



And RIP—Everyone seems to know that FYI means “for your information.” And all eyes surely read RIP as “rest in peace.” But now the news business seems to be moving from FYI as its slogan to a new definition of RIP—“rot in print.” Broadcast news, too—and it hasn't far to go.

Just as Congress tries hurdling President Clinton's veto threat with a telecommunications bill that would make information monopolies more airtight, we have the coincidence of the Disney Company's \$19 billion purchase of Capital Cities/ABC and then the sale of CBS to Westinghouse Electric Corporation for \$5.4 billion—merging information and entertainment.

The pending legislation would allow single corporations to own and control broadcasting stations reaching 35 percent of the total U.S. audience. That's us, and competition and independence are being diminished.

And so are metropolitan daily newspapers. More big ones die every year, and more small ones get gobbled up by chain owners. The Gannett Company wasn't satisfied with ownership of 82 newspapers, so it just bought 11 more. Few probably noticed the recent closing of the *Baltimore Evening Sun*. Then the chain owners of the *Sun*, the Times Mirror Company of Los Angeles, whose flagship is the *Los Angeles Times*, ended 10 years of trying to make its Long Island tabloid, *Newsday*, a saleable competitor in New York City. And the Times Mirror Company's Connecticut property, the *Hartford Courant*, is under orders to drastically downsize its news staff.

There were about 2,600 dailies when this century began. Today there are 1,550—a casualty rate of 16 papers a year. Look for more.

“The Forgotten War” Remembered—The dedication in late July of the Korean War Veterans Memorial adds to Washington's monuments a dramatic evocation of combat that was never formally called a war but rather an international “police action” by 22 countries. Remember? The monument, whose wall bears the inscription “Freedom Is Not Free,” recalls some facts worth remembering.

Korea was the bloodiest foreign war Americans have ever fought. American GIs there stood 1 chance in 9 of

being killed or wounded, against 1 in 12 in World War II and 1 in 19 in Vietnam. And five years after Hiroshima, nuclear weapons were *not* used—so far a defining world-wide decision. The United States and the United Nations also drew a successful line in the sand against Soviet-inspired armed aggression. There was no more.

New JFK files—The movie *JFK*, by producer-director Oliver Stone added much conspiratorial doubt about the official finding of the Warren Commission that the “lone gunman” assassin of President John F. Kennedy in 1963 was Lee Harvey Oswald. There were two important results: (1) The expansion of existing conspiratorial theorizing about hidden records and a “cover-up of the truth” became so troubling that (2) Congress created the JFK Assassination Records Review Board (ARRB) and gave it unprecedented authority to pry loose every government file relating to the Kennedy murder for public review at the National Archives in Washington.

Among the board's latest retrievals are files from the office of Jim Garrison, the former New Orleans prosecutor—and the lone hero of the conspiratorial Oliver Stone movie. The files show that Garrison fabricated from thin air his (and later Oliver Stone's) theory that the “military-industrial complex” plotted Kennedy's death.

The *New York Times Magazine* (Sunday, Aug. 6) gave space to a leading Stone adversary, Gerald Posner, author of the book *Case Closed*, to report that he has studied the Garrison files—documents that Stone declined to review before making his misleading movie—and that they show that Garrison, Stone and the movie *JFK* were wrong.

Subversive Boy Scouts—After all the hypocritical, superpatriotic hoo-haw in the House of Representatives supporting a useless constitutional amendment to outlaw the burning of the American flag (*Washington Spectator*, Aug. 1), it turns out that the Boy Scouts of America have a manual called *Your Flag* that specifically details flag burning. The official Boy Scout procedure, approved by the Army, Navy and Marine Corps, is to cut worn flags “into small pieces that will burn easily and completely on a modest but blazing fire” and reduce them “to ashes unrecognizable as a former flag.”

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ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS:

CONGRESSIONAL REFORM

The Best Congress Money Can Buy is Still For Sale

- A Congress addicted to bribery _____ 1
- Bidding for votes on telecommunications bill _____ 2
- Both parties sell access _____ 3
- FYI _____ 4

