

## IN LOCAL NEWS ...

■ The Willamette Week exposed Street Roots for attempting to rob homeless people of 25 cents a paper, while the other 75 cents was being used to go toward the undeserving poor. The newspaper published two articles this past year that uncovers SR working with people without homes who are dealing with addictions and people dealing with mental health issues. The paper's in-depth reporting on the subject matter also determined that SR works with people with disabilities, determining that SR could no longer be trusted to work with people, unless they were in fact, down and out.

■ The Portland Mercury along with lefty activists accused SR and the Business Alliance of moonlighting after dark and plotting to destroy all that was good downtown. The Mercury also editorialized that SR was probably to blame for most of the laws created by City Hall targeting homeless people. "They're advocacy efforts this past year have just sucked," said the Mercury's British News Editor. "I have two sources that tell me they're sleeping with the enemy."

■ The Oregonian's publisher told readers that the newspaper's lack of coverage on why Portland's homeless population was growing due to the lack of housing was balanced this past year with in-depth reporting on how 21,000 pairs of socks, 1,400 toothbrushes, and 1,000 new coats were going to help the homeless in the region.

■ The Portland Tribune profiled chronic homelessness and panhandling in an in-depth article that found many individuals living outdoors actually want to be homeless, voluntarily giving up everything they own and their kids to sleep on the streets. One business owner told the Tribune that the homeless people panhandling in front of his store told him that, "Living with rats in the rain under threat of violence and disease was fun," and then asked him for a dollar to buy drugs.

■ The Portland Business Journal ran five news stories this past year on homelessness — all after the Business Alliance called and asked them to cover the subject matter. Portlanders were able to read the first half of all five articles, but due to an online subscription model and an overpriced product, readers determined the last part of the articles didn't really matter much.

■ An independent consulting firm looked at homeless coverage by TV news stations in Portland over a one-year period. The firm found that the news stations combined ran a total of 37 news stories on homelessness from January to December of 2009. The firm also found that no one inside the city proper actually paid attention, and even fewer polled said they cared.

# News keeps getting bigger, better

## Media executives whistle optimistic tune past graveyard

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In cafés, pubs and back patios across Portland, writers and editors are struggling to decide their course in the changing economy of journalism.

Various social groups have convened to explore news incubators and nonprofit possibilities for Web sites that would incorporate citizen journalists as well as press-pass-carrying reporters and editors, many hoping to find a steady paycheck at the bottom of the glass.

Whatever model this "new journalism" will take, it sure as hell won't be a newspaper, members have twittered among their goupes.

Only last year, newspapers were reporting their omnipresence despite talk in the board rooms that online news services and independent media could soon creep into their market. As a result, 2009 was a busy year for newspapers as they consolidated news and advertising efforts across the country to better leverage their core strengths.

News Corp. (Fox Network) announced in July it was buying the McClatchy Corp. (The Olympian, Tacoma News Tribune), then unloading McClatchy's Knight-Ridder acquisitions from a few years ago to the Tribune Co. In August, News Corp. announced it was merging with the Tribune Co. and absorbing its assets into Fox News, essentially buying out the struggling Chicago-based corporation. That news was shortly followed by News Corp.'s announcement that it will be selling off a portion of Tribune's Thompson-Reuters acquisitions of the past decade to Gannett Corp., (Salem Statesman-Journal) which was recently acquired by News Corp. and subsequently reorganized as a limited liability corporation under Direct TV, the nation's largest satellite TV system. Direct TV is owned by Rupert Murdoch, owner of News Corp.

"Now we are aligned to weather the changing marketplace," said Murdoch, Skyping from his chalet in Switzerland. "We have never, and will never, waiver from our

commitment to put in print for the American people what's important, when it's important and how to vote on it."

No official reduction figures have been released, but Twitterer @datelinedeath reported soon after the changes that more than 32,000 journalists already have been "retired" from McClatchy Corp., via Tribune Co., via News Corp. via Gannett via Direct TV as of press time. (You can read the transcript of newsroom discussions during the layoffs through the live blog mymediamattersmost.com.)

Another 12,000 employees are shivering at their ergonomic keyboards.

"This is an exciting time to be in newspapers," says Rudy Sukitup, vice president of "American Idol" promotions for Direct TV, as reported on the blog www.papercuts.wordpress.com. Among the changes made by News Corp. is that now all news editors will report to their regional executive directors of promotional advertising. "It just seemed to make sense to put into policy what we've been doing all along."

Apparently, those synergies have been spent. Monday, News Corp. reported it was selling its McClatchy holdings to Gannett, but later rescinded the offer after learning it already owned Gannett. On Tuesday, News Corp. announced it would be unloading Gannett to Tribune Co., which is being dissolved into a wholly owned subsidiary of Direct TV, owned by News Corp.

"We're responding immediately to the changing market," said a nondescript white guy in a gray suit speaking in front of a microphone reporters were gathered around.

Meanwhile, The Oregonian owner Advance Corp. has become Facebook friends with Lee Enterprises, owners of Pulitzer Inc.

The Oregonian also announced it is sending pink slips to all J School seniors in an effort to thwart any misunderstandings about their prospects.

Learn more about street papers like Street Roots through the North American Street Newspaper Association, [www.nasna.org](http://www.nasna.org)



This woman works —  
— So does Street Roots