

'New journalism of hope'

USA Today chief challenges media

By Michele Matassa
Of the Emerald

To keep pace with America's news audience, the nation's media leaders must drop their traditional journalism of despair and focus on journalism of hope, says Al Neuharth, pioneer of the 17-month-old newspaper *USA Today*.

Speaking Friday at the University's 63rd Oregon Press Conference, Neuharth said America's readers are challenging the industry to justify its Constitutional freedom and to re-examine its "whole tone and attitude."

Despite the challenge, many journalists still practice journalism of despair, the method big-city media use to focus attention on themselves by walking all over their readers, he said.

"The old journalism of despair is a technique that leaves the readers or viewers or listeners discouraged or mad or indignant. The new journalism of hope is a technique that combines the good and the bad, the glad and the sad and leaves readers fully informed," Neuharth said.

President and chair of the Gannett Co., which owns 85 of the nation's daily newspapers with a total circulation of more than four million, Neuharth delivered the annual Eric W. Allen Memorial Lecture as part of the statewide biennial conference.

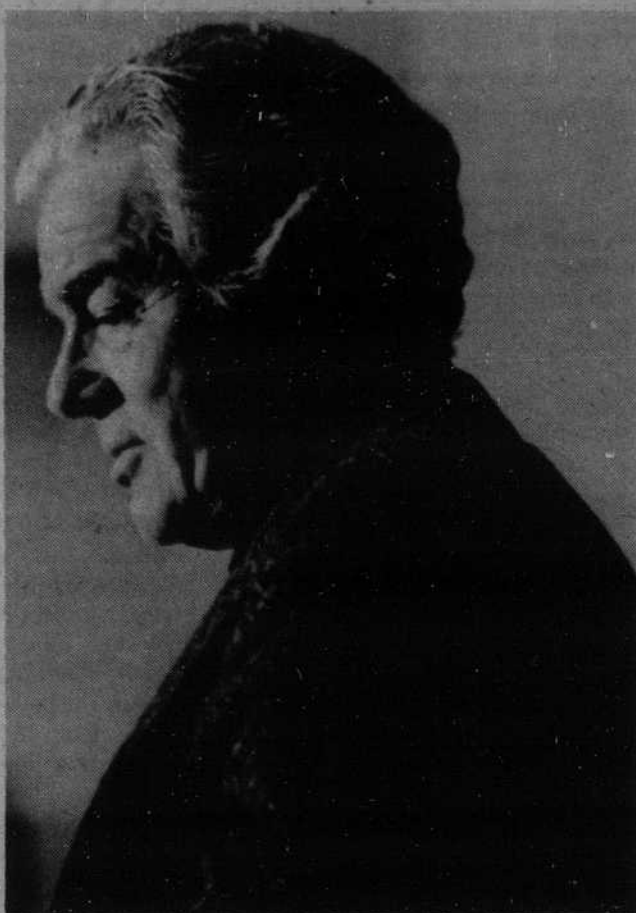
Groups like UNESCO, which supports licensing reporters and wants absolute censorship, are threatening the journalistic freedoms given the industry by free-press champions like Thomas Jefferson, Neuharth said.

"We must keep pace with our readers as well as with our satellites. We must devote time and energy to our philosophies as well as to our product. In short, I think we need to work a bit harder to understand our freedoms, so that we not only preserve them, but we also deserve them," Neuharth said.

The information era doesn't lie off in the future but confronts us today, Neuharth said.

"The future is not in the 1990s. The future is right now and the public in this country will not wait until the 1990s for the newspaper industry or any other area of communications to understand... that we are indeed living now in an information society," he said.

Neuharth told Oregon's journalists to not be



Al Neuharth

afraid of this revolution but to move with it by noticing that readers will not tolerate being held captive by manipulative media leaders.

"The sooner we realize that, the sooner skeptics will stop asking whether newspapers have a future and they will start talking about what that future is," Neuharth said.

Now one of the most imitated publications in the country, *USA Today* grew to a circulation of 1.3 million in 16 months, making it the third largest daily behind the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Daily News*, he said.

Critics denounce *USA Today's* format, but readers embrace it and that's what counts, Neuharth said.

"The important question all of us in the newspaper business and in this profession should ask ourselves is whether as editors and publishers or reporters we plan to edit our newspapers for a few professional critics, for ourselves or for the readers."

'Japanese Phenomenon' continues

A panel discussion on "Japanese High-Tech and Harmonious Labor" will follow two films on the subject tonight at 6:45 p.m. at the Eugene Public Library.

More than 100 people from the University and Eugene communities attended the last event in the series entitled "Japanese Phenomenon," says Alan Wolfe, professor in the east Asian language department is spon-

soring the series.

Tonight's panel will include Melissa Barker, sociology, Gerald Friar, international studies, Ken Ramsing, management and Kurt Willcox, Oregon Public Employees Union, who will present an American labor point of view, Wolfe says.

Two half-hour films, "Technology and Tradition," and "Beyond Confrontation," will be shown before the

discussion.

The Japanese Phenomenon series is a study of Japan's image as a business superpower and American reaction to that image, Wolfe says.

The last event in the series will be a discussion on "Partners or Victims? — Women of the Japan Phenomenon" on Feb. 20. Films will include "The Elusive Geisha" and "Farm Song."

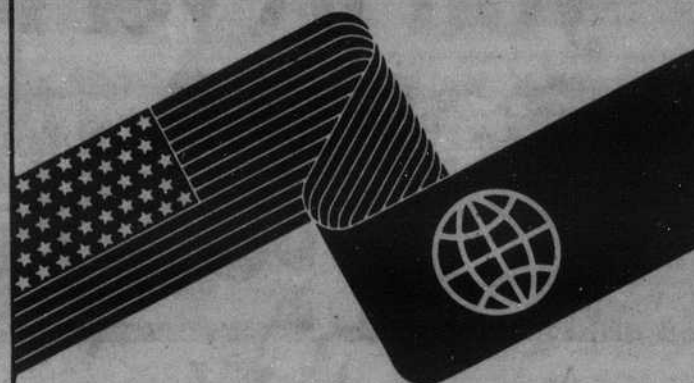
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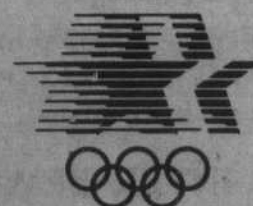
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