

When investigative reporters approach, many people now “lawyer up” quickly. “As a result,” Stern says, “instead of interviewing people, many investigative reporters spend hours upon hours preparing ques-

tions, which are faxed to attorneys . . . [who] then send back carefully worded responses.” That’s not much fun, and it’s another significant restraint on the media watchdog.

A Newshounds’ Utopia

“Imagine” by Liz Cox, in *Columbia Journalism Review* (Jan.–Feb. 2003), Journalism Bldg., Columbia Univ., New York, N.Y. 10027.

At many newspapers, it is, or once was, a hallowed tradition for spirited young reporters to gather after hours at a nearby bar to talk about their stories, gripe about their editors, and imagine how much better their paper could be. Updating this custom for the Age of Focus Groups, *Columbia Journalism Review* recently persuaded 67 young journalists from 18 papers around the country to get together in small groups to discuss their “Dream Newspaper.”

Meeting over half-priced beers on Chicago’s North Side, or in places such as the Elvis Room at Mama’s Mexican Kitchen in Seattle, the twentysomethings decided that one thing they don’t want is more “news” about J.Lo and Ben. “Newspapers assume our generation wants nothing more than fluff, 24–7 entertainment,” said one participant. “That is flat-out wrong.” Even so, the Chicago bunch, along with many others, want their Dream Newspaper “entertainment-heavy, but not at the expense of news.”

Some of the journalists’ ideas were fairly predictable. They would like more freedom to express their own viewpoints (“When

something is just blatantly one-sided or wrong, it would be nice to point it out,” said Anand Vaishnav, a 27-year-old *Boston Globe* education reporter), to be more “smart assed,” even more foul mouthed (“We’re a foul-mouthed generation,” argued Andisheh Nouraei, a 29-year-old columnist for *Creative Loafing*).

But one desideratum advanced by the Dream Teams is quite surprising: more international coverage. “As it turns out,” writes Cox, an assistant editor at *Columbia Journalism Review*, “the young people in our groups—far from being disengaged or self-involved, as the prevailing wisdom goes—see themselves very much as part of a global community.” Along with breaking foreign news and diplomatic coverage, they would like more stories about foreign folk—“people who could be here, but just happen to be there,” as Leslie Koren, a 30-year-old writer for *The Record*, in northern New Jersey, put it. An example of what she craves: a *Boston Globe* story about local rock bands emerging in Afghanistan after the defeat of the Taliban.

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Socrates’ Last Words

“Have We Been Careless with Socrates’ Last Words? A Rereading of the *Phaedo*” by Laurel A. Madison, in *Journal of the History of Philosophy* (Oct. 2002), Department of Philosophy, Hunter College, 695 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10021.

If all of Western philosophy is footnotes to Plato, then Socrates’ best lines are the epigraphs: “The unexamined life is not worth living.” “He is wise who knows he knows not.” “All of philosophy is training for death.” What to make, then, of his not-so-

quoteworthy final words: “Crito, we owe a cock to Asclepius; make this offering to him and do not forget”?

This apparent “trivial concern with Crito’s unreliable memory,” as Madison, a doctoral student at Loyola University,