

# QUILL

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Executive Editor:  
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News Editor:  
Charles F. Long

Publications Assistant:  
Ellen Schneider

Advisory Editor:  
Charles C. Clayton

Circulation Manager  
Pearl Luttrell

Associate Editor:  
Edmund C. Arnold

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THE QUILL for January, 1970

## The Editor's Column Write

• Our QUILL office is just a couple of blocks across the Chicago River away from the Sun-Times Plaza and the Tribune edifices. These house the four major daily newspapers under two ownerships which provide a unique situation in metropolitan journalism for both morning and evening intense competition—the Tribune, Chicago Today, the Sun-Times and the Daily News.

And it is here where the "action" is in news coverage, an oft-boiling pot stirred by political partisanship.

Once again, this journalism which caused mounting blood pressure of its reportorial participants and editors as well as television viewers during the Democratic national convention of August, 1968, doesn't need a thermometer. Just read the headlines. The bystanders, namely the citizens who often measure their journalism by a political yardstick only, aren't exactly cool, either.

While the trial of the "Conspiracy 7" for alleged Democratic convention riot provocation proceeded, a new journalistic brawl arose during December.

It concerns the early-morning shoot-out at Black Panther headquarters with two of the black leaders killed by State's Attorney Edward Hanrahan's special police.

The Chicago Daily News printed what it labeled was the Black Panthers' version of "murder by police."

Hanrahan a few hours later took a step which is bound to raise the hackles of any newspaper seeking a scoop or even break. He gave his version to the Chicago Tribune exclusively. See headlines herewith.



Chicago Tribune

FINAL

## EXCLUSIVE

### Hanrahan, Police Tell Panther Story

That was the red cape which aroused frozen-out rival newspapers to do some goring of their own. Their intended victim naturally was the state's attorney who had asserted that press coverage of the shooting was "outrageous" and "an affront to decency and society." Thus, he blacked out the other newspapers as well as some of the broadcasters: Who is correct?

We're not attempting to say, only to point out to the journalism world that both competition and political climate do not make Reporter Jack a dull boy in Chicago.

And only in Chicago, perhaps, could a reporter—J. Anthony Lukas of the New York Times—be ejected from a courtroom (where "Conspiracy 7" trial goes on) for reading a book during the weeks'-long sessions. It happened Dec. 10. The book was appropriately titled, "The Conspiracy."

Despite all this, newsmen of America, come to Chicago. That's where the "action" is.

• Lynda Morstadt is a sports reporter for Chicago Today, not Chicago's American as noted in the December QUILL. She's a blond dynamo on a bright newspaper.



# Our Readers Sound Off

## Pro and Con on Vice President Agnew

• The Vice President presents the typical picture:

The press is free — as long as it is balanced, responsible and properly respectful of authority; newsmen, including TV commentators, have a right to think for themselves — as long as they reach the right conclusions; free comment and criticism is fine, splendid — when it flatters. Otherwise, it is biased, mean and intolerable. Dissent and campus turmoil, the black upheaval, the inconvenient aged and the disagreeable poor will go away if reporters will just stop paying attention to them; young demonstrators are bad actors in a middle-class morality play who ought to be jailed for failing to learn their lines.

**Prof. John Barron**  
*Journalism*  
Butler University  
Indianapolis, Ind.

• Herdsmen whose job it is to tend the new elite among the news media sacred cows have reacted as expected since some of charges were gored by Vice President Agnew. Incredibly, SDX has now joined the chorus by passing a resolution which condemns Mr. Agnew's alleged "threat to the American freedom to collect and comment on the news."

**John L. Bluck**  
*Nat. Advt. Mgr.*  
The News-Star  
Monroe, La.

• What he (Agnew) really was trying to do in his speech was to stir up as many people as possible into believing that the way to end the so-called "bad news" they see and hear is to silence the voices which bring them that news.

That is strangely—perhaps frighteningly—similar to the ancient custom of killing messengers who brought bad news to the king.

**Steve Emerine**  
*Green Valley News*  
Green Valley, Ariz.  
(Idaho '55)

• I note the resolution passed by Sigma Delta Chi at San Diego relative to the criticism of Vice President Spiro Agnew's comments on

the mass media. As the father of two Sigma Delta Chi sons and the son of a Sigma Delta Chi with three Sigma Delta Chi brothers I wish that it be known that I believe this resolution one of bias and one that should never have been proposed . . . certainly not without majority approval of membership. Frankly, I feel that like other news media, the electronic media should identify or make a distinction between news and editorial or opinion—not just run it in all together as is often the case.

**Merle M. Miller**  
*Belleville Telescope*  
Belleville, Kan.

• Spiro Agnew's attack on television networks is the most frightening speech by a public official since the passing of Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy . . . From all possible standpoints Agnew's Des Moines speech advocating suppression of discussion was deplorable, almost incredible. All believers in the Bill of Rights should loudly disavow it.

**Curtis MacDougall**  
*Prof. of Journalism*  
Northwestern Univ.

• I feel such criticism as Mr. Agnew has been making is all to the good and should have been made a long time ago . . . It seems to me the Fourth Estate has gleefully tried to undermine and sabotage every good undertaking of the present ad-

ministration. They could serve the United States much better, in my opinion, to search for the good and tell about it than to continually prophesy doom. I'm really ashamed to admit my connection with Sigma Delta Chi in this area.

**Lawrence S. Clark**  
Edina, Minn.

• This is my resignation from Sigma Delta Chi. It comes as a result of the too strongly-worded resolution recently passed at the San Diego convention in reaction to statements by Vice President Agnew and others concerning bias in television news coverage. The convention would have been better advised to pass a resolution directed at those within its own ranks whose irresponsibility in reporting the news poses a far more serious threat to press freedom than anything Mr. Agnew can say or do.

**Willard E. Wilks**  
Glendale, Calif.

• When journalists seek to defend their own right of free speech by condemning another for exercising the identical right, they are courting disaster. And in criticizing Mr. Agnew for his remarks about network television Sigma Delta Chi is, in my opinion, tragically on the wrong side.

**Jay W. Wells**  
Seattle, Wash.

• The convention's reaction to Mr. Agnew's comments was understandable, but it overlooked or covered up a couple of facts: There are many more journalists and commentators on the left than on the right . . . Most commentators and owners of papers and stations are grinding

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## Where Were the Correspondents?

• I would like to comment on the article in your November issue entitled "Military-Press Relations." On the whole, the author, Major Bob Chick, presented a fairly accurate description of the problems that confront both media representatives and unit IO's (Information Officers).

However, from my experience as an IO with the 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division from Dec. 13, 1967 to Dec. 7, 1968, I feel that the relationship between field IO's and

media representatives should be further explored. I have complete faith in Major Chick's figures stating that there are approximately 480 correspondents assigned to the Vietnam beat. From my position, which was six miles northeast of the city of Hue, I could only wonder where they were. I saw maybe 10 *different* correspondents the entire year.

**Joseph Pulcinella**  
Secane, Pa.



their own single-minded axes daily . . . Commentary propaganda should be identified, maybe like the politicians are forced to do: "This is a paid political announcement."

Gerald K. Muesel  
San Diego, Calif.

• We need constructive criticism. Let's not condemn constructive criticism of our efforts to sensationalize our news coverage and editorial comments. We should thank Vice President Agnew for giving us a real opportunity for self-inspection before it becomes necessary to have others put us in our place.

Melvin C. Koch  
Member SDX  
Columbus, Ohio

• Who gave Sigma Delta Chi permission to speak for me, a member in good standing, in censuring Vice President Spiro T. Agnew for his remarks about television? Without polling the membership, how can a handful of SDX pass a resolution and say that it represents the society? Isn't this the kind of news management that the Vice President—and me, for another, is protesting?

Paul League  
The Journal Co., Inc.  
Seneca, S.C.

• Dear Mr. League:

Thank you for the carbon copy of your letter to The QUILL.

The by-laws of Sigma Delta Chi are fairly explicit: "Convention shall be the supreme legislative and executive body of the organization and its power shall be complete and general." It is assumed that the delegates to the national convention are to some degree representative of the Society. Any SDX member may, to my knowledge, attend the convention, and any professional or student chapter is expected to send a delegate. The Central South Carolina chapter did not send a delegate to the 1969 convention in San Diego.

The convention's vote on this relatively weak resolution was in no way unanimous. But among the delegates, the issue that you cite—that the Vice President might conceivably be right—was not, to their thinking, the principal issue. There were two others: the issue of a possible infringement of freedom of the press and the fact that the Vice President's criticism was not constructive.

As the University of South Carolina's delegate to the 1969 convention, I voted against the Agnew resolution, although certainly through no great

love for the Vice President or his television speech. Even a Vice President is entitled to his opinions.

It might further be pointed out that the Vice President later attacked newspapers. There was no criticism of

newspapers in the fall of 1968 when three-quarters of the American dailies were supporting the Republican ticket.

David C. Whitney  
U. of S. Carolina

## Regarding Carl Rowan's Article

• I was disgusted to see The QUILL playing up such propaganda as the Carl Rowan story in the November issue.

Ben H. Brown  
Kansas City, Mo.

• If Rowan is going to tell suburban editors how to do their jobs (Nov. QUILL), perhaps he'd better get out into the suburbs and see what life really is like there. But per-

haps he's happy sitting in Washington writing his column and not seeing the efforts by suburbanites toward greater understanding and comingling of different cultures. As they say, ignorance is bliss.

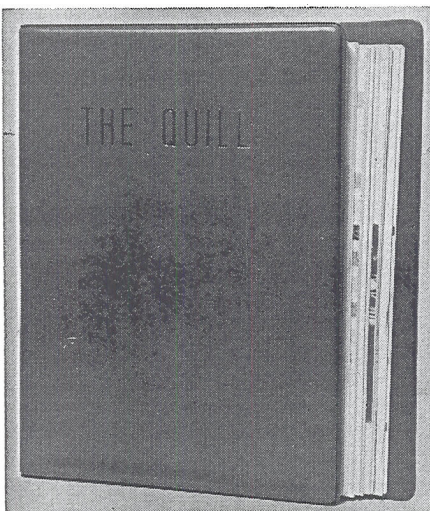
Rick Helberg  
Editor  
Bellevue American  
Bellevue, Wash.

Editor's Note—Carl Rowan does live in a suburb, of Washington, D.C.

## Regarding 'Objectivity' and Merrill

• The piece in the July QUILL by Prof. John Merrill came tantalizingly close to shattering United States journalism's most crippling mental quirk—belief in the feasibility and

value of reportorial objectivity. Coming from a faculty member of Missouri, the attack would have been a more valuable contribution to the  
(Turn the page, please)



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## ... Our Readers Sound Off

professional improvement SDX seeks if it hadn't stopped short of its logical conclusion.

Professor Merrill, however, was ultimately unable to divest himself of the "objectivity" sentiment which has so endured in the teaching and practice of news writing ever since the sentiment was born in the righteous battle against the standard yellow journalism of yesteryear. While

he agreed objective reporting is impossible, he closed his QUILL article with, "Perhaps we should go on living with this myth accepting it as real in order to hold before us an ideal, a goal toward which to strive."

Nathaniel Polster  
Washington (D.C.)  
Prof. Chapter

## Regarding the Paul Buser Article

• You have lost a bit of credibility in devoting so much space to the Paul Buser article, "Neither Stooges nor Wide-Eyed Radicals" in the November QUILL. The official publication of Sigma Delta Chi, a professional journalistic society, should have saved space by chopping the author off after the first sentence of the second paragraph.

Ken Kizer  
Purdue University  
(Utah Prof. '56)

• A considerable number of people have been puzzled about the "purposeless" destructiveness of rad-

ical campus elements and the apparent determination of the media to encourage it.

Perhaps an answer can be found in your recent (Nov. QUILL) article by Paul J. Buser, who purports to speak for campus editors around the country. Although his argument seems to be a somewhat inaccurate recital of what someone has been telling him, it might well reflect the bemused thinking of that part of the teaching profession which imparts propaganda rather than knowledge.

Ted Berry  
Seattle, Wash.

## Dr. Gainza Paz Was Her Hero

• Thank you for the interesting article on *La Prensa* in the October QUILL. I was particularly happy to be brought up-to-date on the activities of Dr. Gainza Paz.

Doctor Paz became one of my heroes as I followed his courageous and precarious struggle to try to keep his paper alive during the Peron regime. Therefore, it was with great anticipation that I looked forward to meeting him at the Inter-American Press Association held in San Francisco in October, 1959. He was then president.

The great moment arrived when my husband (Bill Losh, SDX, Stanford '19) introduced us. Doctor Paz was tall, handsome, gracious and in good humor answered my questions concerning his ordeal with President Juan Peron. I particularly enjoyed his account of hasty departure via the back door of his newspaper as the Peronistas were kicking in the front door.

My husband has a rather impressive looking document which I recently

framed and now is hanging over his desk. It is an invitation to attend the First Pan American Congress of Journalists held in Washington in April, 1926. He received this at the time he was manager of the Washington (D.C.) bureau of the United Press. Could the present Inter-American Press Association be an outgrowth of that first 1926 meeting of the Pan American Congress of Journalists?

Volna Losh  
(Mrs. William J.)  
Mill Valley, Calif.

## Newsman Need Riot Protection

• Thanks to Martin Gershen for his report on the press as a target of force and intimidation (November QUILL). In recent years, militant groups of one stripe or another have been using force or the threat of force against newsmen with alarming frequency. Such in-

## Proud Member

• Twenty-five years ago when I joined SDX it was with pride that the Society did not discriminate against blacks. While I do not see the same moral issue involved in banning women, nevertheless I am glad that our Society has now eliminated that somewhat unprofessional anachronism. All of the actions of the recent convention make me proud all over again that I am an SDX member—the say-nay to the Vice-President, the program to recruit and train and employ non-whites, and to retain the name Sigma Delta Chi.

Odom Fanning  
Bethesda, Md.

stances have often gone unreported to the public.

One of the latest examples of bully-boy tactics against newsmen took place at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology during protest demonstrations there early in November. Youthful militants declared certain Institute buildings "off limits" to cameramen and warned that any still or film man caught inside would have his equipment broken. Protest leaders repeatedly threatened TV technicians with physical harm and on numerous occasions forcibly blocked camera lenses with their hands or pieces of clothing. My ABC camera crew was forcibly prevented from filming the student-demonstrator take-over of the hallways of the Institute's main Administration building.

It is time that the top executives of the news media took public steps to protect their reporters and cameramen with every legal power at their command. It's time that the news media served notice on militants of whatever persuasion that they will be made to pay a very high price indeed if they resort to violence against newsmen at work in their rightful roles.

James E. Burnes  
American Broadcasting Co.  
New York, N.Y.

## WE CAN'T GUESS,

If you have  
changed your  
address let

The QUILL know.

THE QUILL for January, 1970