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**1 – CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS: NATIONAL & METROPOLITAN**

**47.1.1 HOW THE WEST WAS NOT WON – THIS TIME**

Seven Network chairman Kerry Stokes lost his bid on 23 April to win a seat on the board of West Australian Newspapers Holdings Ltd (WAN), and has pledged he will not launch a takeover bid. But he has indicated he will fight on to win WAN board representation. WAN has said it will consider expanding its board to include more directors with media experience. More than 500 shareholders turned out at Perth's Hyatt Regency Hotel to see the highly publicised showdown between Stokes and the board of WAN. The showdown followed a two-month campaign by Stokes to win two seats on the board for the Seven Network, which holds a 19.4 per cent interest in WAN (*Australian*, 24 April 2008, pp.1-2, and Media section, p.31). Following is a select summary of major news stories related to the *West Australian* since mid-February.

- WAN posted a 21 per cent fall in profit for the first half of 2007-08. Net income fell to \$44.3 million, from \$56.1 million a year earlier. Influencing this result were a \$10.4 million loss from the sale of Hoyts Cinemas and charges to write down old printing presses (*Age*, 15 February 2008).
- A group of seven senior Perth-based journalism academics asserted that reports in the *West Australian* had "increasingly crossed the line into beat-up and misrepresentation" and the newspaper was "losing its authority" (*Australian*, 21 February 2008, p.3).
- The WA Government prepared what amounts to a dirt file on the editor of the *West Australian*, Paul Armstrong. The document is described as a damning critique of Armstrong's editorship and says Armstrong receives a \$467,323 salary package (*Australian*, 22 February 2008, p.3).
- Kerry Stokes condemned the business and editorial performance of the *West Australian*. He wrote to WAN, calling for a shareholder meeting to vote on the removal of all non-executive directors and the installation of Seven's Peter Gammel and Stokes himself (*Australian*, 26 Feb 2008, pp.3 and 19).
- WAN chairman Peter Mansell sent, on 26 February, a letter to the company's shareholders, accusing Kerry Stokes of trying to wrest control of WAN without paying an "appropriate" takeover premium. Mansell is a non-executive director (*Australian*, 27 Feb 2008, p.23).

- Mark Day reported (*Australian*, Media section, 28 February 2008, p.36): “It is inevitable that Kerry Stokes will get control of West Australian Newspapers. Regardless of the board spill he has demanded, all he has to do is play the waiting game until his shareholding creeps into irresistible territory. He knows how to do this. It’s exactly how he took control of the Seven Network ...” (see also pp.31-32 of that issue of the Media section).
- The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission will examine claims by the Seven Network that it is not seeking to control the board of WAN Holdings (*Australian*, 3 March 2008).
- Kerry Stokes sent WAN shareholders a letter asking for their support in the 23 April directors’ ballot. He also launched a hotline to convince shareholders they should throw out all the company’s non-executive directors (*Australian*, Media section, 6 March 2008, p.33).
- Eleven outside candidates nominated for the four board seats at WAN’s extraordinary shareholders meeting in April after a rush of nominations on 7 March (*West Australian*, 8 March 2008).
- WAN chair Peter Mansell says company funds will be used only to keep shareholders informed rather than for electioneering (*Australian*, 11 March 2008, p.25).
- The four non-executive directors of WAN declared they would not work with Kerry Stokes or Peter Gammell if they were elected directors of the company (*Australian*, 17 March 2008, p.31).
- Peter Mansell says the Stokes push to take two board seats is the first step in a process that will cost WAN \$500 million (*Australian*, 18 March 2008, p.21).
- Seven Network will push for an expanded WAN board if Kerry Stokes and Peter Gammell are elected as WAN directors (*Australian*, 19 March 2008, p.23; see also Bryan Frith’s column, p.22).
- WAN has missed the boat for online offerings and is being swamped by its competitors’ more successful digital strategies, Seven director Peter Gammell says (*Australian*, 20 March 2008, p.6). The Seven Network has marshalled support from some of Australia’s top media buyers and advertisers to dismiss claims by WAN that Kerry Stokes’ push for a board seat would create an insurmountable conflict of interest (*Australian*, Media section, 20 March 2008, p.35).
- Seven (WAN) Pty Ltd took out a full-page advertisement in the *Australian* on 27 March (p.9) to present its “proposal to Refresh the Board of Western Australian Newspapers Holdings Limited”. The advertisement ran in a number of other papers, too. (See *Australian*, Media section, 27 March 2008, p.40, “The Diary”.)
- On 2 April, at a Perth breakfast, attended by 1200 people, Kerry Stokes questioned the performance of the *West Australian’s* editor, saying the newspaper was failing its readership and calling it a poorly laid-out, self-indulgent and unattractive product. Andrew “Twiggy” Forrest (Australia’s richest man) hinted he would use his billions to ignite a newspaper war in Perth if Stokes failed to win a seat on the WAN board (*Australian*, 3 April 2008, p.3, and, Media section, p.31, and Harold Mitchell’s comment, pp.31-32; see also *Subiaco Post*, 5 April 2008, p.9).
- Kerry Stokes said Peter Mansell had two choices if he believed that WAN shares were really worth about \$16 or \$17: he could find another party to buy 20 per cent at that price; or he could “take us out at \$17 a share and we will go with somebody else, like Mr Forrest, and we’ll start our own newspaper”. At close of trading on 3 April, WAN shares stood at \$11.55 (*Australian*, 4 April 2008, p.5).
- The *Australian* editorialised (4 April 2008, p.13) on the solid future of newspapers and discussed the impact of cost-cutting on circulation at the *West Australian*.
- WAN has written to its 30,000 shareholders to “set the record straight”. Peter Mansell accuses Stokes of making “inconsistent and selective statements” about WAN (*Australian*, 7 April 2008).

- The Seven Network established a website to promote its viewpoints on the need for changes at WAN. The site is at [www.refreshthewest.com.au](http://www.refreshthewest.com.au)
- More than 100 staff members of the *West Australian* have written to Kerry Stokes seeking assurances he will not turn the paper into an eastern-states-style tabloid, believing that if he did they would lose even more readers to the *Australian*. The letter asks Stokes to commit to a charter of editorial independence (*Australian*, 9 April 2008, p.3).
- Tony Barrass, who worked for the *West Australian* for 15 years in various journalistic roles, including magazine editor and chief of staff, and who is now the *Australian's* Western Australian editor, writes (*Australian*, Media section, 10 April 2008, pp.27-28) that the WAN's \$210 million Koenig and Bauer Colora press has been "an unmitigated disaster from day one, compounded by a mantra inside the company that dictates that every problem can be solved by cutting costs".
- Jennifer Hewett, national affairs correspondent, discusses (*Australian*, Media section, 10 April 2008, pp.27-28) Kerry Stokes's comparison of the *West Australian* and the *Sunday Times* (Perth), and his praise for the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Herald Sun*.
- Peter Mansell has hailed the company's third-quarter results as evidence of why its shareholders should shun a Seven Network bid to sack the board. WAN recorded a 13 per cent increase in underlying earnings to \$31 million for the first three months of 2008 compared with a year earlier. WAN brought forward the release of its third-quarter results because of the 23 April extraordinary meeting (*Age*, 10 April 2008).
- Kerry Stokes gave his "first in-depth interview in almost a decade", telling of his adoption at age three, his struggle with dyslexia and sleeping on the streets at 15 (*STM*, *Sunday Times*, Perth, 13 April 2008). He spoke about poverty, corporal punishment and plans for retirement. He revealed his fear of public speaking because of his dyslexia, which caused him to be strapped by Christian Brothers teachers; he was not diagnosed until he was in his thirties.
- The West Australian branch of the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance has asked the WA Attorney-General, Jim McGinty, to stop his public attacks on reporters. After months of hostilities between McGinty and Perth journalists – particularly those from the *West Australian* – MEAA faxed a letter to the Attorney-General asking him to "cease unwarranted public attacks on WA journalists and to lift a ban on dealings with reporters from the *West Australian*" (*Australian*, 15 April 2008, p.7).
- Seven has thrown its weight behind Professor Margaret Seares AO and Peter Abery in their bid to be appointed to the WAN board at an extraordinary general meeting of WAN shareholders on April 23 (*Australian*, 15 April 2008).
- The *West Australian* needed to replace its editor and senior management as well as change the newspaper's editorial culture, WA Premier Alan Carpenter said on 15 April (*Australian*, 16 April 2008).
- Nick Tabakoff interviews Kerry Stokes at length after the Seven Network chief failed to win a seat on the WAN board (*Weekend Australian*, 26-27 April 2008, pp.31, 34).
- WAN is examining the possible expansion of its board by two – from five to seven directors – as it seeks to appease concerns raised by shareholders at the 23 April meeting about its performance (*Australian*, Media section, 1 May 2008, p.32; also see pp.31-32 for John Lyons's article on "Stokes heir" Peter Gammell).
- Deputy Federal Opposition Leader, Julie Bishop, said the *West Australian* had declined "dramatically" in recent years. She strongly supports Seven's bid for two directors on the WAN board (*Australian*, 1 May 2008, p.5).

#### **47.1.2 CARTOONIST PRYOR SIGNS OFF AFTER 30 YEARS**

Geoff Pryor has laid down his pen after drawing more than 10,000 editorial cartoons in his 30 years at the *Canberra Times*. He finished on 29 February and his final cartoon appeared the next day. He was farewelled at a dinner at the Hyatt Hotel on 27 February. The 230 guests included the ACT Chief Minister Jon Stanhope and past and present editors of the *Canberra*

*Times*. The newspaper published an eight-page tabloid liftout of some of the best of Pryor's cartoons of the past 30 years. Jack Waterford, the current editor-at-large and a former editor and editor-in-chief, declared that Pryor had been "Australia's premier cartoonist" during his period with the newspaper. Pryor's cartoons had exposed "the vanity, the ridiculous, the hypocrisy and the absence of principle".

Waterford said that when Pryor came to work each day he talked to people – to journalists, to mates and contacts, and focused on finding out what was really going on and why, and what the strengths and weaknesses or relative positions were. By the end of the process there were few who were better informed, which "is why so much of what he does is so sharp, and so satisfying to the insider". Pryor won some major awards for his cartooning but had long ceased to enter competitions. Typically the competitions were for the best cartoon of the year, or the best on a certain subject. Pryor believes that every cartoonist of reasonable ability can produce a great cartoon at least once a year. The challenge was to produce consistently good or excellent cartoons. The Canberra Times farewelled "the fine art of Pryor" in an editorial on 1 March (*Canberra Times*, 27 and 28 February and 1 March 2008).

#### **47.1.3 MUSICAL CHAIRS FOR FAIRFAX EDITORS**

Fairfax Media Ltd has announced an editorial reshuffle apparently prompted by the desire of *Canberra Times* editor Mark Baker to return to working in Melbourne because his wife and family were still in Melbourne. Baker rejoins the *Age* as editor of special projects. Peter Fray leaves the editorship of the *Sunday Age* to become the editor of the *Canberra Times*. Gay Alcorn, the deputy editor of the *Age*, becomes the editor of the *Sunday Age* (*Sunday Age*, 24 February 2008, p.2; *Australian* and *Canberra Times*, 22 February 2008, p.3 and p.2 respectively). Fray was featured in *Mediaweek*, 7 April 2008, pp.3, 6. An extract of Fray's views: "You have to play to the strengths of print as well. You have a physical space and presence – you can use great pictures; you can entice people with a smorgasbord of great stories relevant to their lives. The idea that newspapers are dead is a furphie."

#### **47.1.4 ADVERTISING SPENDING GROWS SHARPLY**

Spending on advertising in Australia last year grew by 11.5 per cent to top \$13 billion, partly because of the federal election, the Commercial Economic Advisory Service says. When classified directories, such as Telstra's *Yellow Pages*, are included, spending reached a record \$13.192 billion in 2007. Newspaper advertising grew by 9.5 per cent and online advertising, 34.5 per cent (*Australian*, 11 April 2008, p.21).

#### **47.1.5 ADELAIDE'S REVIEW A MONTHLY AGAIN**

After four years as a fortnightly, the *Adelaide Review* reverted to monthly publication in April. The change followed an expensive four-year campaign by its Spanish publisher to gain a foothold in the Adelaide newspaper market. First published in 1984, the *Review* switched to fortnightly publication after it was acquired by Spanish publisher Javier Moll, who had hopes of using it as a bridgehead into the Australian market. Moll hoped eventually to launch a daily newspaper in Australia, by making the *Review* a weekly and then a daily. His ultimate goal was to start dailies in the single-newspaper metropolitan newspaper markets of Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth (*Australian*, Media section, 6 March 2008, p.33).

#### **47.1.6 WILD ABOUT HARRY LEAK**

British military commanders have condemned Australia's *New Idea* magazine for breaking an embargo on the publishing of news of Prince Harry's deployment in Afghanistan. The commanders have withdrawn him from the conflict. The *New Idea* website drew a bitter response from readers, who accused it of endangering the prince and soldiers serving with him (*Weekend Australian*, 1-2 March 2008, p.7). *New Idea* apologised for breaking the international embargo on Prince Harry's military service in Afghanistan. The rare apology follows a management shakeup in which the editor-in-chief and editor were removed and a

senior executive was installed to oversee the magazine (*Australian*, 11 March 2008, p.7; see also, Trevor Cook, “Goodbye embargo?”, Issue 50, April/May 2008, pp.23-24).

#### **47.1.7 RECENT CHRONOLOGY**

##### **47.1.7.1 EVENTS**

**5 February 2008:** *Roxby Downs Sun* celebrates 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**14 February 2008:** *Gympie Times* celebrates 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary and publishes 24-page liftout (*APN Password*, February 2008, pp.1, 4-5).

**23 April 2008:** Extraordinary meeting of shareholders of West Australian Newspaper Holdings discusses Seven Network’s proposals for “refreshing” the WAN board but does not elect Kerry Stokes and Peter Gammell to the board (see 47.1.1).

##### **47.1.7.2 DEATHS**

**Bone, Pamela:** D. 26 April 2008 in Melbourne, aged 68; courageous journalist and columnist for the *Age* for 23 years; contributed articles to the *Australian* in recent months; twice winner of Melbourne Press Club’s award for best newspaper columnist; her work took her to some of the toughest places in the world – she saw bodies being exhumed from mass graves in Rwanda and held emaciated babies in Malawi; retired from the *Age* as associate editor on 16 December 2005 (*Age*, 28 April 2008; *Australian*, 28 April 2008, p.6, and p.9 [letter to editor, and “Cut & Paste”] and Media section, 1 May 2008, p.32; see ANHG 36.4, February 2006, and ANHG 47.5.2, Bone).

**Galton, Barry Daniel:** D. 29 February 2008 on Gold Coast, aged 72; educated in Lismore, Casino and Charters Towers; began journalism cadetship with *Northern Star*, Lismore; worked for *Sydney Morning Herald* for four years before working in airlines public relations for nine years; moved to Gold Coast to become editor of the *Logan & Albert News*; became senior report for *Gold Coast Bulletin*; wrote the centenary history of that newspaper in 1985; wrote two histories of the surf lifesaving movement later worked in Government public relations; diagnosed with motor neurone disease only a day or so before his death (*Gold Coast Bulletin*, 1 March 2008).

**Hogg, Lionel Ker Strutton:** D. 17 February 2008 in Brisbane, aged 84; born at Longreach; joined *Morning Bulletin*, Rockhampton, as cadet journalist on leaving school in 1941; after a year, enlisted with RAAF and became a Flying Officer; demobilised in 1945, returned to *Morning Bulletin*, but joined *Brisbane Telegraph* in 1947 and became chief of staff of *Tweed Daily News*, Murwillumbah, in 1948; then joined *Sydney sun* and *Melbourne Herald*; was *Herald’s* Darwin correspondent, 1954-56; won International Press Institute fellowship in 1957 and made a work-and-study tour of US for three months; won Walkley Award in 1957 for best piece of reporting; became chief of staff of *Herald*; served as London editor of the *Herald* group, 1962-63; appointed deputy editor, *Brisbane Telegraph*, 1964, and editor, 1975-81; took on an administrative challenge within Queensland Newspapers; retired 1992; became a top tennis and swimming administrator; made a Commander of the British Empire by the Queen in 1980 for services to journalism (*Courier-Mail*, 20 February 2008, p.70).

**Laurie, Ken:** D. 15 February 2008 in Melbourne, aged 88, former secretary of the Australian Provincial Press Association (the antecedent body for Country Press Australia); served APPA 1961-1980; was also executive director of Victorian Country Press Association and Country Press Co-operative Ltd.

##### **47.1.8 NSW SUPREME COURT’S ERROR**

The NSW Supreme Court issued the wrong version of a judgment in a case against a *Sydney Morning Herald* journalist that contained insulting and unfair remarks. In what the court says was a mistake, an unauthorised version of a judgment in a contempt matter in which Elisabeth Sexton was acquitted – describing her as “incompetent” and “arrogant” – was released to the parties and media. Referring to an article in which she used the word “derail” in relation to the plaintiff, the judgment from Justice Roderick Howie said that “if the use of the word was not intended to prejudice him in the eyes of the reader, then the journalist is incompetent in her

understanding and use of language”. It then says: “If she did intend to prejudice him, then it displays an arrogance and disregard for the rights of an accused person.” The court issued on 7 March a statement admitting the mistake along with an authorised version of the judgment from which the insulting references were deleted (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 March 2008).

#### **47.1.9 BREEN LEADS NEWS TEAM FOR OLYMPICS**

*Sunday Telegraph* editor Neil Breen will lead a 25-member News Limited team in covering the Beijing Olympic Games in August. Breen, a former sports editor of the *Courier-Mail* and the *Australian*, launched the innovative sports magazine, *Alpha*, in 2005 (News Limited media release, 22 February 2008).

#### **47.1.10 STOKES AND SHANGHAI**

Kerry Stokes’s family company, Australian Capital Equity, has become the first foreign firm to participate in owning and running a daily newspaper in the People’s Republic: the English-language *Shanghai Daily*, which sells about 60,000 copies a day (*Australian*, Media section, 20 March 2008, p.35; see advertisement, Media section, 10 April 2008, p.29)

#### **47.1.11 TOOHEY RETURNS WALKLEY OVER ABORIGINAL PRESS CURBS**

Paul Toohey returned his 2002 Walkley Award trophy to the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) to protest a push by the journalists’ union to make media representatives outline their intentions to authorities before being granted access to Aboriginal communities (*Australian*, 20 March 2008, pp.1, 6). Toohey, the *Australian*’s chief Darwin correspondent, gave the reasons for his anger and his action in an article in the Media section (pp.35-36) that day. (See also, “Media union adds its own barriers to permit system”, *Australian*, 18 March 2008, p.3.) MEAA backed down swiftly. In a letter to the Indigenous Affairs Department on 18 March, the MEAA secretary Chris Warren said MEAA was withdrawing its submission on changes to the permit system governing access to Aboriginal lands pending further “consultation” (*Weekend Australian*, 22-23 March 2008, p.3, and see Simon Kearney’s comment, “Community gatekeepers, keeping us from the truth”, p.25). The issue was discussed on *Media Watch* (ABC-TV, 24 March 2008). As the federal Government shuts down Northern Territory Aboriginal communities to outsiders after a brief window in which they were open, Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin is to make a one-off ministerial declaration exempting journalists (*Australian*, 27 March 2008.)

#### **47.1.12 AN ARMY OF PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICERS**

The Defence Department envisages a bigger role for itself in providing “packaged news” as it sets out to reduce its reliance on traditional media outlets for information on military and security issues. According to former Defence Public Affairs Branch employees, staffing levels at the Russell offices in Canberra in the past 15 years have risen from 20 to 119 staff (62 are civilians and 57 are military officers), to produce material and images including three service newspapers, as well as managing a website and responding to media inquiries. Last year Defence issued 736 media releases and fielded 5826 media inquiries (*Australian*, 24 March 2008).

#### **47.1.13 IDENTITY CRISIS PERSISTS ON SUNDAYS AT CANBERRA TIMES**

In an email, **Barry Blair**, of Tamworth, suggested the *Sunday Canberra Times* was suffering an identity crisis and mentioned: In the 88-page, 23 March 2008 edition, no fewer than four pages (at pp.7, 9, 34 and 61, in the pagination/footer area) gave the paper title as *Canberra Sunday Times*. **Victor Isaacs**, of Canberra, responded: See my item (43.14) in the *ANHG Newsletter* of July 2007. “On 3 June [2007] the name of the *Canberra Sunday Times* was subtly changed to *Sunday Canberra Times* – or perhaps not. The change was unannounced in the paper; the front page masthead was changed; however, the running titles at the bottom of each page, the title of the magazine and the title above the editorial were not changed. On 10 June the running titles at the foot of each page and the magazine were changed. Finally, on 24

June, the title above the editorial was changed. Cataloguers will wail and curse. The paper had earlier had another change of name of 7 May 2000 from the *Sunday Times*. The earlier change coincided with a change from broadsheet to tabloid and removed any possible confusion with the Perth paper.”

#### **47.1.14 HOBART MERCURY'S NEW PRESS**

New Limited has ordered a single-width, double-circumference KBA Comet press line for Davies Brothers in Hobart, publisher of the *Mercury* and the *Sunday Tasmanian*. The new press, which will be commissioned in July 2009 at Glenorchy Technopark, is part of a \$32 million upgrading project that includes a new building and Ferag mailroom (*Australian Printer*, March 2008, p.16). To see schematic diagrams of the *Mercury's* KBA Comet press configuration, go to [www.i-grafix.com/go/mercury](http://www.i-grafix.com/go/mercury) Earthworks have begun at the site for the new printing press. The first sod was turned on 26 March (*Mercury*, 27 March 2008).

#### **47.1.15 PEOPLE**

**James Button**, Fairfax foreign correspondent and son of the late John Button (former Senator), is interviewed in *Mediaweek's* series on “The Reporters” (14 April 2008, p.7).

**Ken Cowley**, chief executive of News Limited, 1980-97, was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of NSW on 31 March for his “eminent service to the community”. Cowley is now the owner of bush outfitter R.M. Williams, publisher of *Outback* magazine. From humble beginnings, growing up in Bankstown in Sydney's west, he established his own newspaper in Canberra. There, he said in accepting the doctorate, his career took a fortuitous turn when he had “a life-changing meeting” with a youthful Rupert Murdoch. At that meeting he had told Murdoch of “my idea to create a national daily newspaper”, he said. “And so the *Australian* was born.” (*Australian*, 1 April 2008, p.5.)

**Colleen Egan**, a Perth *Sunday Times* columnist and blogger and the winner of the News Limited 2007 Sir Keith Murdoch Award for Journalism, talks to *Mediaweek* (17 March 2008, p.10) about the people who have been influential in her journalism career, about the Andrew Mallard case, and about blogging.

**Doug Flynn**, who rejected an offer three years ago to become CEO at what is now Fairfax Media Ltd, has been axed from his position as CEO of Rentokil, the world's largest pest exterminator (*Weekend Australian*, 22-23 March 2008, p.31).

**Peter Game**, 81, retired on 16 April after a career spanning almost 61 years. He started work as a cadet at the Melbourne *Herald* in December 1947. His postings included the Sydney and London bureaux, chief-of-staff and assistant to the editor-in-chief, Archer Thomas. He achieved journalistic fame with his 1975 Walkley Award-winning expose of the Khemlani loans affair which played a part in the downfall of the Whitlam Government. Another of his landmark scoops was in revealing links between the mafia and Italian migrants in Griffith, NSW. Yet another was the exposure of cancer guru Milan Brych as a fraud. When the *Herald* closed in 1990, Game became a leader writer on the newly formed *Herald Sun*. He retired at 65, for a few weeks, but returned to work as a contributor. He was awarded the Melbourne Press Club's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2000 (*Herald Sun*, 17 April 2008).

**Michael Gawenda**, a former editor of the *Age*, discusses (*Australian*, Media section, 3 April 2008, p.33) his aspirations for the University of Melbourne's Centre for the Advanced Study of Journalism, to open in late February 2009.

**Frank Kelett** retired at the end of April after 50 years in the newspaper industry. A former deputy editor of the *Newcastle Morning Herald*, he was the executive director of the Pacific Area Newspaper Publishers Association (PANPA) from 1986 to 2001 (and PANPA has never been as vigorous since). He left to fill a similar role at the Publishers National Environment Bureau from the beginning of 2002 (*Australian*, Media section, 1 May 2008, p.36; see also PANPA historical notes and ANHG 15.5, November 2001).

**Bill Leak**, a cartoonist for the *Australian*, was at the National Portrait Gallery on 19 February to see his portrait of Richard Woolcott, one of Australia's most distinguished diplomats, added to the national collection (*Australian*, 20 February 2008).

**Mungo MacCallum**, author of *Poll Dancing: The Story of the 2007 Election*, is interviewed about his career in journalism (*Mediaweek*, 3 March 2008, p.8).

**Glenn Milne**, News Ltd political columnist, is interviewed in *Mediaweek's* series on "The Reporters" (14 April 2008, p.8).

**Chris Mitchell**, editor-in-chief of the *Australian*, discusses a wide range of issues in an interview by *Mediaweek* (10 March 2008, pp.3, 7 and 8). Mitchell said the paper was building a new business website and would soon launch a monthly business magazine; the *Age* was producing a "pretty good paper"; the *Australian* is "much less conservative in world terms than the *Wall Street Journal* or the *Telegraph* in London".

**Shane Rodgers** has been appointed general manager of Queensland Newspapers Pty Ltd, publisher of the *Courier-Mail*, *Sunday Mail*, *mX* and *Brisbane News*. He was "Person of the Week" in *Mediaweek* (3 March 2008, pp.4, 7). Rodgers is a former editor-in-chief and deputy general manager of Quest Community News, Brisbane.

**John Silvester**, the *Age's* veteran crime reporter, has been named the Graham Perkin Australian Journalist of the Year for 2007 (*Mediaweek* online, 21 April 2008).

**Lenore Taylor**, regular *Insiders* commentator, 2007 Paul Lyneham Award winner and a political reporter for 18 years, has left the *Australian Financial Review* to rejoin the *Australian* as a federal political reporter and a weekend columnist.

**Rebecca Weiser**, a woman with a diverse background, including serving as a diplomat in various overseas locations, has been named Tom Switzer's replacement as opinion editor at the *Australian*.

#### **47.1.16 NEW WOMAN BECOMES OLD HAT**

Australian Consolidated Press has closed its second magazine in two months. One of ACP's recent acquisitions from Emap Australia, *New Woman*, ceased publication on 9 April, as the *Bulletin* did at the end of January. The woman's lifestyle magazine was part of a stable of magazines the PBL Media-owned company bought from Emap in September 2007 for \$94 million. The stable included *Zoo*, *FHM*, *Empire*, *Mother & Baby*, and *Pregnancy & Birth* (*Australian*, 28 March 2008, p.23).

#### **47.1.17 IN BLACK AND WHITE: READ ALL OVER AGAIN**

"In Black and White" was a feature of the Melbourne afternoon paper, the *Herald*, from the early 1950s until the *Herald* ceased in 1990. In early March it was revived and is now a feature of Page 2 of the *Herald Sun*.

#### **47.1.18 THE NEW-AGE AGE**

*Inside the Age*, February 2008, carries a lot of detail about the new premises into which the Melbourne daily will move on the edge of the CBD and Docklands precinct on Collins Street in the first half of 2010. Print and online sections will be integrated with more than 420 journalists and support staff seated over two interconnecting floors, close to TV, audio, radio, photographic studios and editing suites (the newsletter is published for subscribers to the *Age*; there's a profile of the *Age's* literary editor, Jason Steger, on pp.1-2 of the February issue).

#### **47.1.19 THE SHARED NEWSPAPER PAGE**

**Michael Davis** reports (*Australian*, Media section, 3 April 2008, p.34): One of the fastest growing divisions of Australian Associated Press was founded by Martin Thomas and Bruce Davidson, former News Limited editorial executives. They started Pagemasters 13 years ago, supplying television program listings and other ready-to-set pages to newspapers throughout the Asia-Pacific. They began by renting a small office in Richmond, Melbourne, and, employing one or two other staff, initially provided desktop publishing services to clients, including book editing, design and typesetting, and editorial production services for company annual reports. Within 12 months they were producing TV guides for the *Herald Sun*, *Sunday Herald Sun* and the *Weekly Times*, with a full-time listings workforce of three. The listings business quickly grew to include the *Age* and several Victorian regional papers. During the next decade it became the leading Australian supplier of TV listings, providing services for all



daily and weekly newspapers across the country, as well as *TV Week* magazine. The big break for the company's founders came in 2002, more than a decade after they had left the security of News. AAP acquired Pagemasters; Davidson assumed the role of managing director, and Thomas retired three years later. The takeover enabled Pagemasters to provide more page-ready services, similar to what news agencies across the world, particular's Britain's Press Association, already supplied.

#### **47.1.20 HISTORIC MEETING OF PRESS COUNCILS**

**John Dunnet** writes: The first meeting between the Australian Press Council and the New Zealand Press Council took place in Wellington, New Zealand, on 13 and 14 2008. The meeting allowed members from both councils to meet in formal and informal surroundings to discuss a wide range of issues, from organisational matters to contemporary issues of press freedom, privacy and public interest, the inroads being made by government into the operation of the modern media, the increasing use of suppression orders by courts, and defamation laws. At a public forum on 13 March addresses were given by the chairman of the NZPC, Barry Paterson, QC, a retired High Court Judge, NZ Law Commissioner John Burrows, QC, and the APC chairman, Professor Ken McKinnon.

The Australian and New Zealand press face a great many common concerns although the circumstances in each country are somewhat different (for example, NZ has only one principal legal jurisdiction whereas the Australian state-based system presents obvious challenges). However, the question of privacy (and privacy laws) in relation to freedom of expression is a matter of moment in both countries now. In many areas, it could be said that the press in NZ has a better time of it than the Australian media in terms of freedom of the press; a Bill of Rights Act, the Official Information Act, looser defamation laws, and the abolition of sedition laws (it may be recalled that the Howard Government included sedition provisions in its anti-terrorism laws).

Some of the Australian observers found the processes of the NZ Press Council to be more legalistic in practice. The NZ council is much smaller than the APC and somewhat more insular in its concerns (the NZPC, for example, has not directly concerned itself with developments affecting freedom of the press in neighbouring Pacific nations). The adjudication process of the New Zealanders requires the publication of extensive adjudications and the voting decisions are made public with the Council members' names appearing to show how they voted. The APC makes its decision on a "cabinet" basis and voting patterns are not revealed.

#### **47.1.21 MURDOCH-PACKER DEAL COLLAPSES**

A \$3.3 billion deal announced in January for James Packer and Lachlan Murdoch to partner a buyout of the old Packer media empire, Consolidated Media Holdings, collapsed on 7 April amid accusations of treachery from both sides (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 April 2008). If the deal had proceeded, the pair would have controlled a 25 per cent stake in the Nine Network and the Packer magazines, a 25 per cent stake in Foxtel and a half stake in Fox Sports. (See also: *Australian*, 4 April 2008, pp.19-20, 7 April 2008, p.29, 8 April 2008, pp., 21, 23, and Bryan Frith, p.22, and Media section, 10 April 2008, pp.27, 31 and 32).

#### **47.1.22 JOHN B. AND THE FAIRFAX INTEREST**

A move by John B. Fairfax to cement his influence on the company that bears his name, Fairfax Media, appears to have cost him tens of millions of dollars because of the meltdown in both the general market and the Fairfax share price. Fairfax and siblings, including brother Timothy, have, since the merger of Fairfax with Rural Press in May last year, been the media group's largest shareholders through their private family company, Marinya Media. Marinya's dominant asset is the 211 million Fairfax shares it holds, or just under 14 per cent of the company. But it is believed John B. Fairfax has taken his personal stake in Marinya to 75 per cent through the purchase of Timothy's mooted 37.5 per cent holding in Marinya –

indirectly representing more than 79 million Fairfax shares – in February when Fairfax’s share price was above \$4. Since the mooted date of the transaction, the Fairfax share price has fallen from \$4.05 a share to yesterday’s closing level of \$3.44. Based on the effective purchase of just over 79 million Fairfax shares, this would represent a loss of \$48 million in two months. But there have been suggestions that the deal may have been struck on late-2007 levels, when Fairfax shares were closer to \$4.50 – potentially crystallising an even larger loss (*Australian*, 18 April 2008).

#### **47.1.23 MANAGEMENT AND JOURNALISTS DIFFER AT THE AGE**

The management of the *Age* has defended editor-in-chief Andrew Jaspán from allegations that he had allowed commercial partnerships to compromise editorial independence. Commercial partnership deals were here to stay for the *Age*, the paper’s chief executive, Don Churchill, told the journalists in a letter (*Weekend Australian*, 12-13 April 2008, p.3). The letter came a day after a stop-working meeting between journalists and Jaspán. Journalists condemned management for allegedly undermining the Melbourne newspaper’s editorial independence, claiming reporters were pressured not to write negative stories about Earth Hour and sports coverage was in danger of being compromised by commercial considerations. During what reporters called a “volatile” and “hostile” staff meeting on the editorial floor with Jaspán, journalists also criticised his decision to attend the 2020 summit and attacked the publication in February of a letter by Fairfax chairman Ron Walker about the Liberal Party (*Australian*, 11 April 2008; see also ANHG, 47.5.2, Colless article).

#### **47.1.24 DREDGING UP DIRT ON THE AGE**

Martin Pakula, the understudy to Victoria’s Roads and Ports Minister Tim Pallas, has condemned the *Age*’s coverage of the dredging of Melbourne’s shipping channel as unbalanced, low-brow and disgraceful. It comes after private complaints to the *Age* and its editor-in-chief, Andrew Jaspán, from the Premier, corporate chiefs and top bureaucrats, including Prime Minister and Cabinet chief Terry Moran, as well as unrest among reporters about the paper’s stance on the project (*Australian*, 18 April 2008).

#### **47.1.25 HALL CONSIDERS BUYING BULLETIN**

Peter Hall, an investment funds manager and former journalist, is considering buying the *Bulletin* masthead. Hall, the executive chairman of Hunter Hall Investment Management, told the *Weekend Australian* (26-27 April 2008) from London: “I am in discussions with ACP. I am carrying out due diligence to see if I can build an economic model that might work. I am trying to prove that up. But, sadly, we are still a few months from working it out. It’s looking a bit iffy about whether I should do it.” If he bought the country’s oldest news magazine, which was closed by Publishing & Broadcasting Ltd in January, he would turn it into a weekly magazine of comment and analysis, like the *Spectator* or the *New Yorker*. “I believe Australia needs an intelligent weekly magazine of comment and analysis,” said Hall, who was a cadet journalist with the *Canberra Times* before moving into the funds management business 25 years ago. He would buy only the title to the magazine, estimated to be losing more than \$4 million a year before it was closed several months after private equity group CVC bought 75 per cent of PBL, James Packer’s media arm (see also ANHG 46.1.1, and 47.5.1, Foyle, Haigh, Stirling and Warden).

#### **47.1.26 POLICE RAID PERTH NEWSPAPER OFFICE**

More than a dozen fraud squad officers raided the offices of the *Sunday Times*, Perth, on 30 April in a bid to find the source of a story that embarrassed the Carpenter Government. The report, by senior journalist Paul Lampathakis, detailed a request by Treasurer Eric Ripper (as chair of the Cabinet sub-committee on communications) for \$16 million to pay for advertising for the Carpenter Government’s re-election campaign (*Australian*, 1 May 2008, p.5; see also *Australian*, 2 May 2008, p.5).

## **2 – CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS: ONLINE**

### **47.2.1 FAIRFAX AND PERTH**

Fairfax Digital chief executive Jack Matthews has persistently played down the company's interest in starting up a news website in Perth, but the elephant in the room is getting bigger by the day. After advertising for a Perth-based marketing manager last month, Fairfax Media in March posted advertisements for "experienced reporters to work for a Perth-based news service" on its employment website, **MyCareer**. The company has also paid for the rights to at least six Perth-related website domain names. One of the six, **WAtoday.com.au**, is believed to be the favoured title of the news website, which has a working title of "Project Red-Eye". Perth is Australia's only state capital not to have a daily newspaper owned by at least one of Fairfax or News Ltd, although News publishes the *Sunday Times* newspaper in WA and the PerthNow daily news website. (Age, 6 March 2008).

### **47.2.2 SMH.COM.AU TOPS AGAIN**

The *Sydney Morning Herald's* website, **smh.com.au**, has regained its mantle as the top news destination on the internet for Australians, knocking the PBL Media portal **ninemsn** into second place for the first time since July last year. The Nielsen//NetRatings data for February shows that **smh.com.au** defeated **ninemsn** for the first time in all three key measures – monthly domestic unique browsers (UBs), page impressions and average daily unique browsers – in the news and weather category. According to the internet industry ratings, **smh.com.au** attracted 388,129 average daily UBs, 4.2 million monthly UBs and a total of 140 million page views in February. **Ninemsn** had 366,047 daily UBs, 3.8 million monthly UBs and 49 million page views (**smh.com.au**, 6March 2008).

### **47.2.3 NOT ON BRUMBY'S RUN**

Nicholas McGowan, a former spokesman for Victorian MP Ted Baillieu, has established the online news service, **staterounds.com**, to report on Victorian State politics. The Brumby Labor Government is refusing to send media releases top McGowan's service (Age, 18 February 2008, "The Age Diary", p.20).

### **47.2.4 CAIRNS POST'S WEBSITE POPULAR**

The *Cairns Post's* website, **cairns.com.au**, received 756,612 hits during its first month (February), the newspaper asserted (29 February 2008). Its top stories, included the dog-eating python, had been picked up by 18 national and 11 international websites.

### **47.2.5 HANNAN FAMILY'S PLAN STRIKES HURDLE**

The Hannan family's ambitions of recreating its former print empire online have struck a hurdle with the sudden resignation of chief executive Michael Gethen. Gethen had been working to build the Hannans' online business, Independent Digital Media, for the past year. But staff were told in before Easter that he was to leave immediately after differences of opinion over strategy and direction with IDM's board which includes three members of the Sydney-based clan: brothers Michael and David Hannan and their uncle, John Hannan, who is chairman (*Australian*, Media section, 27 March 2008, p.37).

## **3 – CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS: COMMUNITY & PROVINCIAL**

### **47.3.1 CIRCULATION OF REGIONAL DAILIES**

The *Kalgoorlie Miner* recorded the biggest percentage circulation increase in the figures issued by the Audit Bureau of Circulations for regional dailies for October-December 2007. The *Miner's* sales rose by 3.15 per cent. The *Fraser Coast Chronicle* (2.61pc) and the *Geelong Advertiser* (2.26pc) were the next best performers among the 12 dailies that showed increases. Mount Isa's *North-West Star* recorded the biggest circulation decrease (7.73pc) closely followed by Warwick's *Daily News* (6.63pc). The Warwick paper was the smallest

circulating daily for the period (with average daily sales of 3,125) and the Mount Isa was not far ahead (3,344)

	<b>Oct-Dec 2007</b>	<b>Oct-Dec 2006</b>		<b>Oct-Dec 2007</b>	<b>Oct-Dec 2006</b>
<b>Border Mail, Albury-Wodonga</b>	25,851	26,579	<b>NewsMail, Bundaberg</b>	11,608	11,630
<i>Western Advocate, Bathurst</i>	3,961	4,067	<i>Cairns Post</i>	30,268	30,709
<i>Barrier Daily Truth, Broken Hill</i>	5,814	5,811	<i>Gladstone Observer</i>	7,227	7,352
<i>Daily Liberal, Dubbo</i>	5,096	5,330	<i>Gold Coast Bulletin</i>	47,107	47,960
<i>Daily Examiner, Grafton</i>	5,458	5,692	<i>Gympie Times</i>	5,868	5,935
<i>Northern Star, Lismore</i>	15,384	15,743	<i>Queensland Times, Ipswich</i>	11,017	10,812
<i>Maitland Mercury</i>	4,364	4,348	<i>Daily Mercury, Mackay</i>	16,180	16,242
<i>Herald, Newcastle and Central Coast</i>	50,000	50,000	<i>Sunshine Coast Daily</i>	22,529	22,383
<i>Central Western Daily, Orange</i>	5,296	5,375	<i>Fraser Coast Chronicle</i>	10,021	9,766
<i>Northern Daily Leader, Tamworth</i>	7,988	7,977	<i>North-West Star, Mount Isa</i>	3,344	3,624
<i>Daily News, Tweed Heads</i>	4,808	4,867	<i>Morning Bulletin, Rockhampton</i>	18,106	18,265
<i>Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga</i>	13,486	13,415	<i>Chronicle, Toowoomba</i>	23,048	23,885
<i>Illawarra Mercury, Wollongong</i>	28,080	28,553	<i>Townsville Bulletin</i>	29,099	29,312
<b>Courier, Ballarat</b>	19,353	19,275	<i>Daily News, Warwick</i>	3,125	3,347
<i>Advertiser, Bendigo</i>	14,462	14,485	<b>Advocate, Burnie</b>	24,884	24,528
<i>Geelong Advertiser</i>	30,354	29,684	<i>Examiner, Launceston</i>	33,946	34,476
<i>Sunraysia Daily, Mildura</i>	7,139	7,169	<b>Kalgoorlie Miner</b>	5,760	5,584
<i>News, Shepparton</i>	10,301	10,425			
<i>Standard, Warrnambool</i>	12,788	12,769			

#### **47.3.2 APN (1): HAND-INSERTING DAYS ARE OVER**

APN Print Australia has reached the end of an era in its production area, says general manager Gary Osborne (*APN Password*, February 2008, p.27). This stage has been reached because of the investment in mechanical-inserting equipment at all sites. Teams of people, mainly women, no longer hand-insert newspapers every night. This has been part of the APN business since it began publishing newspapers. Hand-inserting finished at the end of February when Rockhampton fired up its Alphaliner inserting line. (See “‘Plug and play’ way to hybrid”, *gpress*, November 2007, p.31, for an insight into the APN Print Centre at Yandina.)

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#### **47.3.3 APN (2): PROFIT UP BY 5 PC**

APN News & Media Ltd recorded a net profit of \$167.4 million, a 5 per cent increase, for calendar year 2007. APN has announced it is interested in buying the 50 per cent of Australian Radio Network that it does not already own (*Australian*, 20 February 2008, p.23).

#### **47.3.4 APN (3): CHIEF CRITICISES FUND MANAGERS**

In the APN News & Media Ltd annual report for 2007, chairman James Parkinson took a thinly veiled swipe at the fund managers who helped cause the failure of a \$6.20-a-share, scheme-of-arrangement bid by a consortium led by Tony O’Reilly’s Independent News & Media. The report was issued to the Australian Securities Exchange on 31 March. Parkinson said investors would be the ultimate arbiters of whether the institutions that helped to scupper

the deal were right, given the global credit crunch. APN shares closed on 31 March at \$4.59 (*Australian*, 1 April 2008, p.23).

#### **47.3.5 ROCKAMPTON: NEW PRINT CENTRE OPERATING**

The *Morning Bulletin* of Monday, 18 February, was the first to be printed with full-colour capacity at APN's new Rockhampton print site in Hempenstall Street, North Rockhampton. Editor Frazer Pearce said the state-of-the-art Manugraph press had been printing a range of publications for a few weeks (*Morning Bulletin*, 19 February 2008, p.2). It was commissioned on 30 April (Simon Irwin, E-mail message to ANHG, 1 May 2008).

#### **47.3.6 NOWRA: COUNCIL TO PUBLISH ITS OWN NEWS**

Shoalhaven City Council, with headquarters at Nowra, south of Wollongong, has decided to publish its own news, reports the *South Coast Register* (29 February 2008). At a meeting on 26 February council decided to publish several pages of council information and news in the fortnightly TV guide, the *Mail*. Council will employ a cadet communications officer to compile the material, with the cost of the project being partially offset by savings from not advertising in regional newspapers.

#### **47.3.7 BUNGENDORE: BULLETIN CHANGES NAME**

**Kay Hynes**, of the State Library of New South Wales, writes: The *Bungendore Bulletin* ceased publication with Vol. XVIII, No. 24, on 20 December 2007. The *Palerang and District Bulletin* (incorporating the *Bungendore Bulletin*) began publication in February 2008 and is appearing monthly. ISSN 1035-1299. Managing editor Maria Taylor says the newspaper hopes to reach readers from Gundaroo to Captains Flat and from Bungendore to Braidwood and most places in between.

#### **47.3.8 ROXBY DOWNS: 20 YEARS OF PUBLICATION**

The *Roxby Downs Sun*, South Australia, has celebrated 20 years of publication. It was launched as the *Northern Sun* on 5 February 1988 at the small mining camp of Olympic Dam, which has since become Roxby Downs. Before the *Sun*, there had been only the *Dam News*, issued by Western Mining (*Roxby Downs Sun*, 8 February 2008).

#### **47.3.9 CAIRNS AND TOWNSVILLE: POST AND BULLETIN COMPARED**

The following is a comparison of the 8-9 March 2008 weekend issues of the *Cairns Post* and *Townsville Bulletin*, both tabloid News Ltd north Queensland dailies. The *Post* published a tabloid equivalent of 232 pages and the *Bulletin*, 296 pages. They organised their issues differently and followed a different system in numbering pages. Turn to the back page of the *Post* and you find it is p.200, but that includes the Real Estate section (56pp), the Weekend section (24pp) and the Cars Guide (24pp), even though each of those is numbered from page 1. They fit in between p. 48 and p.153 in the body of the newspaper. The *Home* magazine has its own individual numbering, too, but is not included in the 200 mentioned above. You will not find any pages marked with pp. 49 to 152. The *Bulletin* has its sections paginated separately. For the purposes of the table, the ANHG has broken down the page numbering for consistency.

Newspaper	Main section	Real Estate	Cars	Jobs	Weekender	Home mag	Total
<i>Post</i>	77pp	56pp	24pp	19pp	24pp	32pp	232pp
<i>Bulletin</i>	104pp	128pp	32pp	32pp	n.a.	n.a.	296pp

#### **47.3.10 MILDURA MANAGER RESIGNS**

Jarrod Delahunty, the general manager of the *Mildura Weekly*, has resigned after 15 months in the role. He was the first employee hired by the owners, a consortium of Mildura real estate agents and other business people. The paper began publication in November 2006 and now has a print run of 22,000. The *Bendigo Weekly* helped establish the Mildura operation and last

year the concept was expanded to the Riverland of South Australia (*Mildura Independent*, 29 March 2008).

#### **47.3.11 MACKAY FLOODS**

Since the devastating floods that hit Mackay on 15 February, the residents have received three issues of *Community Recovery News*, a six-page A4 newsletter folded into DL envelope size for ease of mailbox distribution. The newsletter, produced by the Queensland Government, has focused on the rebuilding program, insurance issues, electrical safety, sources of information on different issues, Australian government disaster relief payments, and so on.

The *Daily Mercury*, Mackay produced a 24-page colour flood liftout on 23 February. This included two pages devoted to how the newspaper covered the floods – with both editor David Fisher and deputy editor Jennifer Pomfrett away for several days. Production editor Mark Sleeman acted as editor and he wrote about the flood coverage (23 February, p.20), along with veteran journalist Charlie Payne (p.21) whose home was flooded.

#### **47.3.12 RED CLIFFS EDITOR CELEBRATES 80<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY**

Here is an extract from an item your editor wrote for *Mediaweek*, 24 March 2008, p.5): Betty Krake, the owner-editor of the weekly newspaper at Red Cliffs in the Sunraysia district of north-western Victoria, has not met Ella Ebery, but she is continuing the Ebery “age-shall-not-wither-them” tradition among female Victorian country newspaper editors. Krake, the owner of the *Red Cliffs Settler News* for 15 years, celebrated her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on Saturday, March 1. When she arrived for work the previous day, she could not get into her office because it was filled with 80 helium balloons, which signalled the beginning of three days of celebrations. Centrepiece of the celebrations was a party for 250 guests from all over Australia on the Saturday night at the Red Cliffs Club. Krake was a government-employed social worker for 23 years before she bought the *Settler News* because she was becoming “bored in my retirement”. She told *Mediaweek* she was “computer illiterate” before she took on the newspaper, but now produced the 16-page A4 editions on her own. On March 8, at an International Women’s Day forum in Mildura, the former Victorian Minister for the Arts, Mary Delahunty, presented Krake with the augural Pearl Award, instituted by the Mildura-Wentworth Arts Festival in memory of Captain Pearl Wallace, the first woman to become a certificated master mariner in Australia. Capt. Wallace worked most of her life on the Murray and Darling Rivers. In the Bendigo district, Ebery, who turned 92 last December, has been the editor of the St Arnaud paper since 1979.

#### **47.3.13 GERALDTON: COLUMNIST WRITES BOOK**

Raelene Hall wrote a column for five years for the *Midwest Times*, Geraldton, that took a light-hearted look at life on the land. She lives on “Ned’s Creek”, a cattle station 214km north-east of Meekathara, with her husband and three children. Her newspaper columns have formed the basis for a book, *Legitimate Bush Woman: The Lighter Side of Life on the Land*. KMK Publishing (kmk@gmail.com) \$15 plus p&p (*Outback*, April/May 2008, p.132).

#### **47.3.14 EDITORS: SUNSHINE COAST AND ALBURY**

**Peter Atkinson** has resigned as editor of the *Sunshine Coast Daily*. **Mark Furler**, former online editor of the APN daily, is now the editor-in-chief (*Mediaweek*, 28 April 2008, p.2).

**Cameron Thompson**, 38, editor of the *Border Mail*, Albury-Wodonga, died of cancer in Melbourne on 28 April. He is survived by his wife, Kirsty Grant, a journalist at the *Border Mail* (*Australian*, Media section, 1 May 2008, p.36).

## **4 – NEWSPAPER HISTORY**

### **47.4.1 EDUCATION, THE ELLIS FAMILY AND JOURNALISM**

Helen Gregory has written a fascinating article about the role of women in building Australia (“‘The hearts that made the nation’: fleshing out the stereotype”, *Royal Historical Society of Queensland Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 5, February 2008, pp.159-168). In it she mentions the difficulties that confronted Connie Ellis, three of whose children became journalists. The information that follows is drawn from Gregory’s article. Connie Ellis, born in London in 1860, emigrated to Queensland in 1889 because she wanted a job in a new land. Her first job in Australia was as a ladies’ companion at Kyabra, more than 1100km west of Brisbane. There she married storekeeper Tom Ellis. Connie and Tom travelled widely through the bush in search of work. At one point in the 1890s, they built a house in Charleville. Connie took one end of the cross-cut saw to fell big trees for the slab walls. The Charleville venture failed and Connie and Tom took to the road, often living in timber camps or with railway workers.

Four children were born during their travels. Connie taught eldest son, Malcolm, to read without any suitable educational materials. She used newspapers and any adult books that came her way. He wrote on scraps of paper or bark using charcoal from the fire. She encouraged him to display his skills by entertaining workers in the timber camp with songs he made up. Arthur, her second son, was more fortunate. By then, Connie had acquired the *First Century Reader* as his primer. Her educational style was informal. The children “just followed me around and asked questions and I would stop long enough to show them what they wanted”. Education became more formal when the family moved to Mount Morgan where two more children were born. Malcolm and Arthur passed the state scholarship examination at the end of their primary school days and moved on to the Brisbane Grammar School; Pierce used his scholarship at the Queensland Agricultural College, Gatton.

Connie’s daughter, Winifred, became interested in politics and worked for several Country Party members of the Federal Parliament. Three of Connie’s sons, Malcolm, Arthur and Pierce, became journalists. Ulrich, Connie’s youngest son, became political secretary to Sir Earle Page, leader of the Australian Country Party, and later wrote a history of the Country Party. Arthur Ellis became secretary to the Queensland Premier, T.J. Ryan, in 1916 and 1917. Malcolm became secretary to the Leader of the Opposition, Sir Edward Macartney. Malcolm wrote several well-regarded histories of early Australia and wrote for the *Bulletin* between 1933 and 1936. Arthur became a financial consultant to the stockbroking firm, J.B. Were, and wrote its history. Pierce became the editor of the *Weekly Times*. Connie remained active into her extreme old age, writing her autobiography, *I Seek Adventure*, when she was in her eighties and mowed her lawn with a hand mower when she was 90. She died at 99.

### **47.4.2 TASMANIA’S MISSING NEWSPAPERS SOUGHT**

The State Library of Tasmania has mounted a “search and rescue” mission for copies of 26 local newspapers for which there are “imperfect” files at the library. It’s part of the ANPlan search coordinated by the National Library of Australia. The Tasmanian coordinator, Anna Zylstra, said there were gaps in the Tasmanian collection, especially before 1900. She is at [anna.zylstra@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:anna.zylstra@education.tas.gov.au) and is on (03) 6233 7457. The Tasmanian search was officially launched on 12 March, the 166<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Launceston *Examiner*, Australia’s third oldest newspaper (*Mercury*, Hobart, 12 March 2008, p.7).

### **47.4.3 BACK TO THE FUTURE: DUSTING OFF THE ARCHIVES FOR THE WEB**

As magazines and newspapers hunt for the new thing they need to be to thrive in the Internet era, some find that part of the answer lies in the old thing they used to be (reports Richard Perez-pena in the *New York Times*, 17 March 2008). Publications are rediscovering their archives. For magazines and newspapers with long histories, especially, old material can be reborn on the Web as an inexpensive way to attract readers, advertisers and money. *Sports Illustrated*, which faces daily, even hourly, competition with ESPN, Yahoo Sports and others,

has something its main rivals do not: a 53-year trove of articles and photos, most of them from an era when the magazine dominated the field of long-term sports writing and colour sports photography. On 20 March the magazine introduced the Vault, a free site within **SI.com** that contains all the words *Sports Illustrated* has ever published and many of the images, along with video and other material, all in a searchable database. The long-term aim is to attract more readers to *Sports Illustrated*.

#### **47.4.4 EARLY PRESS HOUSES IN CANBERRA**

The following article, "Press Houses in early Barton" by Nick Swain, from the April edition of the *Canberra & District Historical Society Newsletter*, is reproduced with permission:

When the Seat of Government, together with the Parliamentary Press Gallery, moved to Canberra in 1927 the major newspapers sought to accommodate their senior staff near to the provisional Parliament House and the Secretariat buildings. The cottages built for middle level public servants in the garden suburb of Barton were rather more attractive than the wing reserved for rowdy journalists at the Hotel Acton. One company, the Herald and Weekly Times Newspaper Company Limited, took the initiative and purchased by February 1927 a lease previously obtained at the May 1926 land sale by William James Mildenhall. This property is at 8 Macquarie Street, next to The Brassey of Canberra [hotel], and appears to be an FCC [Federal Capital Commission] type 24 cottage. According to the 1928 Electoral Roll, the journalist Arthur O'Connor lived in Macquarie Street with his wife Janet so it is very likely they lived in this house. O'Connor was secretary of the Parliamentary Press Gallery in 1927 and represented the Melbourne *Herald*. He was active in the Canberra community, leading the Public Control Licensing League in 1928 and playing a significant part in the development of the Canberra Tourist Association.

The other three major newspaper companies successfully negotiated with the Crown Solicitor's Department to lease residential property in Darling Street Barton. A minute dated 22 April 1927 (signed on behalf of H.F.E. Whitlam, Deputy Crown Solicitor) refers to these leases being granted to them, although the formalities were not finalised until June. The lease by the Daily Telegraph Co Ltd. of Block 20, section 24, Telopea Park (22 Darling Street) cost £1,565. It is not clear who lived here in 1928 – it might have been Henry Peters of the Daily Telegraph but he was not on the electoral roll. An Historical Title Search indicated that this property changed hands a number of times reflecting the volatility of newspaper ownership from the Depression to the Second World War. Eventually in August 1940 the property was transferred out of newspaper ownership to Florence Selina Sherman, although it was mortgaged to Associated Newspapers Limited.

The lease by John Fairfax and Sons Limited of Block 1, section 25, Telopea Park (26 Darling Street) cost £1,715. The 1929 electoral roll lists Geoffrey Fairfax, Newspaper Proprietor of 38 Hunter Street, Sydney as living in Darling Street. He died on 27 March 1930. There is no evidence that his time in Canberra contributed to his death. G.E. Fairfax was a director of Fairfax 1916-1920 and during that time had visited the front line of World War 1 in the company of C.E.W. Bean, the government's official war correspondent.

The third lease mentioned in the Crown Solicitor's files is the Sun newspaper Limited's lease of Block 1, Section 24, Telopea Park (now 18 Darling Street). This house has the longest relationship with the press. Nancy Modsley, occupation of household duties according to the electoral roll, lived at 'Sun Cottage' in 1928 but no spouse was listed on the electoral roll. 'Sun Cottage' was one of the small number of listings in the 1929 telephone directory. One possibility is that Charley Burr of the *Evening News* lived there – he is listed on the 1928 electoral roll as living in Ralph Darling Street. By 1935 'Sun Cottage' was the home of Otto and Doreen Olsen. Otto was a member of the Parliamentary Press Gallery in 1933, representing the Sydney *Sun*.



The 1928 telephone directory listed the respected journalist W.F. Whyte's phone number in Darling Street. He is listed on the electoral rolls as lived at 18 Darling Street from 1939 until 1958. His wife Hilda stayed on after his death. As the title to the lease was held by others he must have rented. Born in Bombala, Whyte was a highly experienced journalist when he settled in Canberra in 1927, having travelled overseas extensively, interviewed senior political figures in the USA and edited several Australian newspapers. He was a member of the press gallery from 1927 representing his independent Federal Capital News Service. He was also active in local affairs, including the Kangaroo Club, and was in regular contact with Miles Franklin.

The Land Titles Office Historical Title Search only provides information back to 1940 for this property. It shows that at 10 July 1940 Sun Newspapers Limited was in liquidation and the property was transferred to Associated Newspapers Limited. On 18 June 1941 the property was then transferred to Estates Attorneys and Management Pty Ltd of the ACT in whose hands it remained until August 1960. If anyone has further information about this subject or anything about the early residents of Barton, the author would be most interested and can be contacted by email at [nick\\_swain@yahoo.com.au](mailto:nick_swain@yahoo.com.au) or (02) 6273 4242.

#### **47.4.5 HOKITIKA NEWSPAPER GIVEAWAY**

The *West Coast Times*, a small NZ daily, reverted to its former name of *Hokitika Guardian* on 4 March and issued an excellent historical supplement. Victor Isaacs has spare copies available. Inquire via [abvi@webone.com.au](mailto:abvi@webone.com.au) or at 43 Lowanna Street Braddon ACT 2612.

#### **47.4.6 UNIQUE COPY OF GUTENBERG PRESS**

From the April-June "Events" list at the British Library: Tuesday, 6 May, 6.30pm-10pm. "The Machine that Made us: Gutenberg's Brilliant Invention" – in the Conference Centre [the British Library is at 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB]. A new documentary on Gutenberg, *The Machine that Made us* presented by Stephen Fry, is being screened on BBC4 in [the British] Spring 2008, and excerpts will feature in the [British Library] event. A team of experts built a unique copy of his press: it will be seen in action at the event, alongside discussion of the remarkable story behind its invention. Speakers include Alan May (printing expert and press builder), Martin Andrews (University of Reading) and Patrick McGrady (Wavelength Films).

#### **47.4.7 UNEARTHING PICTORIAL TREASURES: MELBOURNE AND SYDNEY**

**Rod Kirkpatrick** writes: The approach of an anniversary triggers special efforts to recall times past and to unearth artefacts that speak powerfully of those times. This was the case at both the *Melbourne Age* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* as they prepared to celebrate the centenary this year of the publication of their first photographs: April 22, 1908, for the *Age* (a train crash at Sunshine that killed 43 people) and August 21, 1908, for the *Sydney Morning Herald* (the arrival in Sydney of the US Navy's Great White Fleet). The two newspapers, both owned by Fairfax Media Ltd, published centenary pictorial magazines: the *Sydney Morning Herald*, "Picture Perfect", on April 21, and the *Age*, "A Century of Pictures", on April 22.

At the *Age*, librarian Lindy McCullough began searching last year for photographs for the proposed commemorative magazine. Late in the year her attention was caught by a set of dusty old Kodak film boxes, sitting on a back shelf. They had gone unnoticed for decades. The boxes contained glass negatives from the early days of photography, negatives that had been used at the *Age* until 1950. Each box was marked "1937-38" and labelled "birds and animals". In all, they contained 117 negatives, each with a short caption. The *Age* library manager, Monica Simpson, said it was likely the boxes had been taken to the newspaper's Spencer Street office when it moved from its former Collins Street headquarters in the 1950s. She considers them a windfall because, until now, there had been no prints or negatives belonging to the paper before the 1950s. "It's like a gem to have a small part of those missing years."

The negatives opened up the largely forgotten post-Depression world of the late 1930s in Melbourne. Visits to the zoon and aquarium were a popular pastime and often a Christmas Day treat. They were treated more like sideshows and carnivals, without the barriers now in place to prevent people handling animals. McCullough ran a cross-reference check with the library's newspaper files, in a manner "a bit like a jigsaw", and found that some of the photographs had been published in the *Age*. Some were run in the centenary magazine. Negatives of other photographs published before 1950 had to be obtained from their owners, either the State Library or the Defence Department. .

At the *Sydney Morning Herald*, they were even more fortunate. Ross Duncan was set a task that many colleagues considered impossible even for such a renowned photo sleuth: find the glass-plate negatives carrying images of the first pictures published in the *Herald*, showing the arrival in Sydney in August 1908 of the US Navy's Great White Fleet. So old, so fragile were the plates that there was a fair chance they had been lost, or smashed, in one of the several moves made by the *Herald* since 1831. If they were to be found, it would be somewhere in the Fairfax Media archives in an Alexandria warehouse, containing an estimated 16 million images in corridors off boxes most of which had lain unsorted and unopened for decades. The images could not be located three years ago when researchers sought material for a book to celebrate the paper's 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This time, Duncan found the long-lost plates within hours, in an unmarked brown box that looked like numerous in the warehouse. The images were taken by Charles Bell, who was soon appointed the *Herald's* first photographer. Also in the box were treasures from other eras: pictures of the Harbour Bridge taking shape, of Don Bradman in action, and of the Beatles arriving in Sydney in driving rain. Duncan said, "My guess is they must have been put together for some special edition that never happened. They were put back in storage without being used."

Each weekend from Anzac Day until August, the centenary of the Great White Fleet's visit, the *Herald* is presenting a feature called "Picture This", looking at the story behind some of the best photographs. By the way, the ANHG believes the first half-tone photographic image published in an Australian newspaper appeared in *Table Talk*, a Melbourne weekly, on January 6, 1888. Phillip Pares, of Tasmania, made this discover during research at the National Library of Australia for a PhD thesis. He said the image featured a portrait of the visiting American phrenologist, Miss Jessie Allen Fowler (*Age*, 5 and 22 April 2008 and *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 and 21 April 2008).

#### **47.4.8 NEW NEWSEUM OPENS**

The new Newseum – a 23,000 square-metre, seven-storey glassy edifice – has opened on Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington. Anne Davies writes (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 April 2008): From the original door of the Watergate Hotel, found taped open by a security guard during the 1972 break-in at Democratic Party headquarters, to its 4-D theatre and interactive newsroom, the Newseum tells the fascinating story of journalism and its role in democracy. A tour of the new Newseum begins with a videotape that includes prize-winning newspaper stories that turned out to be fakes.

#### **47.4.9 A FATEFUL FAIRFAX DAY**

The ANHG editor has come into contact recently with George Finn, a Fairfax employee of nearly 20 years ago. He retired in 1989 and now lives on the Gold Coast. Here's an edited version of what he told me: "Before I retired I was Production Computer Services Manager, for John Fairfax's Sydney operation. Following the death of Sir Warwick Fairfax in January 1987, young Warwick Fairfax joined Fairfax's marketing department. He was to spend time in each department to gain a good understanding of the general operation of the company. He was due to join my department, computer operation production, on 31 August 1987. In preparation I had the systems manager put together an overview of the production system.

That morning I got a call from my boss to tell me that Warwick would not be coming; that he had made a bid to buy the company instead. The rest is history.”

Finn served his apprenticeship at the Wagga Wagga *Daily Advertiser* and continued as a tradesman. A compositor from Launceston’s *Examiner* joined the paper, but returned to Launceston after a year or so. He wrote Finn a letter using the *Examiner*’s stationery. Finn was on night work at the time, and the envelope was posted on a notice board where mail and notes were left for the night staff. “When I collected the letter there was also a note from Len Ward, then the *Advertiser*’s general manager, asking if I would come and see him the next day. The letter from Launceston was asking a favour and was of no consequence, except that when I saw the general manager, he asked me if I’d like a transfer to the *Sydney Morning Herald*.” Rupert Henderson, the general manager of the *SMH* at that time was part-owner of the Wagga paper. Finn said, “Sure, I’d love to.” Ward said, “Good I’ll make the arrangements. You’ll be better off there than in Launceston!” Finn stayed at the *Herald* as a Linotype mechanic for couple of years and then went to Canada. He now helps maintain some hot-metal machines at Caboolture’s Historical Village, north of Brisbane.

## **5 – RECENTLY PUBLISHED**

### **47.5.1 BOOKS**

**Dover, Bruce**, *Rupert’s Adventures in China*. Penguin, 2008. \$32.95. An anecdotal insider’s account of Murdoch’s ultimately vain attempts to become an influential player in the Chinese media market (*Age*, 16 February 2008); reviewed by Mark Day in the *Australian Literary Review*, 2 April 2008, p.12.

**Warner, Peggy**, *Over the Other Side: From Williamstown to the World*. Melbourne: HR Publishing, 2008. \$27.95. This book recalls an unusual Australian husband-and-wife reporting team, Denis and Peggy Warner. This is Peggy Warner’s fourth book; she is 94 (see Cameron Stewart, “One crowded lifetime”, *Weekend Australian*, 29-30 March 2008, p.28).

### **47.5.2 ARTICLES**

**Beecher, Eric**, “Look to the future”, *Walkley Magazine*, Issue 50, April/May 2008, pp.14-15. Quality journalism is under siege, but mainstream media are in denial. Beecher suggests it’s time for a robust debate about the future. There are other articles in the same magazine that focus on “The future of journalism”.

**Bone, Pamela**, “Bad news days”, *Walkley Magazine*, Issue 49, February/March 2008, pp.23-24. Newspapers their faults but remain essential, writes a former *Age* journalist.

**Bradley, Stephanie**, “Small town joys”, *Walkley Magazine*, Issue 50, April-May 2008, p.11. From the new shelves in the newsagency to a \$1m drug bust, a young reporter finds western Queensland a terrific source of news.

**Coleman, Peter**, “Fairfax looks to turn the heat on”, *gxpess*, March 2008, pp.12-14. A program of upgrades has put Fairfax’s coldest capacity in good shape, so the group is looking to expand into heatset.

**Colless, Malcolm**, “Age loses the plot without their captain at the helm”, *Australian*, Media section, 24 April 2008, p.36. A wonderful insight into the different corporate mindsets of News Limited and Fairfax Media, and some thoughts on the *Age*’s current journalistic dispute.

**Day, Mark**, “Readers want a good yarn regardless of the method”, *Australian*, Media section, 3 April 2008, p.36. A columnist discusses the basics of journalism.

**Devine, Frank**, “It takes a dedicated team to enervate a once mighty organ”, *Australian*, 25 April 2008, p.11. Discusses the problems that confront newspaper editors.

**Foyle, Lindsay**, “Bulletin out of ‘toon”, *Walkley Magazine*, Issue 50, April/May 2008, pp.43-44. The author traces the *Bulletin*’s proud history of cartooning, and finds its mixed fortunes related to the number of gags it published.

- Gearing, Amanda**, "Trauma overload", *Walkley Magazine*, Issue 50, April/May 2008, pp.27-28. Reporting on death and accidents in regional Australia can exact a heavy toll.
- Haigh, Gideon**, "Packed it in: The demise of the *Bulletin*", *Monthly*, March 2008. A comprehensive review of the reasons for the end of the *Bulletin*.
- Headon, David**, "A toast to visionary burghers", *Canberra Times*, 10 March 2008. Discusses the role of John Gale, editor of the *Queanbeyan Age*, in the selection of Canberra as the site for the national capital.
- Kirkman, Deborah**, "Getting the balance right", *Australian Press Council News*, Vol. 20, No. 1, February 2008, p.1. An examination of how the Press Council has adjudicated complaints about balance. The article concludes: "When newspapers publish unbalanced material, there is an onus on them to correct the imbalance. The balancing response should be published **promptly** in the appropriate section of the publication. In such cases, justice delayed is justice denied."
- Lockhart, Greg**, "Red dog? A Loaded question", *Australian Literary Review*, 5 March 2008, pp.4-5, 10. Reviled by the Right as a traitor, Wilfred Burchett was misguided but not necessarily malevolent. The author of *The Minefield: An Australian Tragedy in Vietnam* reviews a collection of the writings of Burchett.
- Meray, Tibor**, "Writings wrongs of Wilfred", *Weekend Australian*, 22-23 March 2008, p.23. Renowned Australian foreign correspondent Wilfred Burchett obliged his hosts with his reports from communist countries for decades, according to a one-time comrade, award-winning Hungarian journalist, Tibor Meray.
- Munro, Ian**, "Murdoch's Wall Street Makeover", *Age*, Insight section, 29 March 2008, p.4. Discussion of plans to make the *Wall Street Journal* more competitive with the *New York Times*.
- Severgnini, Beppo**, "Diario Australiano", *Age*, 7 February 2008, p.16. A visiting Italian journalist finds that life for Italians in Australia can be *molto difficile*.
- Shanahan, Dennis**, "Hi-tech end to reptiles' party", *Australian*, Media section, 10 April 2008, pp.27-28. A veteran political correspondent compares the pressure of overseas travel with Prime Minister Rudd in this online era with overseas trips with previous Prime Ministers in a less hectic media environment.
- Simons, Margaret**, "Guilty parties in media mayhem", *Walkley Magazine*, Issue 49, February/March 2008, pp.5-6. A new generation is gatecrashing traditional reporting.
- Stirling, Rosalind**, "J.F. Archibald: The Old Chief of the *Bulletin*", *Australian Heritage*, Autumn 2008, pp.22-26. A reflection on one of the founder of the *Bulletin*, written on the discontinuation of the publication early this year.
- Warden, Ian**, "Like the roars of the breakers on a rockbound coast", *National Library of Australia News*, April 2008, pp.14-17. Warden uses the newspaper collection of the National Library to examine how roaring fans welcomed Rugby League to Australia 100 years ago. Sources used include the *Sydney Sportsman*, the *Bulletin* and items of Rugby League ephemera.

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