

GIVE IT TIME

A path to conflicting perceptions

TIME IS THE CRITICAL RESOURCE FOR an in-depth exploration of race in your community, according to editors and reporters who have worked on race projects during the last decade.

Time spent reporting builds trust. Time spent telling the story increases impact.

“Everything you do in this business is sort of rushed all the time,” said Peter Callas of *The Times* in Trenton, New Jersey. “But if you spend more time just talking and watching, you end up getting a better feel for what the story is.”

The series Callas edited, “The Comfort Zone,” demonstrates the benefits of generous reporting time. It has a compelling thesis: The demise of official segregation has given way to voluntary self-segregation due to cultural barriers that are more difficult to address but nearly as pernicious as the previous legal barriers. This phenomenon revealed itself so gradually, it could not have been written on deadline.

The “Comfort Zone” began as a short-term project, a look at the 30th anniversary of the 1968 New Jersey race riots. It finally ran in 1999, after reporters had spent nearly a year working on it — first discovering the story and

then marshalling the facts that confirmed it.

A telling example is the first story’s lead anecdote about cultural segregation. The scene is a black-owned barbershop where customers bantered, gossiped and listened to R&B:

But when a new customer walked in ... the shop quickly fell silent. The customer was white. And whenever a white person enters an all-black establishment, Earl Jennings notices a strange behavior among black people.

“They go into a very prim, proper, ‘let’s not say anything’ (mode) versus continuing on with the conversation,” he laughed. The talking stops and the mood changes, he said, because the comfort zone has been altered by the arrival of a person who isn’t from the same culture.

Reporter Genikwa Williams had gone to the barbershop originally just to do some interviews. It was because she had the luxury of spending time there over the course of several visits that she was able to detect the subtle change in atmosphere and elicit the observations of customers, bringing the story home to readers.

Many of the issues reporters will tackle in covering race — like self-segregation — are not behaviors people easily acknowledge or

TRENTON METRO
The Times
SATURDAY
MARCH 13, 1999
EIGHTY-FOUR CENTS

Votes stacked against abolishing chief positions

By TOM HEISTER

Chief and Nelson's decision drew a 5-4 vote to support it in a referendum that drew a 5-4 vote in favor of the chief positions. The Trenton Council of Chief Executives, a group of 16 chief executives, has 10 members who support the chief positions and 6 who do not.

Still no level playing field for minorities

By CHRIS KYLE

Louis Pines, a white headhunter for the Trenton-based company, said he had never interviewed a minority candidate for a job.

Ex-enemies brought into NATO fold

By JANE PERLEZ

ISRAELI and U.S. officials say they are working to bring the former enemies of the United States into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Bishop Doss resigns

Will receive \$1.2M

By KEN WINTHROP

Bishop Robert Doss of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Trenton has announced his resignation.

School chief backs licensing

Hespe: Phase in preschool teachers

By ANDREA ALEXANDER

Superintendent Robert Hespe supports a plan to license preschool teachers.

Rutgers moves on

Planning branches

Rutgers University has moved on from its planning phase.

PRINCETON METRO
The Times
SUNDAY
MARCH 7, 1999
EIGHTY-FOUR CENTS

Equal but separate: A nation divided

Evolution of an era of racial detachment

Editor's Note: The Times staff spent the past year delving into the subtle nuances of self-segregation in a series of articles that ran from January through February. We hope you enjoyed them. We are proud to have published them. We hope you will continue to read them. We hope you will continue to read them.

Kosovo accord backed

Pressure on Serbs to sign peace plan

By LAURA MYERS

WASHINGTON — All members of the United Nations have agreed to back a peace plan for the Balkans. It is a major step toward ending the violence in Kosovo.

Races living together but not as one

As the United States' population is becoming more diverse, Americans hold sharply different perceptions of the state of race relations.

Are race relations in your community excellent or good, or poor?

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|
| Excellent or good | 28.7% | Poor | 12.6% |
| Good | 38.0% | Excellent or good | 22.4% |
| Poor | 34.6% | Good | 34.6% |

INSIDE

| | | | |
|----------------|------|------|------|
| FEELING UNWELL | 43.3 | 44.3 | 12.2 |
| WELL | 24.5 | 35.7 | 12.3 |
| NEUTRAL | 38.2 | 43.8 | 12.3 |

The Times in Trenton, NJ, found the athletic field was a place where races often come together and yet segregation persists.

The Times spent months capturing the subtle nuances of self-segregation, such as the change in atmosphere in an African-American hair salon when a white customer walked in.

discuss openly. Reporters will only get honest answers if they spend enough time with sources to break down instinctive defenses.

At the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, reporter David Hanners said that getting to know a community was one of the rewards of writing about the Hmong experience for a series about new immigrants in the Twin Cities. "We don't often get a chance to let people get to know us and the more human you are to each other, the better the story is," Hanners said in an interview.

Perhaps no reporter has ever faced a bigger challenge in gaining trust on the race issue than Michael Winerip, *The New York Times* reporter who wrote about undercover narcotics officers in the New York City Police Department for the paper's series, "How Race is Lived in America."

This assignment began while the police were under heavy criticism for such charged incidents as the shooting of West African

immigrant Amadou Diallo. Winerip actually had to go to Mayor Rudolph Giuliani for access to police officers he could observe and interview. Even with the mayor's and police commissioner's blessings, officers were skeptical.

"For the first few weeks, every time I tried to take a note, they'd ask, 'What are you writing? Did I say something racist?'" Winerip said in an interview.

He spent weeks just trying to understand the police and what they do before he even broached the subject of race. Winerip said it was his willingness to try to see their point of view that eventually won their trust, but it was a long process.

Winerip spent about a year reporting the story — working, he estimates, 70 to 80 full shifts with a narcotics unit. Even for *The New York Times*, it was a major investment of resources. Especially when combined with 18 months of reporting by more than 30 other reporters and editors.

“Traditionally, papers put their resources into harder stories, like investigating a public official,” Winerip said. “But [executive editor] Joe Lelyveld could see how a project like this would be important. To put this many reporters and this much time into it, it was a big thing. But don’t you think it produces amazing stuff?”

Indeed, the series, accessible online at www.NYTimes.com/race, has been roundly praised for its unusually candid insights on the black/white experience in America.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

In-depth reporting time brings new challenges for reporters. For one thing, organization becomes essential. Numbered notebooks, small sticky-note guides on the outside pages and indexes are all tricks that reporters who have worked on these projects said they learned to use, sometimes the hard way, to keep track of notes as they went along.

Winerip, who has built his career on project reporting and coordinated *The Times* series, said editors held numerous meetings with reporters to keep them focused as the project progressed. However, he said, the most important element for staying organized is scrupulous self-editing.

“You want to put in all the characters, all the scenes, all the things you’ve seen and you can’t,” said Winerip. “It takes a tremendous amount of discipline or an editor screaming at you, but you have to be able to throw stuff away.”

Winerip raised another point — one that several reporters and editors made — about the complicated nature of building trust to get the best material for a project on race: It is difficult to build a relationship with someone and then be totally honest in telling their story — not blinking from the difficult or unpleasant parts. Sources

often end up feeling hurt or used.



Part of “How Race is Lived in America” studied how black and white journalists get along at the Akron Beacon Journal.



NAUM KAZHDAN, THE NEW YORK TIMES

Times reporter Michael Winerip wrote a painstaking account of life inside a multiracial New York Police Department drug unit.

This sensitivity is particularly true for explorations of race because the sources are likely to be ordinary citizens who have never been in the media spotlight before, not officials or public figures who have a more sophisticated understanding of a reporter’s job.

Winerip said he threw a party for the narcotics unit he profiled when his story ran and half the officers refused to come, feeling he had portrayed them in an unflattering light. He said his colleague, Steve Holmes, had a similar experience with the men of Bravo Company at Fort Knox after he spent months with them to write about race in the military. Though Holmes developed a genuine affection for the men, Winerip said none of them will speak to Holmes now that they have read his story.

This problem may not necessarily have a solution but it is a phenomenon reporters and editors should anticipate so they can lay the groundwork with story subjects.

MAKING AN IMPACT

In addition to time spent reporting, the most compelling projects analyzed for this book — those stories that really showed tangible results — spent time telling the story. For broadcast news operations, this meant airtime — devoting lengthy segments, even whole shows, to the subject. For newspapers, it meant letting the reporting unfold over the course of weeks, months, even an entire year.

The *Akron Beacon Journal* won the 1994 Pulitzer Gold Medal for its series, “A Question of Color,” which ran throughout 1993.

Two dozen staff members looked at how race played out in all the major aspects of life — work, home, church, school and the justice system. As the series unfolded, the community began to respond, prompting the paper to take the lead in broadening the scope to include town meetings and connecting civic groups to work on improving race relations.

At the series’ end, the paper published the names of more than 20,000 readers who made a formal pledge to improve race relations in Akron. The series also led to the creation of the non-profit Coming Together Project, which coordinates racial unity programs.

“WE GOT E-MAIL SAYING
‘THANK YOU FOR DOING
THIS’ AND ‘THIS IS THE BEST
APPLICATION OF PRIME-TIME
TV JOURNALISM I’VE SEEN.’ ”

— DAN ROSENHEIM, KRON-TV

A project does not achieve these sorts of distinctions, nor does it get readers actually involved, unless it stays before readers over a sustained period.

“The effect comes when it’s laid on the table time and again,” said Bob Paynter, lead

reporter for “A Question of Color,” adding that the project was one of the most rewarding things he’s done in journalism. “Many times you think, ‘Gee whiz, if we only had a little more time, we could have hit a homer,’ ” said Paynter, now a reporter for *The Plain Dealer* in Cleveland. “But we got everything we needed. It was beautiful, the way it worked out. And that’s rare.”

One of the most memorable broadcast race series, “About Race” at KRON-TV, the former NBC affiliate in San Francisco, took a major chunk of the station’s highest-rated news show every night for a week during sweeps month in 1998. Then-news director Dan Rosenheim, now at rival KPIX-TV, recalled that his colleagues thought he was crazy to devote 12-, 14- and 16-minute segments to such a weighty topic.

Rosenheim, though, saw his faith rewarded when ratings for the news shows that featured the project surpassed ratings of the same show the previous year. More importantly, Rosenheim said he received an outpouring of positive feedback from viewers who appreciated the depth given the subject.

“We were pleased with the quantitative response but overjoyed with the qualitative response,” Rosenheim said. “We got e-mail saying ‘Thank you for doing this,’ and ‘This is the best application of prime-time TV journalism I’ve seen.’ ”

The length of the segments didn’t necessarily attract viewers but it did not drive them away, as conventional wisdom would have it, Rosenheim said. And he believes the length did contribute to viewers’ enthusiasm. “They told us we made a positive contribution to the conversation about race in the Bay Area,” Rosenheim said.

THE PROJECTS

THE NEW YORK TIMES: Giving Reporters Time

Every newspaper in the country envies *The New York Times*' resources. But even *The Times* had to take a big swallow to launch "How Race is Lived in America."

"I don't think we ever put so many resources into a series, not even the Pentagon Papers," said reporter Michael Winerip. "There was a lot of griping by the desks. You take reporters out of what they could be doing for the daily paper and others have to work harder to fill the space. As many resources as *The Times* has, we never have enough."

Smaller papers can look at that one of two ways: If *The Times* has to stretch itself for a project on race, how can *you* afford to do one? Fair enough, if you are looking for a way to avoid taking on the issue.

On the other hand, if the nation's newspaper of record decides this is an issue that requires an exceptional investment, how can you justify avoiding it?

"How Race is Lived in America," which ran in 2000, is the product of 18 months of work by more than 30 editors and reporters. As you listen to staff members and read what they wrote in interviews for NYTimes.com, it's clear that time was their most important investment.

"I think the difference made by spending months covering a story, rather than just a few days, is apparent in every article in the series," said then-executive editor Joseph Lelyveld.

A striking example of that investment of time is Charlie LeDuff's story about race in the workplace. LeDuff applied for a job at a Smithfield meatpacking plant, was hired and worked there for a month, giving him a perspective seldom experienced by reporters who remain outside observers.

In his journal, LeDuff reported the frustration of being an assembly-line meat cutter, working long hours with only a half-hour break.

"When you work like that, the one thing you have to look forward to is break time. The thought of break time gets you through the day," he wrote to explain joining a low-key protest about shortened break times. "So when the boss starts nibbling away at your rest period, you get angry. Even a reporter who earns a good salary from a big company gets angry."

LeDuff achieved an unusual level of trust with the men he wrote about and



THE NEW YORK TIMES

Times executive editor Joseph Lelyveld: "I think the difference made by spending months covering a story, rather than just a few days, is apparent in every article in the series."

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Mirta Ojita spent weeks just choosing which subjects to profile for her story on interracial friendships in Miami's Cuban community.

Reporter Kevin Sacks' account of the rewards and difficulties of integrating an Atlanta church led The Times series "How Race is Lived in America."

brought a rare degree of empathy to his story about them. The time he spent is apparent in his poignant lead set in the workers' locker room after a black meat cutter was dressed down by a white supervisor:

At shift change, the black man walked away, hosed himself down and turned in his knives. Then he let go. He threatened to murder the boss.

He promised to quit. He said he was losing his mind, which made for good comedy since he was standing near a conveyor chain of severed hogs' heads, their mouths yoked open.

"Who that cracker think he is?" the black man wanted to know. There were enough hogs, he said, "not to worry about no fleck of meat being left on the bone. Keep treating me like a Mexican and I'll beat him."

The boss walked by just then and the black man lowered his head.

For his story on race and religion, reporter Kevin Sacks not only attended an integrated Atlanta church regularly over several months but also socialized with parishioners at their homes, where they opened up in ways that would be unlikely in church. He wrote:

As much as anyone, the Pughs have been transformed by the church's integration. Having lived most of their lives with little exposure to blacks, and little interest in gaining any, they now count blacks from the church among their closest friends.

"My feeling before I got to know them was that there really wasn't that many good blacks out there," Mr. Pugh explains. "After being around them and working with them, shoot, I don't even think about them as colored anymore."

Of course, Mr. Pugh's "colored" friends would prefer he use a synonym.

But in his mind, his choice of words marks some progress. “Hey, I’ve come a long way,” he says. “I don’t say nigger anymore.”

“That’s right,” his wife chimes in, “they should see where you’ve come from.”

Although all *The Times*’ articles show a great deal of work, even more time and effort remain invisible, invested by reporters whose leads came to dead ends.

REWARDING PATIENCE

Reporter Steve Holmes, who wrote about race in the military, had to throw away weeks of work gathered from one Fort Knox tank company when it became apparent the men were never going to drop their guard enough to speak honestly about the issue. He started over with another company and spent many more months reporting that experience.

Similarly, reporter Janny Scott spent months pursuing access to comedian Chris Rock and his writers for her segment about race in the entertainment industry only to be turned down in the end.

Persistence rewarded reporter Amy Harmon, now a writer for *The Times*’ business section, who spent two months being turned down by dozens of black executives before finding someone who was willing to be profiled for her story on race in upper management.

Winerip said the reporters often felt discouraged and as if they were wasting time, but he says every minute increased their understanding of the story. “You have to have the confidence that if you keep going back and keep going back, it will happen,” explained Winerip, who himself spent months working on the project.

Winerip credits Lelyveld with recognizing the importance of the project even though it differed from the types of projects *The Times* normally undertakes. Winerip has worked on more traditional investigative projects and he understands why the paper normally focuses its resources on that kind of series.

“When I investigated (former Senator Al) D’Amato, the reaction was incredible. The U.S. Attorney investigated. People got indicted. It makes you feel great. It makes you feel important,” Winerip said.

But he knew he would have to content himself with a different kind of satisfaction from “How Race is Lived” because the series would not elicit that kind of reaction. “We were not going to please anybody totally,” he explained.

Winerip believes the series will continue to have an impact over time by raising the level of discussion about race relations in American society.

“It will give people who write about this in the future, who make movies, who make political decisions, a level of insight and a way of seeing that adds to our body of knowledge as a people,” asserted Winerip. “It shows up in the culture in a very quiet way, but it really does change us.”

The Press-Enterprise, Riverside, CA: Giving the Story Time

On Thanksgiving Day, 1995, a troubled black man armed with a gun walked into a halfway house in a small California town. He was planning to kill former Los Angeles policeman Stacy Koons, who was serving out his sentence there for the beating of Rodney King. Koons wasn't in that day and so the gunman, Randall Tolbert, killed a 67-year-old man instead and was subsequently shot by police.

The killing began as a major story for *The Press-Enterprise* of Riverside County, California, and evolved into an extensive series. The killing prompted "Through the Prism," a yearlong project on race relations that involved 35 reporters, produced more than 150 articles and elicited some 500 reader comments published in nearly 100 issues of the paper.

Halfway through, a group of Latino readers denounced the series as inflammatory amid new police tensions. Other community activists, however, credited it with bolstering efforts to promote racial understanding.

Five years later, top editors at the paper question whether they gave it too much time, whether everything they published belonged in the paper. But no one denies that the series — with its consistent appearance in the paper several times a week over the course of an entire year — compelled the community to confront the issue of race.



JAY RACZ, THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Study circles grew out of The Press-Enterprise's yearlong exploration of race relations and had a lasting impact.

"I don't know that you can ever say you're done with the issue of race relations," offered Marcia McQuern, *The Press-Enterprise's* president and publisher, in an interview. "We didn't solve the problem with our little series. But it had quite an impact."

Tolbert's murder of the wrong man is one of those instances that revealed a pronounced chasm between black and white residents.

Many white residents of Riverside County considered the shooting basically open and shut. An autopsy showed alcohol and the hallucinogenic drug, PCP, in Tolbert's system. Tolbert had taken three hostages in the halfway



THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Marcia McQuern, publisher of *The Press-Enterprise*: “It can’t be just a one-time thing. You’ve got to keep covering in different ways what’s going on.”

house, and the survivors confirmed the police account that Tolbert, a convicted felon, had shot the 67-year-old victim and that officers, hearing the gunshot, stormed the house and killed Tolbert.

That account was not the way it played in parts of the black community. In many eyes, Tolbert was a caring member of the community who was set up, framed for the murder in the halfway house, and shot in cold blood by racist police officers.

The conflicting beliefs among members of *The Press-Enterprise*’s own racially diverse staff convinced editors that the shooting was more than a news story and that it was time for the paper to help the community figure itself out.

INVOLVING THE READERS

Then-managing editor Mel Opotowsky recalled recently that the decision to include heavy reader involvement in the series was made from the beginning.

“We wanted to examine how people arrive at their prejudices in this area,” he said, “so we invited people to tell us their personal experience about how they arrive at their conclusions about these events.”

Opotowsky found the responses intriguing and illuminating. So when the initial story in the series ran on the first Sunday in January 1996, the paper included a question for readers to ponder and answer: *Are students in Riverside County treated differently because of their race?*

The answers to that question began running the following Sunday with the next installment about race in education.

The letters were often long and sometimes painful accounts of personal experience or observation, like the one from a teacher who reviewed student writing about prejudice: *Latinos and African-Americans ... wrote things such as ‘they follow me around the store like I’m a criminal.’*

In an unusual change of policy, Opotowsky decided to grant anonymity to one letter writer in order to include his rather controversial view that, *“Outwardly, I will appear and act unbiased as best I can but inwardly ... my trust will always be overly cautious and critical ...”*

“I felt we needed to dig it out and talk openly,” explained Opotowsky, “so I decided to allow it.”

Answers to the question ran almost daily over the course of the next two weeks. On the same page with the reader responses, *The Press-Enterprise* posed a new question: *Does law enforcement in Riverside County treat people differently because of race?*

The answers to that query began running with the start of the next installment, about race and law enforcement.

The series continued this format, with reporters writing in-depth stories about racial issues in

various aspects of life in Riverside County — about interracial dating and families, affirmative action and criminal justice. The stories were accompanied by pages of letters, often several times a week, along with a question posed for the next installment.

One time the paper ran an article-length contribution by a group of high-school students who had conducted their own social-science experiment about being judged by appearance. The students — three white and one Hispanic — had dressed up either in shirts and ties or in baggy jeans and spiked hair and then gone into stores to see how salespeople reacted to them. Not surprisingly, they found they were treated better when they were dressed more conservatively.

Then in March, the series was overtaken by external events. Riverside police deputies were videotaped beating undocumented Mexican immigrants after a freeway chase. The case became a major scandal all over Southern California and the letters that poured into *The Press-Enterprise* took on a level of vitriol that some in the community found offensive.

A group of Hispanic activists and a local Spanish-language radio station began urging *The Press-Enterprise* to stop the “Prism” series. It didn’t, and even now McQuern wonders if perhaps she should have stopped printing the letters about the chase a little sooner. “It was healthy at first,” she said. “Our thinking was ‘let’s lance the boil.’ But at some point it became counterproductive. Maybe it was just one day too long.”

McQuern, though, said she has no regrets about the series overall. “It can’t be just a one-time thing,” she explained. “You’ve got to keep covering in different ways what’s going on.”

FINDING SOLUTIONS

Midway through the year, *The Press-Enterprise* announced in its pages that it was shifting focus and the series was now going to concentrate on solutions to racial tension. Reporters wrote about study circles, going as far away as Lima, Ohio, for stories about community efforts to achieve racial understanding.

The Riverside Human Relations Commission, citing those stories, started its own study circles program. Another discussion group formed, calling itself the Coalition for Finding Common Ground. Founder Grace Slocum says there is still racism in Riverside but she credits *The Press-Enterprise* with helping to reduce it. “It’s not measurable. It’s just anecdotal, but it seems to me it had an impact on people who were just on the cusp of understanding, thinking, wondering, learning,” she said. “Without education, there’s no hope and *The Press-Enterprise* is the biggest educational tool we have in the wider community.”

So a series that began with an act of violence changed its focus to fit the needs of the community and seemed to have some long-term positive impact despite some misgivings along the way by the journalists involved.

The Spokesman-Review, Spokane, WA: Breaking the News

“We have identified The Spokesman-Review as public enemy number one ... A bomb is being constructed to destroy The Review tower.”

The note was unsigned but *Spokesman-Review* editors had a pretty good idea who had sent it. The paper received the bomb threat in July 1998 just after launching “In it Together,” a series of conversations about race relations in Northern Idaho and Eastern Washington meant to counteract the white-supremacist rhetoric of the local hate group, Aryan Nations.

The bomb threat specifically referred to community forums the paper had held for the series: “Keep on holding those n—loving assemblies,” it stated. “That way you’ll have a good brigade of mourners.”

The note was frightening, no question. The paper’s Spokane Valley bureau had been bombed two years earlier (with no injuries) and the note talked about a bomb larger than the one used to blow up the federal building in Oklahoma City.

At the same time *The Spokesman-Review* felt a sense of satisfaction at how rattled the white supremacists must have been to have sent the threat, a sense that the extraordinary effort it took to rush the series into the paper had accomplished its mission.

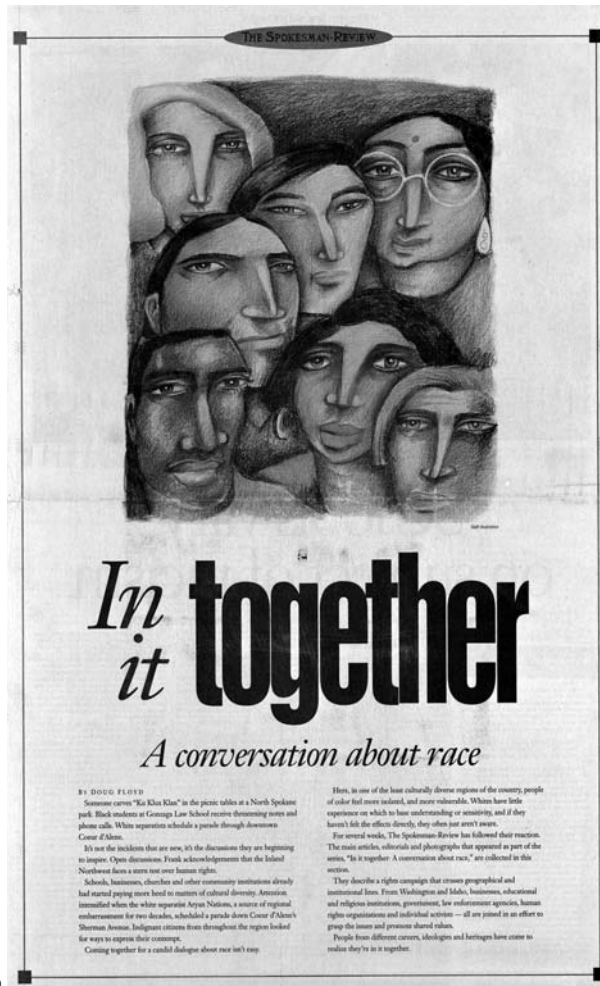
Race relations is rarely a deadline story and projects about the issue almost always benefit from a generous investment of time. But “In it Together” is an exception. Its impact came from the speed with which it landed — fast enough to steal the spotlight from a hate group bent on sowing discord.

The Spokesman-Review serves a region known as the Inland Northwest, an overwhelmingly white area. The issue of race relations seems to surface only when white-supremacist groups raise it and, then, it is presented totally on their terms. Intolerance sets the agenda and tolerance goes on the defensive.

That scenario began again in the spring of 1998 when Aryan Nations leader Richard Butler announced that his group would stage a 45-minute march through Coeur d’Alene, Idaho. But the paper decided this time would be different.



The Spokesman-Review distributed window placards with its “In it Together” special section. The paper suggested the placards be displayed as a visible commitment to racial justice. Editors say they still see the cards in home and office windows.



Most series benefit from extensive reporting time but *The Spokesman-Review's* "In it Together" responded to breaking news. The paper reprinted the series for wider distribution.

RESPONDING QUICKLY

The Spokesman-Review revved up a project in just three weeks. Because of the short lead time, editors kept the framework simple. They would seek out other parts of the community where people were engaged in earnest discussions about race and report on those discussions. The paper sponsored two forums on the issue, one for teen-agers that attracted 700 high school students, and a panel discussion broadcast on KHQ-TV, an NBC affiliate.

The strategy was that the paper would still cover the Aryan Nations march but it would do so in the context of the full range of conversations about race taking place in the Inland Northwest.

"It put them in a reactive mode, which was uncomfortable for them," said Scott Sines, managing editor. "Normally they do

something and we react. But here we are having a discussion on race in schools and in churches and they have to react."

The paper wrote about local churches coming together to draft a statement condemning racism and schools teaching lessons on the dangers of racism. Not all the stories were heartening accounts of tolerance and understanding, however. The series included the views of one local pastor defending white supremacist groups and another who rejected an interdenominational service to protest the Aryan Nations march.

"When they say, 'Let's get everyone all together, we're all the same,' it ain't so," the paper quoted the Rev. Ron Hunter. "That's not what Christianity is all about."

Sines thought it was important to include those points of view. "There is [that] side that exists in this community and it is valuable for people to understand that," he said. "If you want to help a community define itself, you need those comments. You have to know they're out there."

"In it Together" ran from late May through July 17, the day before the march. The series succeeded in shifting the emphasis from the minority involved in hate groups to the larger numbers of community members involved in working toward better race relations.

When the Aryan Nations did take to the streets of Coeur d'Alene, it was clear a lot of the steam

had gone out of the gathering. Numbers were low — about 70 marchers, including Ku Klux Klan members who had been bused in from out of state. They marched for less than half an hour and were vastly outnumbered by some 600 people who gathered at Gonzaga University for a counterdemonstration.

Interactive Editor Ken Sands gave *The Spokesman-Review* some credit for the balanced picture of the Inland Northwest that was presented nationally.

“I personally handed reprints of the series to people from New York and Los Angeles, wire services, the networks, when they came to cover the parade,” Sands recalled. “I believe it had a lot of impact, because the stories that came out were more about the community response to the hate groups. For the first time, the stories in the national media were about the majority of people fighting against this small band of kooks.”

The Spokesman-Review tower still stands intact, by the way. There never was an explosion at any of the paper’s facilities after the series. About the only bomb was the figurative one that recently went off under Aryan Nations leader Butler. In February 2001, a federal judge, ruling in a lawsuit against Butler, stripped him of his property — a 20-acre ranch in Coeur d’Alene — and forbade all future use of the name *Aryan Nations*.

Chapter Tips: *Marshaling Time and Resources*

If you think your news organization is ready for an in-depth series on race in your community, remember these lessons learned the hard way by editors and reporters on previous efforts:

- Allow news developments to change your focus.
- Build in adequate time and resources, including reporters who can stay focused on a long, complex effort.
- Prepare your reporters for the challenges of a complex reporting project, including organizational tricks and working with accessible notes.
- Select reporters and editors who can self-edit and find the best examples in a mass of good examples.
- Expect that many leads won’t pan out; dead ends are inevitable in such an area.
- Prepare your reporters for some potential hurt feelings when sources read their own words about race in the paper.
- Consider presenting the project over a long time span to allow reporting and community response to unfold.
- Be aware that racial division may come to the surface among your staff, just as in society.