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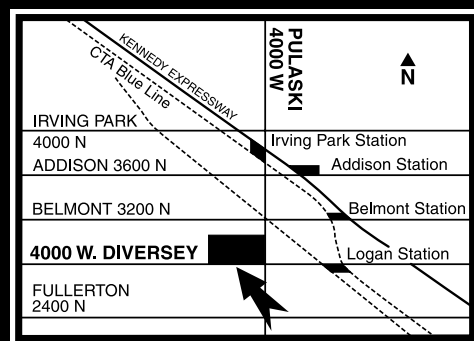
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Letters

This Checks Out

Mike [Miner]:

I want to attempt to set the record straight and end all the nonsense of posters, plaques, and reminiscences about who coined the advice to young reporters "If your mother says she loves you, check it out" [Hot Type, December 9]. City News Bureau legend A.A. Dornfeld, better known as Dorny, is continually credited with the dictate. However, in his book *Behind the Front Page*, the curmudgeon night CNB boss, who tossed compliments around like sewer covers, disabused Mike Royko of the thought and insisted Ed Eulenberg, a coconspirator rewrite and deskman, penned the memorable order. "Eulie" was one of the great CNB mentors until he went straight and took the cash offered by the *Daily News*.

James B. Strong, aka Stormy

CNB '55

Arlington Heights

Take a Year—Take Two!

Thanks for "A Year Without Journalism" [December 30] and its elitist response to the blogger and Internet advertising challenge, as if bloggers aren't journalists too. The same self-serving cries were heard from the monasteries when Gutenberg printed his Bible with movable type. And from the movie industry when television came along. But we're not going back to buggy whips. Sorry.

What the new citizen journalism means is that the prima

donnas of press journalism, with their snobby pecking order, airs, pretensions, and delusions of grandeur, are outward bound, and good riddance. They give lip service to the concepts of democracy, equality, honesty, and free communication, but when true equality of access comes along they favor the continuing stranglehold information bottleneck represented by their jobs and their billionaire owners.

Newspaper advertising can't compete? Well, isn't that too bad. Welcome to the 21st century, guys. Thought you'd never get here. Take a year off. Take two, they're small. Nobody will ever miss you.

Neil Elliott

Evanston

Dept. of Misapprehended Hyperbole

Dear editor,

I picked up the current issue and went straight to the comics section. Then I read something much funnier: Michael Lenehan's hate piece on the online community ["A Year Without Journalism," December 30].

While it is getting tiresome to hear print journalists bemoan the popularity of the Internet, it can be very amusing to see how little of it they understand. As a public service, I'm going to outline how some of this works in a business sense so that we can, perhaps, have a more informed discussion in future issues.

The bloggers Mr. Lenehan seems to hate so much are link aggregators—they collect links to information relevant to the topic of their blog's subject and present them to the audience. Often they have a quick summary of the piece and some commentary on the content, but they almost always contain



Craig is bent on making a better world. And now that he has done so for job seekers, apartment hunters, and sexual predators, he's turning to journalism. He's involved in an online project that will use the same "wisdom of the masses" approach that informs Craigslist. —Michael Lenehan, December 30

a link. This is sometimes referred to as an "infomediary" or even "disinfomediary," but the general idea is that you have someone or something that finds and filters information to give you a "best of" list of information and links.

Bloggers help people find articles. And then they link to those articles. Do you know what that makes bloggers, Mr. Lenehan? That makes them FREE ADVERTISING for the publications putting those articles online.

Of course, this puts the onus of generating revenue on the publications that put their material online. Let's take the *Chicago Tribune*, for example. CPM (cost per 1,000 impressions) for banners ads on the *Tribune's* Web site ranges from \$12 to \$33, based on how specific you are on where you want your ad to appear (per the *Trib's* advertising media kit).

So let's say the Wonkette, one of the Web sites with hate piled upon it in the article, ran some commentary and a link to an article in the *Tribune*. I don't have any hard data on how many visits a link from Wonkette would generate, so let's say 1,000 people left the site to visit this *Tribune* article. (I suspect that number is low.) On the low end of things, that would represent \$12 of ad revenue for the *Tribune*. On the high end, \$33. Free money, generated because Wonkette linked to a *Tribune* piece. But wait, the *Trib* usually has two ads on a page, so we're talking more like \$20-\$50 of free money because one of those darn bloggers was talking about a *Tribune* article. More if some of these people decide to look at something else at the *Tribune's* Web site. (The technical jargon for people sticking around a site and looking at something else is "stickiness," FYI.)

So bloggers are hurting the papers? Not nearly as drastically as some would have us believe. On the other hand, I have been passing around the PDF link for the *Reader's* special

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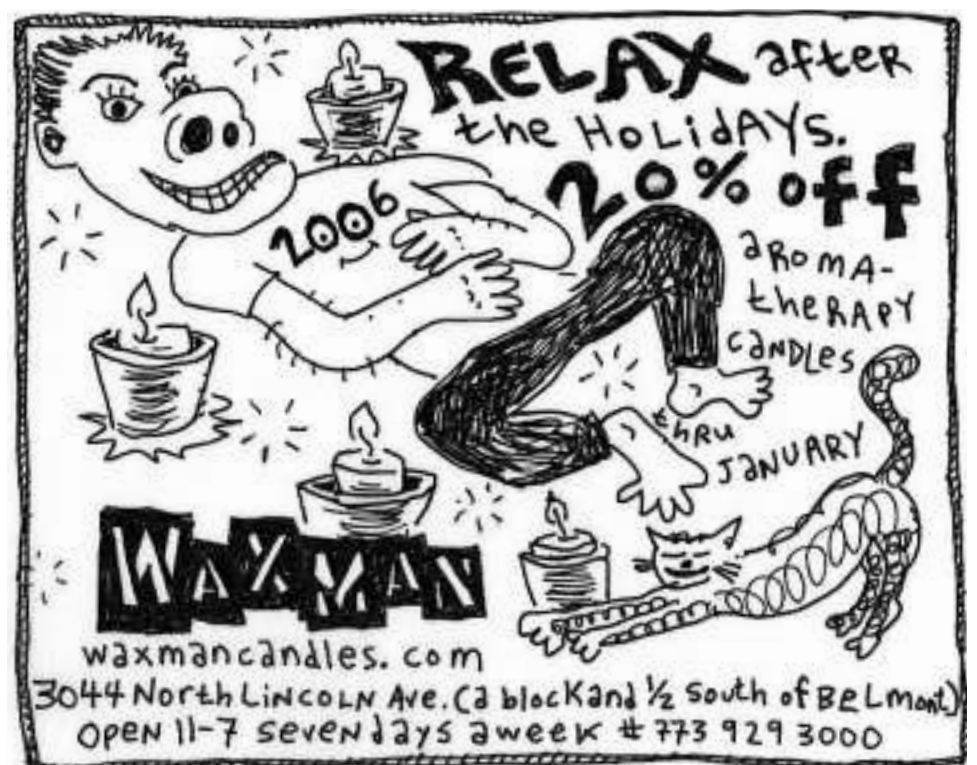
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Letters

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cial comic section. It will be popular in comics and cartooning circles, and the only ad revenue there is if there's an arrangement with the holders of the print advertising on the page of ads included in the block to shell out a little extra based on downloads. In this case, yes, the Web would not be making any money for the *Reader*.

Now past the issue of whether bloggers prevent money from flowing to the print media or actually help it, there's the issue of whether online journalists can do anything besides link to print sources (and help the revenues of the print

sources who have an online revenue model). Is there original journalistic content online? Of course. Check out Chicagoist.com. While they link to some print-originated material, they do plenty of original work in areas print publications gloss over.

Chicagodailynews.org should be up and running before too long and will be specializing in original material. You can hardly be online for half an hour without accidentally tripping over political commentary. Liberal, conservative—whatever—the commentary is out there. Print columnists expanding their output online, people who are online only. The value of the

political commentator is determined by the individual reader, not the editor, and certainly not by whether the commentator's words are on paper or a screen. It is freedom of what you want to read.

Newspapers and magazines have revenue models that are based primarily on advertising. Alternative weeklies like the *Reader* are based exclusively on advertising. Web pages are based primarily on advertising, with a few entering into the realm of subscription and another set reaping the benefits of selling merchandise that complements their product and/or topic area. The product is not so different; the medium the prod-

uct is distributed in is a little different. The Internet is also a much more inclusive and robust distribution system.

I hope Mr. Lenehan can quit wailing like an infant with soiled diapers and learn about the different types of ways to distribute a news story and to get a check for it. The model is changing, and you can either adapt or go have a drink with those nice young men from the buggy-whip factory.

Todd Allen

Adjunct professor of e-business
Columbia College

Michael Lenehan replies:

Over here at the Buggy Whip Gazette we are very grateful to

Professor Allen for so patiently sharing his e-business expertise, particularly in the area of advertising, a subject we know very little about. I fear, however, that my humble attempt at humor has eluded him in a variety of ways, of which I'd like to address just one: With capital letters and a great deal of condescension, Mr. Allen informs us that blogs provide FREE ADVERTISING for newspapers and generate traffic for their Web sites. In his eagerness to deliver a lecture, he seems to have completely missed my point about the Wonkette item in question, which was precisely that it did neither. Forgive me for repeating myself, but Wonkette linked to Sploid, a sibling blog, and to a page on Yahoo News. The item made no mention of the *Houston Chronicle*, which originated the story, or the AP, which delivered it to Yahoo.

Damn the Health Taliban

After reading Ben Joravsky's piece on Chicago's smoking ban [The Works, December 30], I found it odd that he fails to mention the fact that "second-hand smoke" damage itself is about as proven as "intelligent design." Or the fact that despite humanity being aware of possible damage from inhaling smoke since the first caveman tried building a fire within the cave, not to mention the fact that citizens have many choices of places to go that don't allow smoking, some people feel Big Mother needs to step in and form the Health Taliban.

But since the conservatives have their own pseudoscience justifying the War on Drug Users, liberals need some too, evidently.

John Biederman

DailyLimerick.net

Ben Joravsky replies:

My point was that the city started with the assumption that secondhand smoke is dangerous then did nothing about it.

Swift Justice

Dear Michael [Lenehan],

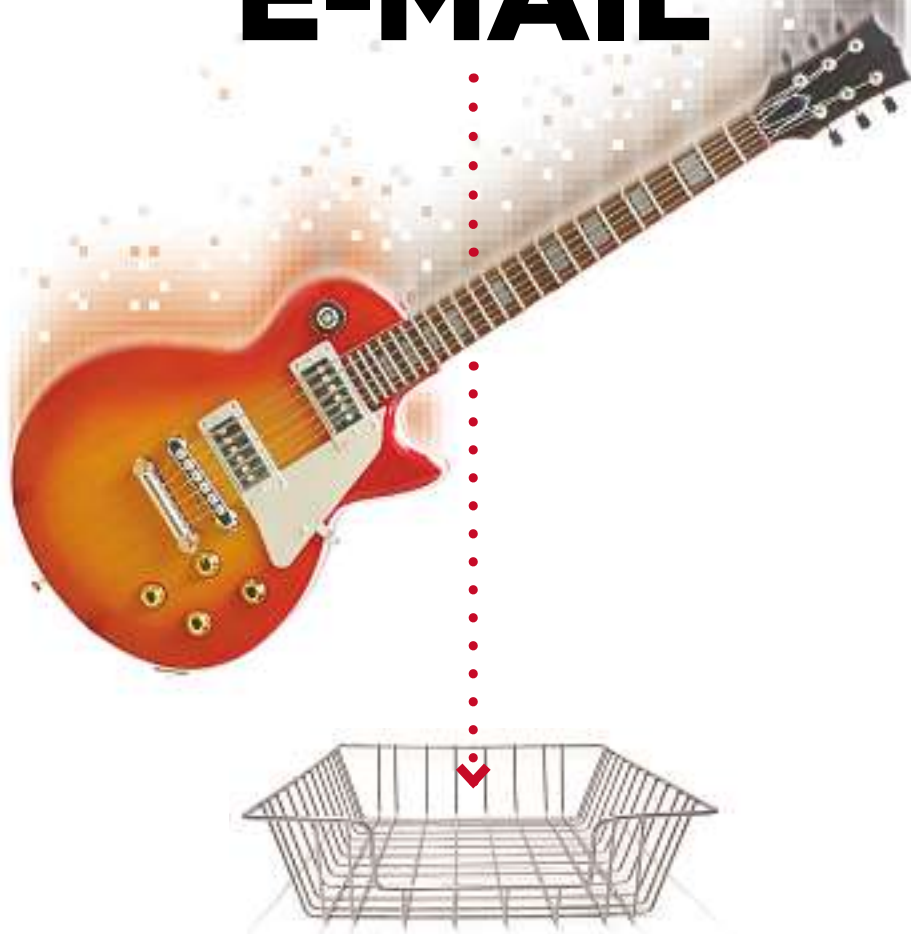
I enjoyed your piece in the latest *Reader* ["A Year Without Journalism," December 30], and your modest proposal for a year's sabbatical for journalists. As I'm sure Swift would've agreed, perhaps those daughters (and sons) of reporters and writers who are unsuitable for lives of prostitution can be eaten.

Fred Donini-Lenhoff

River Forest

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Books

continued from page 29

Keeler mystery is impossible to divine from mere clues, and Keeler had a penchant for introducing twist upon turn upon complication right up to the final page. Clay's impeccably reasoned solution quickly crumbles when the truth comes out; the final answer involves so many unlikely coincidences and almost avant-garde literary devices (including four characters who all turn out to be the same person) that it's almost postmodern.

It's not too surprising that this sort of tomfoolery didn't play too well in post-World War II America. As cold war paranoia set in, mysteries grew increasingly straight and serious and the popularity of hard-boiled writers like Mickey Spillane and Erle Stanley Gardner skyrocketed. Even Ellery Queen swapped his pince-nez for a psychology textbook. Against this buttoned-down backdrop—when a “cult writer” meant someone like Kafka—Keeler must have appeared hopelessly screwy, if not downright un-American. But with the line between high and low culture now so intractably blurred, his time may have finally come. **B**

Ink Well by Ben Tausig

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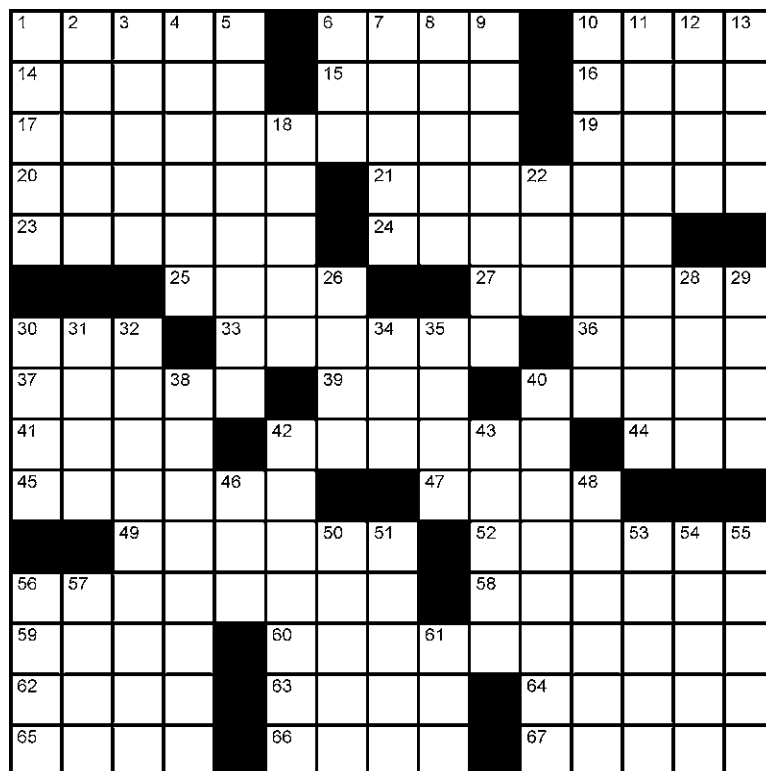
ACROSS

- 1. “No problemo!”
- 6. Quarters in college
- 10. Genghis or Chaka
- 14. “___ a drink . . .”
- 15. Trice of hip-hop
- 16. Reprehensible
- 17. Driving instructor?
- 19. Premade waffle option
- 20. Riffs
- 21. <
- 23. Take down the aisle, in a way
- 24. Really
- 25. Not busy
- 27. More sore
- 30. Chi. summer hours
- 33. Add slack
- 36. Plus-size model
- 37. Stand-up responses
- 39. What a swish misses
- 40. False start?
- 41. Early garden

- 42. Arbiter who calls strikes
- 44. Puncture sound
- 45. Buckle up
- 47. Four: prefix
- 49. Greenpeace target, at times
- 52. Desisted
- 56. Mr. or Ms. Right
- 58. Hit the big time
- 59. Smart
- 60. Crepe paper?
- 62. Ancient South American empire
- 63. Land of limericks
- 64. Halloween 2005 nominee
- 65. Stern's opposite
- 66. Went platinum, perhaps, but probably not gold
- 67. Phone company that merged with Bell Atlantic in 1996

DOWN

- 1. Cuban, e.g.
- 2. Battery terminal
- 3. Carter and Gwyn
- 4. Flouts
- 5. Nuts
- 6. One may lead the blind
- 7. Division symbols
- 8. Out of bed
- 9. Seinfeld, notably
- 10. Bitches
- 11. Joint publication?
- 12. Seaweed, e.g.
- 13. Dodge model
- 18. Playground retort
- 22. Pouch
- 26. Apple problem
- 28. Big Aussie birds
- 29. Bolsheviks
- 30. Child, notably



- 31. Subversive art movement
- 32. Rap sheet?
- 34. Nurse
- 35. Give off
- 38. Civil War battleground
- 40. Perpetual child
- 42. Like a model in a life-drawing class
- 43. Play the highlight reel
- 46. Wing
- 48. Nearly never
- 50. Type of tower
- 51. Bottled spirit
- 53. Protest strategy
- 54. Online party-planning resource
- 55. Dry out, so to speak
- 56. “Get ___!”
- 57. Litter's littlest
- 61. Not to mention

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