

# Times Editors Dig Deep To Keep Wire Running

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By Larry Kramer

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The New York newspaper strike has had an unusual effect on New York Times metropolitan desk editor John Friendly.

For the first time in 10 years, he has gone back to being a reporter.

"I love it," says Friendly, one of about a dozen Times editors pressed into service as reporters to keep the New York Times News Service sending dispatches to its estimated 450 subscribing newspapers around the world.

In addition to Friendly and his co-workers in New York, 17 of the 70 people in the Times' Washington bureau are working, as well as all of the paper's foreign correspondents and about one-third of those assigned to domestic bureaus.

"We're keeping the full 14-hour wire going," said Rob Roy Buckingham, editor and general manager of the Times News Service. "Our foreign news and Washington news is about up to par, but none of our (culture) critics are writing in New York, so we have had to nominate a few of our own."

Buckingham said there were some articles lying around when the strike began, "but we have gone to the bottom of the barrel."

"Actually, we now have a sharper report because all of our people are writing for a news wire instead of the paper, so the stories are shorter. And crisper. We have told our correspondents to concentrate on exclusives and news analysis, except for the major news events."

For the first time in its history, Buckingham says, the Times wire is buying material from its member

newspapers. "Some of our clients are chipping in," he said, "but none of them are getting rich on what we're paying for the stories."

Most of the Times' editorial columnists are working, and the service also is drawing heavily on free-lance pieces originally sold to The Times for use opposite the editorial page.

Columnists William Safire and James Reston will be returning from vacations next week, Buckingham said, and their columns will resume then. National columnists Tom Wicker and Anthony Lewis have been contributing since the strike began last week.

In some cases, Times investigative articles that were scheduled to be published in editions that never came out were sent over the wire anyway. The day after the strike began, Times Washington bureau staffer Nicholas Horrock had an exclusive on the House assassinations probe.

Editors at subscribing newspapers say there has not been too much change in the wire service.

"We are using about the same amount of Times material as we did before the strike," said Jim Bellows, editor of the Los Angeles Herald-Examiner.

"You don't feel like they are passing along as much, though," he added, "because they're probably holding a good amount of the investigative stuff until they can use it in their own paper."