

"I go where I want to go. I'n God created us all. But if so , but I don't have a problem," he d that blacks perceived the problem e eyes on you," said John Cornelius, a

, who has lived in Benton Harbor 1930s, said race relations between d blacks are made worse because Benblacks resent treatment they get from

it's worse than it was. You used to be you. There was white separation back it people respected people. The law is If I can respect you, you can respect me. en everybody worked and everybody got

was raised to mind my own business, go

# Delving

think it's tin

"Most of the peop

formed four rap. There's just fun ra

ne returned to about. We got no what color you

ewis, Washing-

ame back from on of joining a VFW rans affairs. "I was

proached the Veterans t a claim he was applying made to feel unwelcome. some help through them, y were saying, 'We don't people around here,' and that

lack and being a Vietnam

II vets approached him and asked lp form the new post in Benton Har-

was saying, 'Why me?'
y told me stories that kind of upset me,
hey came back from World War II, they

anted to join the post, but they were discour-ged from joining. I looked at that and noticed to absence of black people within that post. "These older guys really wanted a VFW post

of their own," Dukes continued. "These guys are very fine people — World War II and Kore-an vets. There was even some questions as to

why we wanted our own VFW post,"

Dukes said the "silent treatment" the black veterans got was not uncommon in other areas

around the Twin Cities in past decades.
"When I grew up in Benton Harbor, they
never had signs up that said 'No blacks,' but

what you had was the unwritten contract that

There's some artis

### R-E-S-P-E-C-

roll or rap, arts organiz in the Twin Cities agre that the arts can help g

"Everybody recogni but it's going to take a huge, huge, collaborat

"What everyone has covered over the past s al decades of trying to ground, is that it is a v percent of the things.

Blacks just knew not to go there.

"At least in the South they were more honest." Dukes Writtern by go at the when people or he she had to figure out that the south that the south the so

thing wrong. You want

Hawkins said that if a person is made aware of his racist attitudes, he will often come up with reasons to justify certain behavior. "Once of some reason why you feel that way, and then you would start rationalizing and say, 'Well, it's

But Hawkins also expressed a hint of hope. "Once conscious of their racism, some people

but that sometimes other St. Joseph ake him feel unwelcome. et along with everyone," said Anders black. "I work in St. Joseph and we

er people have given Anderson "a off," he said. "Usually they (whites) too much to me, but sometimes they

son added that he often makes an extra talk to white people. "I try to get togeth-people. I try to talk to people every day,"

"What's the difference? They're black white. It's all the same," Segrave said.

### The silent treatment

Darnell Hawkins of the African-American Studies Department at the University of Illino in Chicago said unconscious racism is often talked about in academic circles. Hawkins said recent study in Europe looked at whether it makes a difference of how aware a person is of his or her own racism, and the effects of uncon scious racism on other races.

'Can there be a kind of unconscious racism? I think there's a lot of unconscious racism," said

You can pick up on that feeling. I'm sure any-

one can," Dukes said.
Since forming the Benton Harbor VFW, the veterans of the area have been working togeth-

"A lot of that (unspoken racism) was proba-bly the old guard, and most of the old guard is dying," he said. "A lot of Vietnam vets are joining the posts now, and they have different ideas than some of the older guys. They really don't have time for this racism mess.

wrote of the cruelty of being disregarded as a human being, of being ignored and isolated from society. He wrote about people's racism

hould both be allowed into VFWs.

"We had white people in the same foxhole will black, we had Puerto Ricar know, yet and Puerto Ricar blook and Puerto Ricar blook and puerto Ricar blook and puerto Ricar blook and made to see his or her fau and made

The last of the color of the co

because of this and because of that. You might develop an elaborate ideology to support your

might just change.

there needs to be much

here. Community Rene Through the Arts is still its infancy," Weber said that there have been son incredibly successful co

# Delving into the Divide

A Study of Race Reporting in Forty-Five U.S.

Newsrooms

Written by Pat Ford

### Introduction

THE ISSUE OF RACE IN AMERICA DEFIES traditional media coverage by the nature of its scope, its complexity, its intangibility. It is an area that requires novel approaches, finding ways to reach ordinary people and to relate the stories of how race affects their lives. It's been an ongoing challenge for the evolving field of civic journalism.

For decades, stories on race relations were relegated to sidebars of more spectacular racial news: civil unrest, sensational crime stories, reports from blue-ribbon panels that were frequently quoted but rarely put into practice. By the early 1990s, news organizations began to change, tackling the subject of race relations head-on. Newsrooms using civic journalism techniques were in the vanguard of this movement, equipped with additional tools to investigate this difficult and sensitive area of American life.

The Pew Center for Civic Journalism studied 45 projects on race that came to the center's attention between 1993 and 2000. The list is by no means all-inclusive but it demonstrates many of the advances that have become hallmarks of contemporary race-relations reporting.

News organizations developed series about different communities struggling to coexist, individuals trying to understand one another, communities experiencing success and failure, events signaling friction or understanding among whites, blacks, Latinos and a host of immigrant communities.

These projects aired on radio and television and appeared in newspapers, large and small. Some organizations used polls to assess community attitudes; some used town hall meetings or Internet chat rooms. Several projects reported on more intimate conversations in study circles and focus groups. Many invited readers to contribute directly to their pages or their Web sites. Historical context was often provided and, in a few cases, painful self-examination was part of the process. Many of the initiatives made a real difference in their communities.

These projects represent progress.

Sensitive journalism that involved citizens helped many of the communities come closer together and allowed individuals to experience profound changes in outlook. Race in America is being covered with growing sophistication.

Earlier in the decade, it was revolutionary and controversial to bring people together and ask them to speak frankly about race. Later projects built on those early efforts, cutting deeper into the layers of mistrust, cynicism and paranoia that often still characterize discussions between the races.

## "THESE PROJECTS REPRESENT PROGRESS. RACE IN AMERICA IS BEING COVERED WITH GROWING SOPHISTICATION."

By March of 1999, *The Times* in Trenton, New Jersey, could begin its series on race with a statement ringing with candor:

"... While Americans affirm the importance of improving race relations, they often prove reluctant to do the heavy lifting required to make it happen ... The majority of Americans make an intellectual commitment to be 'colorblind' while at the same time making dozens of smaller decisions that reinforce the existence of limited meaningful contact with people of other races."

By the year 2000, when *The New York*Times brought the weight of its considerable resources to bear on "How Race is Lived in America," it won a Pulitzer Prize.

Newspaper editors and news directors across the country have told the Pew Center they would like to continue engaging citizens in honest explorations of race. Readers have spoken, too, telling their newspapers what has helped.

The goal of this book is to compile and analyze race coverage from the recent decade. With these examples, news organizations can build on the past in designing new, more meaningful explorations of race relations.

The book's nine chapters explore the major techniques most recently employed in reporting on race:

- Giving it time.
- Taking a poll.
- Identifying major issues.
- Walking the streets.
- Listening to conversations.
- Debunking myths.
- Investigating the newsroom.
- Inviting community action.
- Putting it on the Web.

These categories cover a wide variety of stories and interactions journalists have generated to fit the needs of their communities. Many projects used several of the techniques and some used only one. No project used them all. Each newsroom must figure out the techniques that are best for its community. In the best-case scenarios, newsrooms will develop new tools that will move reporting on race relations into unexplored territory. Please stay in touch with the Pew Center as your newsroom develops new initiatives to cover race so we can share ideas with other journalists seeking to deal with this critical national issue.

The Pew Center is dedicated to the belief that journalism can make a difference. Race is one area where America is still struggling to make a great deal of progress.

Jan Schaffer, Executive Director
 Pew Center for Civic Journalism

## Contents

INTRODUCTION		
CHAPTER 1	Give it Time: A path to conflicting perceptions	
CHAPTER 2	Take a Poll: A doorway to the issues20St. Paul Pioneer Press: Casting a Multilingual Net24Pittsburgh Post-Gazette: Finding the Facts26Akron Beacon Journal, The Charlotte Observer:Tracking Long-term Changes29Chapter Tips31	
CHAPTER 3	Identify the Issues:A measure of racial disparities32The Columbus Dispatch:Exposing Health-Care Barriers38The Charlotte Observer:Riling NASCAR Fans41The Sacramento Bee:Moving beyond Conflict43The Times-Picayune,New Orleans:Unearthing Environmental Injustice46Chapter Tips48	
CHAPTER 4	Walk the Streets:A hunt for hidden community layers49San Francisco Examiner:Touring your own City52Lexington Herald-Leader:Unmasking a Segregated City55Chapter Tips57	



CHAPTER 5	Listen to People Talk: A window on different views
	Chapter Tips
CHAPTER 6	<b>Debunk the Myths:</b> A challenge to preconceived notions
	KRON-TV, San Francisco: Underscoring Genetic Similarities
	WHRO-TV, WVBT-TV, Norfolk, VA: Tracing the Slave Route
	Chapter Tips
CHAPTER 7	<b>Tell your own Story:</b> A cornerstone to credibility
	The Jackson Sun: Confessing a Conspiracy of Silence
	KRON-TV, San Francisco: Airing Newsroom Tensions
	Chapter Tips
CHAPTER 8	Invite Action: A tool for community buy-in
	Akron Beacon Journal: Launching Long-term Initiatives
	Marshall News Messenger, TX: Instilling Quiet Progress
	Times Record News, Wichita Falls, TX: Generating Tepid Response 9
	Chapter Tips
CHAPTER 9	Put it on the Web: An avenue to access and interactivity
	The New York Times: Setting the Gold Standard
	Chapter Tips

## "WE HAVE TORN DOWN THE BARRIERS IN OUR LAWS. NOW WE MUST BREAK DOWN THE BARRIERS IN OUR LIVES,

OUR MINDS AND
OUR HEARTS."

— President Bill Clinton,

June 1997, University of California-San Diego