for the birds and an epidemic of dirt and disease for consumers.

One More Thing To Worry About . . .

Rather than clean up the industry, current proposals call for covering up the dirt and disease by irradiating the birds. But using nuclear waste to irradiate chickens effectively turns consumers into individual toxic waste dumps. While this may help to dispose of nuclear waste, it introduces additional unknown health risks and encourages the poultry industry to further lower already abominable standards.

You can run this ad. This ad was produced by the Coalition for Non-Violent Food, a project of Animal Rights International, Henry Spira, coordinator, and is not copyrighted. For additional information about Frank Perdue and the poultry industry send a SASE to: ARI, Box 214, Planetarium Stn., New York, NY 10024. Your tax deductible contribution to ARI will make it possible to rerun this and related ads.

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