

higher education, they have developed higher expectations about what they want from life”—and set “higher standards” for potential husbands.

“[Women] have always had what it takes to be good students,” writes Hacker, “and ex-

panding opportunities over the last century have given them the chance to demonstrate that.” But as it almost always does in life, success exacts a toll. Among Americans who earn more than \$100,000 a year, 83 percent of the men are married, but only 58 percent of the women.

PRESS & MEDIA

## *The Daily Web*

“The Next Great American Newspaper” by David Gelernter, in *The Weekly Standard* (June 23, 2003), 1150 17th St., N.W., Ste. 505, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Newspapers on the World Wide Web have their minor uses, but they’re so-o-o boring—little imitation-newsprint newspapers that are standoffish and hard to browse. Gelernter, a computer scientist at Yale University, thinks that “America’s next great newspaper” will be published on the Web but that it will be very different from today’s “conventional Web-based losers.”

“No Web newspaper will match all of newsprint’s best qualities,” says Gelernter, “but Web designers should *understand* those qualities so they can concoct new ones that are (in their ways) equally attractive.” A print newspaper, in his view, is “a slab of space . . . that is *browsable* and *transparent*. Browsability is what a newspaper is for: to offer readers a smorgasbord of stories, pictures, ads, and let them choose

EXCERPT

### *Disgrace in Baghdad*

*Terror, totalitarian states, and their ways are nothing new to me, but I felt from the start that [Iraq] was in a category by itself, with the possible exception in the present world of North Korea. I felt that that was the central truth that has to be told about this place. It was also the essential truth that was untold by the vast majority of correspondents here. Why? Because they judged that the only way they could keep themselves in play here was to pretend that it was okay.*

*There were correspondents who thought it appropriate to seek the approbation of the people who governed their lives. This was the ministry of information, and particularly the director of the ministry. By taking him out for long candlelit dinners, plying him with sweet cakes, plying him with mobile phones at \$600 each for members of his family, and giving bribes of thousands of dollars. Senior members of the information ministry took hundreds of thousands of dollars of bribes from these television correspondents who then behaved as if they were in Belgium. They never mentioned the function of minders. Never mentioned terror.*

*In one case, a correspondent actually went to the Internet Center at the Al-Rashid Hotel and printed out copies of his and other people’s stories—mine included—specifically in order to be able to show the difference between himself and the others. He wanted to show what a good boy he was compared to this enemy of the state. He was with a major American newspaper.*

*Yeah, it was an absolutely disgraceful performance.*

—New York Times correspondent John F. Burns in *editorandpublisher.com* (Sept. 15, 2003), an excerpt from *Embedded: The Media at War in Iraq, an Oral History*, by Bill Katovsky and Timothy Carlson.

what looks good. “Transparent” means you can always tell from a distance what you’re getting into . . . and you always know (as you read) where you are, how far you’ve come, and how much is left.”

Today’s Web newspapers allow readers to “search” them for specific subjects. But what readers mainly want to do, says Gelernter, is browse. “They want to be distracted, enlightened, entertained.”

A Web newspaper, he says, should be thought of as “an object in time,” and news as a “parade” of events. “Imagine a parade of jumbo index cards standing like set-up dominoes. On your computer display, the parade of index cards stretches into the simulated depths of your screen, from the middle-bottom (where the front-most card stands, looking big) to the farthest-away card in the upper left corner (looking small).” The parade is in continuous motion, as new stories pop up in front, and the oldest ones in the rear drop off the screen.

“Each card is a ‘news item’—text or photo, or (sometimes) audio or video,” he explains. The card has room for only a headline, a para-

graph, and a small photo. It can lead (with the click of a mouse) to a full story or transcript, but “the pressure in this medium is away from the long set-piece story, towards the continuing series of lapidary paragraphs.”

Instead of producing “a monolithic slab of text,” as in “today’s standard news story,” he says, reporters “will belt out little stories all the time, as things happen.” The new sort of news story will consist of “a string of short pieces interspersed with photos, transcripts, statements, and whatnot as they emerge. It is an evolving chain; you can pick it up anywhere and follow it back into the past as far as you like.”

Despite the competition from all-news cable channels, Gelernter contends, newspapers can still be first with the news—if they’re Web papers. “Because a Web-paper is a ‘virtual’ object made of software, capable of changing by the microsecond, lodged inside a computer where fresh data pour in constantly at fantastic rates, a Web-paper can be the timeliest of them all—and it can be a *great* paper if it plays to its natural advantages and delivers timeliness with style.”

## Party Animals?

“Whispers and Screams: The Partisan Nature of Editorial Pages” by Michael Tomasky, *Research Paper R-25* (July 2003), Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard Univ., 79 JFK St., 2nd floor Taubman, Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

Partisanship is no stranger on the editorial pages of the nation’s newspapers. But there’s a significant difference in the way liberal and conservative papers handle it, argues Tomasky, a former fellow at the Shorenstein Center who was recently named executive editor of *The American Prospect*, a liberal biweekly.

Tomasky examined 510 editorials from the liberal *New York Times* and *Washington Post* and the conservative *Wall Street Journal* and *Washington Times*. The editorials dealt with 10 pairs of “roughly comparable” issues during the administrations of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. The newspapers were about equally partisan in their treatment of “the other side” on matters of public policy, Tomasky writes. “For example, *The New York Times* opposed the [2001] Bush tax cut about as often, and about as strongly, as *The Wall Street Journal* opposed the [1993] Clinton stimulus package.”

But the papers’ treatment of “their own

side” was markedly different, he says. The liberal papers criticized the Clinton administration in 30 percent of the editorials, and praised it in only 36 percent. The conservative papers rapped the Bush administration in only seven percent of the editorials, while lauding it in 77 percent.

When the issue was secrecy, for example—in First Lady Hillary Clinton’s 1993 health-care task force and in the 2001 Bush Energy Task Force, chaired by Vice President Dick Cheney—the disparate treatment appeared again. *The New York Times* published four critical editorials about the Clinton panel’s secrecy, and five deploring the Cheney group’s. *The Wall Street Journal* printed eight editorials condemning the secrecy in the Clinton case, but only one about the Cheney panel’s secrecy—and it defended the vice president.

Tomasky thinks that the liberal papers take