



*The CAMBODIA DAILY* Issue Number 745  
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# WEEKEND

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Blind students succeed in Cambodia's universities

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In Germany's capital city, a Jewish community revitalized

### IS THE GUARDIAN SINKING?

England's iconic newspaper has a loyal following, but can it stay afloat?

### THE SPACE BETWEEN

Anida Yoeu Ali trades in the white cube for a red stool

### THE INNARD CIRCLE

For this New York eating club, nothing is off the menu







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THE CAMBODIA DAILY WEEKEND

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# The Graduates

Blind Cambodians succeed in higher education



Siv Channa

Eng Phearith, left, is getting ready to take notes in braille during class at the Royal University of Phnom Penh.

BY MECH DARA AND MICHELLE VACHON • THE CAMBODIA DAILY

For students anywhere, being admitted to university on merit is no small accomplishment. For a blind student in Cambodia, qualifying for university is a minor miracle.

Blind since birth, Tuy Sokha still remembers how she had hesitated to even apply for university. Overcoming her handicap to enter primary school and then finish high school had already been a major victory.

"I did not have friends [at school] and I thought it would be difficult to study at university," Ms. Sokha said, recounting the fears she had harbored.

"There would be no book and document [in braille] and I was afraid that no one would want to befriend blind people. But my teacher encouraged me and explained that I should continue to study. I felt he was right."

Accepted in the Department of Khmer literature at the Royal University of Phnom Penh for the school year 2008, Ms. Sokha, along with Khoum Sothea and Eng Phearith are three blind students who have just finished their fourth and final year at RUPP.

They are among the 26 blind students who have completed or are currently enrolled in university programs in the country.

"It turned out so different from what I expected," Ms. Sokha said.

Of particular surprise were the other university students she encountered during her years of study. They were friendly and helpful to blind students, Ms. Sokha said.

[They] helped me a lot, sometimes reading [texts aloud] and helping me to get to places."

Ms. Sokha, Mr. Sothea and Mr. Phearith's journey through disability to university degrees first began in primary-and-secondary school classes set up by the local organization Krousar Thmey, or New Family, who have developed education programs and material for blind and deaf students for more than 20 years.

Krousar Thmey's students first start in specialized classes. But from grade three for blind students and grade five for deaf students, the students spend half their days in public schools, where they learn to interact with other students, teachers as part of the regular syllabus. They also begin to deal with the everyday sit-

uations that physically handicapped people the world over have to face.

For Mr. Sothea, the difficulty was dealing with some of the teachers in his high school who preferred to ignore him. One of those teachers had even told him that he did not have to pass his exams since he was just a temporary student.

But it was Mr. Sothea's classmates who came to his aid, and got him through high school, often reading to him what he could not see himself.

In Mr. Phearith's case, his first hurdle was just trying to get to school.

His father, he recounted, did not see the point in him studying because of his blindness. His mother insisted, however, and when Mr. Phearith won third prize in a general knowl-

edge contest in grade six, his father stopped opposing his attendance at school.

Although they had succeeded against the odds at primary and high school, the thought of going on to university filled the three with apprehension.

"I thought that university students would be cold fish," Mr. Phearith said. But he could not have been more wrong, he noted.

"They are very friendly and do not mind be-

"How would you feel if, each time you handed your CV, you would not get the job even though you were qualified for it?"



ing with me. It makes me feel comfortable... And teachers try to do what they can do to help us," Mr. Phearith said.

Although other university students helped by reading texts aloud at times, it has been essential for the three blind students to concentrate on what teachers would say and to memorize entire texts and lessons.

Krousar Thmey has been translating school manuals in Braille—the reading and writing method for blind people that uses raised dots for letters and numbers. However, at the present time, university material and literary works are not available in braille or on computer programs that speak texts out loud.

Touch Phara, deputy director of the Department of Khmer Literature, said that the determination of blind students has been key to their success.

"There is not much difference between teaching blind students and ordinary students. The only difference is that we have to repeat the main points for them, which is good for both blind and ordinary students," Mr. Phara said.

"Those three blind students are very good students...each semester, they got very good marks in their exams. They work very hard... have good study habits, discipline and behavior. They are punctual and are never absent from school. When we explain something, they really focus."

"Some ordinary students are not as good as them," Mr. Phara added.

Sean Viboth was one of the first blind students to be admitted to the Department of Khmer Literature in 2006. Like other students from poor families, he tried to get part-time work while in university as all the money his family gave him was spent on material for class.

"During all of my four years, I had only one meal a day, at night at home with my family." At breakfast and lunchtime, he would meditate and concentrate on his studies to master his hunger, he said.

Having graduated with good marks in 2010 and also having good computer skills, Mr. Viboth applied to organizations dealing with the physically disabled and for public service jobs.

But he was turned down repeatedly.

"How would you feel if, each time you handed your CV, you would not get the job even though you were qualified for it," Mr. Viboth said.

A good singer with the ability to play several musical instruments, Mr. Viboth performed at wedding functions to earn money. This led to him being invited to sing on Bayon TV during the Khmer New Year in April 2011.

After his performance, the host of the show invited Mr. Viboth to speak.

Mr. Viboth had a short speech prepared in advance. Given the microphone, he explained that he wanted to become a public servant, which required studying at the Royal School of Administration—Cambodia's public-service school.

He ended with a direct appeal to Prime Minister Hun Sen to intercede so he could be admitted to the civil servants' school.

Within weeks, Mr. Hun Sen announced in a speech at the school that he had contacted Deputy Prime Minister Sok An, president of the school's board of directors, and that Mr. Viboth had been admitted to the one-year advanced program. Since then, Mr. Viboth has been studying at the school where, he said, he has received the support of both fellow students and teach-

ers. He is now going through final exams.

The program, which covered about 30 topics such as government service management and laws and regulations to implement, has left him feeling that he needed to know much more. He is now hoping to work toward a Masters' degree in public administration.

Auray Aun, Krousar Thmey's managing director, said there is a need now to help blind graduates find work.

"We realized that we were somehow victims of our success: Having managed to bring young blind people to university level, we had to consider this influx of young, qualified human resources. We therefore have had to open a department to follow up on students and assure their integration into the labor market," Mr. Aun said.

"We have had a young team in place for a year and a half, assigned to follow up on university students, and help those who have not reached that level to get into specialized training programs or jobs," he said.

Currently, there are blind students at the University of Battambang; the Paul Dubrule School of tourism and hospitality in Siem Reap City; Pannasastra University and the Royal University of Fine Arts in addition to RUPP and the Royal School of Administration in Phnom Penh. Krousar Thmey is now in discussion with oth-

er institutions, such as the Royal University of Law and Economics, Mr. Aun said.

While blind students have gained a foothold at university, deaf students have yet to be admitted, said Mr. Aun, explaining that the institutions feel they have not reached the capacity to teach those students.

Therefore to help deaf students acquire marketable skills, Krousar Thmey has started a vocational training program in digital photo manipulation and desktop publishing.

A market study revealed that photographic studios were often asked to modify features on wedding photographs, such as changing the background to include Angkor Wat or other stylized elements, Mr. Aun said. The first deaf students who took the 6-month training program have already found work, he added.

Mr. Sothea, who with Ms. Sokha and Mr. Phearith recently completed final exams, said that attending university as a blind person was not so much the issue. Education alone is the real issue, he said.

"[Students] should value education because the most important thing for people is education: When we have education, we can achieve anything we want. So they should try their best."

Mr. Sothea now hopes to find work as a teacher for the blind.



Krousar Thmey

Blind students read books written in braille by deciphering dots that stand for letters.





# Outside the 'White Cube'

Anida Yoeu Ali combines performance and installation art in "The Space Between Inside/Outside"

BY COLIN MEYN • THE CAMBODIA DAILY

In his quintessential writing on the presentation of contemporary art, "Inside the white cube: the ideology of the gallery space," Irish artist Brian O'Doherty says, "A gallery is constructed along laws as rigorous as those for building a medieval church. The outside world must not come in, so windows are usually sealed off. Walls are painted white. The ceiling becomes the source of light. The wooden floor is polished so that you click along clinically, or carpeted so that you pad soundlessly, resting the feet while the eyes have at the wall."

Breaking out of the "white cube" has been a driving force behind Cambodia-American artist Anida Yoeu Ali's work since she graduated from the Art Institute of Chicago in 2010, and her exhibit "The Space Between Inside/Outside," which opens at Phnom Penh's Java Gallery on Monday, is very much an extension of that thinking. The various projects within the exhibition utilize the entirety of the gallery-cum-cafe, transforming it into an installation and performance space in which Ms. Yoeu Ali is her own

star and patrons the supporting cast.

The panoramic photos stretching across the white walls feature intricate dresses, which are also installed inside the gallery; a billowing black-and-white striped gown nearly fills an entire room and a flowing red dress wraps around much of the upstairs dining and exhibition area.

Behind the window next to Java's entrance, tables have been transformed into digital display boards showing images taken from a participatory project "Enter the Studio, Enter the Frame," in which members of the public were invited to create compositions using their bodies and seven red stools. Within these images are frames within the frame, created with black duct tape on two white walls, a reference to the arbitrary barriers that determine what constitutes art and what is chosen for the white cube.

These displays are surrounded by red stools, which, along with black lines, tie together the entire exhibit.

Ms. Yoeu Ali has appropriated these stools, which are ubiquitous at street side cafes and restaurants in Cambodia, and made them the central aesthetic of the exhibit. A 1.5-meter high wooden replica of those plastic stools is a central element of many of her photographs and the rep-

lica is on display too—placed on a square white mat in the center of the upstairs veranda.

The photographs, which were conceptualized by Ms. Yoeu Ali and taken by well-known Phnom Penh-based photographer Vinh Dao, cover almost all of the wall space at Java. These images contrast the stunning dresses, designed by Ms. Yoeu Ali and produced by students and teachers at the Friend's sewing workshop, with lush rice fields and sweeping cityscapes. There is a surreal quality to the images, borne out of Ms. Yoeu Ali's imagination and executed through careful material manipulation and seamless post-production work by Mr. Dao.

In one photograph, Ms. Yoeu Ali appears at both ends of a red dress, standing on a coconut cart at one side of a roadside cafe and reclining on the giant red stool at the other. The contrast between the elegant red dress and the decrepit yellow walls and soiled umbrellas in the background is jarring. Bold colors, red and orange in particular, often enter the artist's work.

"They can represent so many things," she said. "Life, fire, blood.... I'm trying to interject life and vitality into this decay and dilapidation."

"The Space Between Inside/Outside," runs through August 5.





"I Want Coconut/She Needs Ice Coffee (Street 49) -#2," by Anida Yoeu Ali



"Enter the Field#1," by Anida Yoeu Ali



# In Berlin, Rebirth Of Jewish Life

BY NORMAN SKLAREWITZ

Once the infamous Berlin Wall came down in 1989, the sweeping reconstruction that began in West Berlin at the war's end was repeated and even accelerated in what had been the Communist controlled East Berlin.

Spectacular shopping complexes, elegant new hotels and office towers dominate the now united city. But at the same time, the horrendous fate of Berlin's once thriving Jewish community of some 160,000, the largest in Europe, was observed with somber memorials now found throughout Berlin.

Included are the moving Holocaust Museum, the "Stumbling Stones," the Topography of Terror on the site of the Gestapo and S.S. headquarters, Platform 17 at the Grunewald Station from which men, women and children were loaded like cattle into rail cars to be transported to their death at Auschwitz and Lodz. Wall murals with the names and locations of all the infamous concentration camps are in building lobbies. All these and others remind visitors as well as residents of the unspeakable atrocities committed by the Nazis against what had been a vibrant Jewish community that, at the war's end, had essentially vanished.

In the view of many, if not most, Jews living elsewhere, Berlin could never—should never—again be a home for Jews.

Yet to the surprise, even dismay of many, Jewish life today has returned to Berlin. Upon learning that as many as 30,000 Jews have come to Germany and settled in Berlin, an elderly woman in the predominantly Jewish Fairfax district of Los Angeles asked almost in disbelief, "Have they forgotten?"

By way of response, Rabbi Yehuda Teichtal, chairman of the Chabad Jewish Educational Center, in Berlin by way of Brooklyn, says flatly, "That is an irrelevant question. The fact is that they are here and they should be welcomed with love and warmth and we should invest every resource to enhance their Jewish awareness."

He adds, "We'll never forget what the Nazis have done but it's not in our interest to seek revenge. We have to do something for the present and undo what the Nazis tried to bring about. We owe that to the six million holy souls, to answer darkness with light."

Still, Jewish life in Berlin today is diverse and reflects an admittedly complicated, often a confusing tapestry of social, national and economic fabrics.

Only a relatively small number of Jews resided in Berlin after the war while it was still divided between the East and the West.



Norman Sklarewitz

The distinctive Moorish-style dome with gilded buttresses of the New Synagogue Berlin as the Centrum Judaicum is one of the city's landmarks.

Once Germany was politically, socially and economically reunified in 1990 things began to change dramatically. First was a wave of thousands of Jews mainly from Russia but other countries of Eastern Europe who came to escape discrimination and who were welcomed by the German government. Adding to their numbers soon came entrepreneurs from abroad including the U.S. who found in Berlin's booming economy attractive business opportunities. Then most recently some 15,000, mostly young, secular Israelis have moved to Berlin to enjoy what one described as a "better life" where it could be enjoyed a cost of living far less than back in Tel Aviv or Jerusalem.

Put together, the social, religious, artistic and commercial interests of these various groups from various countries have created something few believed would ever exist again—a Renaissance of Jewish life in Berlin.

Physical evidence of this rebirth is seen throughout Berlin, but mainly in the eastern neighborhoods that historically were centers of Jewish life until the rise of Nazis in the mid-1930s.

In Berlin's western area, Rabbi Teichtal's Chabad Lubawitsch Center is something of a major attraction. Opened in 2007 at a cost of \$7.8 million, it was the first Jewish facility in Berlin built entirely with private funds. The three story structure of some 2,300 square meters includes a sanctuary accommodating 250, an elementary school, the King David Kosher Restaurant,

a mikvah (a bath used for ritual immersion), a yeshiva (a Jewish educational institution) headed by Rabbi Uri Gamson from Israel, an impressive library, a media center, social hall and a Judaica store. A soup kitchen provides free meals to elderly indigent Jews. Rabbi Teichtal last fall opened another Chabad Center in east Berlin using an available office building.

Badly damaged and desecrated synagogues like the Moorish-style domed Neue Synagogue and its Centrum Judaicum museum and venue have been restored as much as possible and now reopened for Shabat services. Its great sanctuary that once seated 3,200 worshipers, was destroyed but what had been one of the upper tiers where women were accommodated is now the main room for services conducted by Rabbi Gesa Ederberg, one of only two female rabbis in Berlin.

Before the advent of Nazism, Berlin boasted 34 synagogues. Most were closed by the Nazis and either destroyed or badly damaged in the war. But today nine including the impressive Rykestrasse Synagogue belong again to the Jewish community.

As with almost every Jewish institution in Berlin (and in other European cities, as a matter of fact), the Neue Synagogue is distinguished outside by no-nonsense barriers, usually concrete or massive steel stanchions. Uniformed German police are also always present, often supplemented by young armed Israel guards in civilian dress, authorized for such duty by agree-



ment with the German government. Actual entry to major centers like this one is via a security screening area, not that different from those in airports. Concedes one Jewish resident, “We do have anti-Semitic graffiti and there are neo-Nazis here, too.” But while the real threat from terrorists is quite low, it’s clear that the German government doesn’t want anything to happen again like the massacre of the Israelis during the Munich Olympic Games.

Upon visiting Berlin, many Jewish visitors who perhaps came reluctantly and were inclined to be critical of Germany, frequently express a change in attitude. One of these was Bernard Valier, a French-born Israeli whose father was deported from France and killed in Auschwitz. On a visit to Berlin a few years back he says, “I sensed a feeling of genuine remorse on the part of the German government. Unlike the situation in some other countries in Europe, I felt in marking the Holocaust with the many memorials throughout Berlin that the authorities actually meant it.”

Given the disparate origins of so many new Berliners, it’s inevitable that organizations representing their cultural and political interests are in place. Among these are the European Jewish Congress, the Central Committee of Jews in Germany and the American Jewish Committee.

Beyond the memorials and the synagogues, it’s not hard at all to spot examples of lively rebirth of Jewish social, gastronomic and artistic life in Germany’s capital.

Just opened in February was a red brick building that was formerly the Judische Mädchenschule, the Jewish Girls’ School. A simple plaque near the main entrance recounts the horrible fate of the teachers and the young women who once studied, laughed and played here. An adjoining open area was a collection point from which other Jews from the neighborhood were transported to camps to be murdered.

While the building’s name has been retained as a mark of respect, it now has been redeveloped by art dealer and entrepreneur Michael Fuchs at a cost of some \$6.5 million to be a center for art and gastronomy. On the main floor is the Pauly-Saal, a fine dining restaurant and bar with seating outside in a garden area.

Down the hall Oskar Melzer and Paul Mogg run a lively New York style delicatessen that features what chef Joey Passarella, until recently of the Upper East Side, claims is the only home-made pastrami to be found in Berlin.

On his menu, too, matzoh ball soup, chicken liver and New York cheesecake. Also on the premises is the Kosher Classroom, a surprisingly attractive restaurant and catering service. All the upper floors are galleries whose space is given over to exhibitions by local and international artists and photographers.

After 60 years, live Jewish theater returned to Berlin in 2001 with the opening of the Bimah Jewish Theater Berlin under Israel-born creative director Dan Lahav. Presented now in its 250-seat theater on the smart Admiralspalast are cabaret acts and original plays, usually satire and comedy, mostly written by Lahav.

In the Bimah’s company is a cast of eight. Among its recent productions were Shabat Shalom, A Friday Evening in a Jewish Family and Three Lusty Widows and a Dancing Rabbi.

Another quite lively example of the future face of today’s Jewish community in Berlin is the Jewish High School in Grosse Hamburger-

strasse. It reopened behind the usual security fences in 1993 as a co-ed private school offering classes from grade 5 to 12. Initially, it had just 27 students. Today the school has 430 students of whom 70 percent are Jewish.

Barbara Witting, principal of the Jewish High School, estimates that more than 80 percent of the school’s graduating seniors go on to university and, additionally, others take a year off before starting university to participate in humanitarian programs abroad.

To be found throughout the city today are specialty restaurants catering to Russian patrons while there are plenty of bars, cafes and clubs popular with the young Israelis. Many of them reside in the Neukoelln neighborhood, dubbed “Little Israel,” where you’ll find Keren’s Kitchen along with restaurants specializing in hummus dishes and Palestinian fare. The Facebook page “Israelis In Berlin” is said to have some 3,000 friends.

Jews are well represented in Berlin’s entertainment industries, too, by film makers, artists, designers, stand-up comics, young rock performers like Sharon Levy, finalist in the “Voice of Germany” competition, the local TV equivalent of “American Idol,” and a D.J. called Meshugena. To accommodate the increasing number of Jewish tourists coming from abroad is Milk&Honey Tours started nine years ago by German-born Noa Lerner. She has seen her

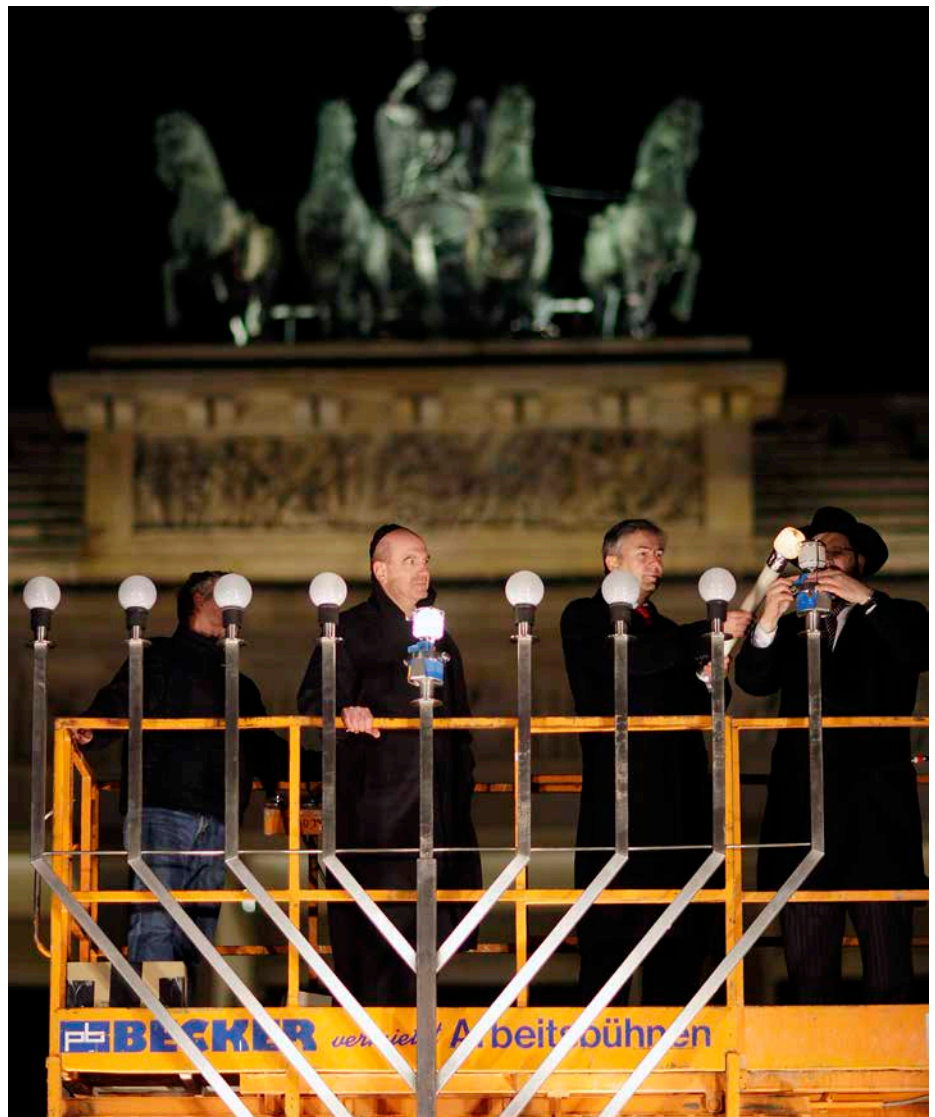
business expand some 20 times and today has 20 guides in Berlin alone.

After appropriate religious services, such traditional family events as weddings, Bar Mitzvahs and Bat Mitzvahs are celebrated in top Berlin hotels. The InterContinental Berlin is particularly popular because its main ballroom can accommodate up to 1,200 although 250 to 400 is a more typical guest number for parties in the Pavilion Room. The hotel hosts an average of two such Jewish events a month.

In Berlin’s booming business world, Jews are certainly prominent. Among the most high profile of these is Michael Zehden. Among other positions, he’s CEO of Albeck & Zehden, a hotel management and consultancy firm that has a portfolio of 12 hotels, four in Berlin. Zehden was a co-founder of Berlin Tourism Marketing, is a board member of the Berlin Airport and personally and through his firm supports a variety of charities.

Charlotte Knobloch, former head of the Central Council of Jews in Germany and a Holocaust survivor, said: “Germany is once again a homeland for Jews. Berlin Jewry can now regard the city in which they live a Haimat, their ‘home city.’”

*This article was provided to the Cambodia Daily courtesy of the author who is a former foreign correspondent for The Wall Street Journal and is now a freelance writer based in Los Angeles.*



Berlin’s Mayor Klaus Wowereit, second from left, and Rabbi Yehuda Teichtal, right, light a Menorah during a ceremony marking the Jewish celebration of Hanukkah in Berlin. Reuters



# Girl Power in China



China's first female astronaut Liu Yang waves during a departure ceremony at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center.

Reuters

## The role of women is on the rise in China, and not only in its space program

THE ECONOMIST

On June 16, Major Liu Yang blasted off in the Shenzhou-9 space craft. At the age of 33 she became the first Chinese woman to travel to outer space. (A young girl in Gansu province, and a rank of all-women soldiers, watched her go.) Even as Liu hurtled skyward, photographs of another young woman, Feng Jianmei, began circulating on China's microblogs. The graphic pictures, taken by her family, show Feng lying on a hospital bed next to the body of her seven-month-old fetus, as she was left after local family-planning officials ordered her doctors to forcibly induce a miscarriage. Though the case sparked widespread outrage, this week there are reports that Feng's husband has disappeared after the couple became the subject of locally orchestrated reprisals.

Liu stands as an example of one of the most significant trends in China today: the emergence of a new generation of women, educated, ambitious and successful, who are playing pivot-

al roles in the country's economic and social development. Feng's sad fate might remind us that even still they struggle against old-fashioned attitudes and the capriciousness of the state.

Women such as Zhang Xin, Yang Lan, Zhang Lan and Peggy Yu Yu rose from improbable, and sometimes quite humble, backgrounds to become influential and wealthy businesswomen. Their stories of self-made millions have in turn inspired other women to believe that hard work and perseverance—as much as a good marriage—can be a ticket to success. While men still dominate the ranks of the uber-rich, China is remarkable for the number of women who regularly appear on the annual list of China's 400 richest individuals.

In sport, Chinese women excelled in the rankings at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, considerably outpacing their male teammates in total medals. The ineptitude of the national men's football side is a much lamented topic of conversation among Chinese fans. The Chinese wom-

en's team by contrast has advanced to the quarter-final round of the World Cup four times since 1991. It even reached the finals once, in 1999, before losing a heartbreaker to the Americans on Brandi Chastain's iconic tournament-clinching penalty kick.

But even young women who are neither millionaires nor world-class athletes are taking advantage of new opportunities. This is particularly true of those fortunate enough to live and work in China's booming mega-cities.

Kate Ba is in her late 20s and works at a public relations firm in Beijing. While men might still wield a lot of the power, says Ba, more women are rising through the ranks and they are not afraid of pursuing their own career goals. "My generation are just now starting to become managers, and in the future I think we'll see more women as presidents and CEOs, far more than in my mother's generation."

With careers and jobs of their own, many women enjoy a financial independence unheard



of in prior generations. Their higher earning potential brings them a greater say in family decisions and in choosing their own goals.

Changing demographics are another source of new opportunity. According to Yang Yuli, who works as a producer for the BBC in Beijing, in the past, parents' extreme preference for having sons would mean fewer resources were available for the education of daughters. (Sons were preferred in part for their role in staying on to care for their ageing parents, while daughters were compelled to marry into their husbands' households.) Now, in an age of only children, if a family's one child is a girl, parents have little choice but to groom her for long-term success. As Yang has it, "it no longer matters if you are a boy or girl; you are the only person responsible for [your] family's future."

Zhao Ning, an educational executive, agrees. "Girls no longer have to compete with male siblings for their parents' attention when it comes time for critical decisions about investing in a child's future or education."

For many years now, female high-school students have done much better than their male classmates in the gaokao, China's highly intense and competitive college-entrance exam. In 2004, just about half of the zhuangyuan in each province were women. (It's a term which refers to the highest scorer on either the humanities or sciences test and dates back to the imperial exam system.) Since then, however, the number of female zhuangyuan has grown steadily, topping the men in every year since except 2009. In fact, from 2006 to 2008 women accounted for more than 60 percent of the top scores by province. More and more women matriculating at China's top universities each year, though women are still the minority at the post-graduate level.

Success begets new challenges. Most striking is the impossible mission of striking a balance between career and family. Even in more developed economies, whether women can "have it all" or not is a subject of perennial debate. As elsewhere, working mothers in China struggle to find time to care for their own children, husbands and sometimes elderly parents too.

Yang of the BBC, who recently had a child of her own, argues that as only children, daughters are now facing many of the same pressures that used to land squarely on sons, including the need to find a livelihood capable of providing for their parents' retirement.

Those women who do want to start a family can find it difficult to break out of the new-found career track. Many women complain that the more successful and financially independent a woman becomes, the harder it can be to settle down. This prompts the fear of becoming a shengnu or "left-behind woman."

According to Ba, who recently married her longtime boyfriend, there is a stark difference in attitudes toward marriage one finds in larger cities, like Beijing, and the cities and towns of China's interior, where older attitudes persist.

"The traditional idea is to find a guy who can take of you," says Ba. "But in a bigger city—like Beijing—you can find a partner and grow together so that you don't have to depend on him. Women here want somebody who can help them achieve their goals and support them, not just feed them."

For Josie Wang, in her mid-20s and also work-

ing in Beijing, there's more to finding the right partner than just property and practical affairs. Half of her friends see it the same way. "I still have friends who are looking for a guy to take care of them, but that's changing. Now it's like 50-50 with more and more of my friends saying they can look after themselves just fine," she says. "Especially those who have been educated abroad; they feel it's important for a man to respect a women's independence."

Ba adds that some men still have trouble accepting a woman who has established herself in a career or makes more money than her potential groom. They avoid women who might out-

shine them. (This has not stopped men complaining about the number of baijinnu, literally "gold-worshipping women.")

Other, older problems are even more serious. Many women working in China experience sexual harassment and discrimination based on gender or marital status. Retrograde attitudes clash with the desire of young women to be able to express themselves without being harassed.

Despite all the challenges, new and old, Ba remains optimistic. "More and more women have their own career and their own ideas and this is going to continue. Society and husbands will have to adapt. There is no going back."



Above, A gymnast from the Chinese national gymnastics team practices floor exercises at the General Administration of Sport of China in Beijing in April. Below, SOHO China Chief Executive Zhang Xin attends a session at the World Economic Forum last year.



# Is The Guardian Sinking?

Newspapers are in crisis—yet they have greater reach than ever before. And nowhere is this truer than at The Guardian, the paper that revealed the phone-hacking scandal.

By **TIM DE LISLE**  
THE ECONOMIST

It was a bright warm day in March, and one of the world's leading newspapers was doing something radical: meeting its readers. The Guardian was holding the first festival in its 191-year history, billed as The Guardian Open Weekend. It opened the doors of its offices, at the King's Place arts center behind King's Cross station in London, and offered passes for \$47 or \$62 a day or \$94 for the weekend (one child free with every adult). Around 5,000 readers poured in. Among them was a Baptist minister in his mid-80s who had received the paper, religiously, for 66 years.

The speakers included painters, politicians, physicists, rock stars, novelists, explorers, actors, footballers and philosophers. There were 188 events, and still the queues were long. You could take a boat trip on the canal, commission a T-shirt from a graffiti artist, eat mackerel and chips "curated" by a local chef, or browse second-hand books on a barge. You could observe the Guardian reader, and see how this semi-mythical figure now comes in two broad types—the over-60s, in linen jackets or sensible cardigans, looking like retired teachers or psychotherapists, and the under-35s, in denim or leather, harder to pin a profession on. You could see the Guardian's editor-in-chief, Alan Rusbridger, chatting to readers, tall and mop-haired with a satchel over his shoulder, simultaneously boyish and avuncular. You could listen to folk bands playing and poets reading from their work, and watch a blank white wall slowly turn into a giant mural, a Bayeux tapestry of vivid vignettes from the weekend captured by a team of illustrators. Among them was a cuddly, felt-tipped version of the artist Grayson Perry, in his transvestite mode, with a speech bubble. "Bite the hand that feeds," it said, "but not too hard."

The atmosphere was stimulating and fiercely polite. The Guardian is easy to mock for its sandal-wearing earnestness, its champagne socialism and congenital weakness for typos, but its readers en masse seemed like the kind any editor would be glad to have: curious, questioning, quick to laugh. Seeing the rapport between them and their paper, feeling its pull for the powerful and the talented, enjoying this brand-new festival that felt as if it had been going for years, you could easily have assumed that everything in the Guardian was rosy.

In many ways, it is. With its journalism, the Guardian has been having an astonishing run. For 20 years or more, ever since a bold reinvention led by Rusbridger's predecessor Peter Preston in 1988, it has been the most stylish paper in the hyper-competitive British quality pack, the wittiest and best-designed, the strongest for features, the one most likely to reflect modern life. But it ruled only at what journalists call the soft end. In the 1970s, the age of Woodward and Bernstein, the Guardian's best-remembered story was an April fool from 1977, which dreamt



The front page of The Guardian on Jan. 16, 2012

up the Pacific nation of San Serriffe—beautifully done but disclosing nothing more than its own sardonic wit. In the 1990s, The Guardian began to land some scoops, notably the scandals that brought down two Tory members of Parliament, Jonathan Aitken and Neil Hamilton. But it still wasn't known for big investigations, the kind of stories that demand courage, persistence and resources. This is where its culture has changed. It ran a sustained investigation into illicit payments by the arms giant BAE—first alleged in 2003, finally admitted in 2010 and now the subject of nine-figure compensation settlements. It did well with the Wikileaks diplomatic cables, and the English riots of 2011 and their causes.

Above all, it has led the way in the News International phone-hacking scandal, a farrago of power, corruption and lies, exposed by Nick Davies and other Guardian reporters. For two years, their investigation was lonely and scoffed at. A police chief urged Rusbridger to drop it; the mayor of London, Boris Johnson, who presides over the Metropolitan Police, called it "codswallop." Then, last July, came the Guardian's disclosure that the targets included the murdered teenager Milly Dowler. The story erupted across the media. It has now led to the closure of the News of the World, the humbling of Rupert Murdoch, the fall of his son James, the arrest of his favorite Rebekah Brooks, multiple resignations by senior policemen and media executives, at least 50 more arrests and six official investigations—three criminal ones, employing 150 police officers; one by a House of Commons select committee; one by the communications regulator Ofcom; and, most theatrically, the Leveson inquiry into the regulation of the media, which has spent months shining a fitful light on the mucky machinations of power. By the end of

May, when it emerged that the Conservative-led coalition had allowed a former Murdoch editor to work at Downing Street without the normal security vetting, the trail of dirt led all the way to British Prime Minister David Cameron's desk.

The hacking saga has shown journalism at its worst, invading the privacy of a murdered schoolgirl and her family, but also at its best, exposing a web of illegal activity that the police had missed, and speaking truth to power at a time when Rebekah Brooks, for one, was busy kissing it on both cheeks.

The Guardian's reporting has not been faultless—it had to retract the claim that News of the World reporters had deleted voicemails on Milly Dowler's phone, which caused an extra layer of public revulsion. But this will still go down as one of the great investigations. As Watergate is to The Washington Post, and thalidomide to the Sunday Times, so phone-hacking will surely be to The Guardian: a defining moment in its history. In March, Rusbridger went to Harvard to receive the Goldsmith Career Award from the Joan Shorenstein Center, one of the highest honors in American journalism. He was the first non-American to win it. "V happy to be in Harvard for a career award," he told his 70,000 Twitter followers. "Like reading nice obit without going to trouble of dying."

This triumph of old-school reporting has been accompanied by spectacular success in new media. The Guardian has never been a big-selling newspaper: Among the 11 national dailies in Britain, it lies 10th, with only the Independent behind it. But on the internet, the Guardian lies second among British newspaper sites (behind The Mail, which cheerfully chases hits by aiming lower than its print sister) and in the top five in the world, rubbing shoulders with The New York Times. Where many newspapers treated the web with suspicion, the Guardian dived in, starting early (1995), experimenting widely, pioneering live-blogging, embracing citizen journalism, mastering slideshows and timelines and interactive graphics. By March 2012, it was putting up 400 pieces of content every 24 hours. Its network of sites had a daily average of 4 million browsers, as many as the sites for Britain's best-selling newspaper (The Sun) and its bestselling broadsheet (The Telegraph) put together. The Guardian's total traffic, around 67 million unique browsers a month, was still rising by 60 to 70 percent a year.

A third of those readers are in the U.S., which is an extraordinary achievement for a left-leaning British newspaper with its roots in Manchester. The urge to crack America is a common yearning in British public life, affecting not just rock bands and TV personalities but supermarkets (Tesco, which hasn't succeeded) and prime ministers (Tony Blair, who has). In the news media, only three British institutions apart from The Mail have made a big impact in America: the BBC, which was already world-famous before it launched BBC America in 1998;



The Economist, whose abiding belief in the free market chimes with American values; and now The Guardian, which had no such head start. If, 15 years ago, anyone in British newspapers had predicted that The Guardian would soon find an audience of 20m in America, they would have been laughed out of the pub.

In terms of reach and impact, The Guardian is doing better than ever before. But its success may contain the seeds of its demise. Its print circulation is tumbling. In October 2005, boosted by a change to the medium-sized Berliner format, the average daily circulation was 403,297. By March 2012 it was down to 217,190. Those figures are not quite like-for-like, as the Guardian has sworn off the Viagra of giveaway copies and overseas sales (which tend to be counted less rigorously); but they are still bleak. Saturday sales remain sturdy, at 377,000, but, on a typical weekday, only 178,000 people buy the Guardian, while millions graze on it for nothing on their screens. In the financial year 2009-10, the national newspapers division of Guardian Media Group—which also includes The Observer, Britain’s oldest Sunday paper—lost \$58 million. The following year, it managed to cut costs by \$41 million, and still ended up losing \$59 million. In May, Rusbridger told me he was expecting a similar loss for 2011-12. So, for three years running, The Guardian has been losing \$156,000 a day. This is not boom or bust, but both at once: the best of times, and the worst of times.

At the Open Weekend, one event looked at whether journalism was a second-rate form of writing. In the audience of 50 or so was the white-haired figure of Nick Davies, taking a breather from his investigative duties. When the conversation turned to long-form journalism, he spoke up, sounding exasperated. “In 20 years’ time,” he said, “there won’t be any newspapers left to do this. All these millions of hits won’t pay our salaries. The internet is killing journalism.”

In fleet street, not many editors last long. Those who do stick around tend to come in one of five types: the smooth, the calm, the owlish, the dynamic and the apoplectic. David English of The Daily Mail was smooth; William Rees-Mogg of The Times was owlish; Harold Evans of The Sunday Times was dynamic; Kelvin Mackenzie of The Sun was apoplectic. Alan Rusbridger is calm. “We’ve all been hit by a tidal wave,” he observes. But his tone is that of a man telling you that he has run into a spot of drizzle.

He is in his office, which rather sums up the two sides of The Guardian’s personality. It is amiably cluttered, with books spilling out of shelves and sitting in piles on the floor; but also big and modern, with floor-to-ceiling windows, sparkling canal views and pod-shaped armchairs. It’s as if an Oxbridge don had stumbled into a yuppie loft.

His answers are apt to be as measured as his tone. When I say that The Guardian seems to be having a triumph and a crisis at the same time, he replies, “If we are, everybody is. Maybe the answer is that everybody is.” He gives a studious summary of the market. “If you divide it in old-fashioned terms, and maybe we shouldn’t, we’re in a market with four papers, and the other three [The Telegraph, Times and Independent] are all owned by billionaires—the Barclay brothers, Rupert Murdoch or [Alexander and Evgeny] Lebedev. The last two declared losses for The Times and The Sunday Times were \$122 million and \$75 million, from memory, so

we’re doing much better than they are.” (When I check the figures, they turn out to be \$137 million and \$70 million—followed by \$19 million. Say what you like about Murdoch, he has got the losses going the right way.)

A skeptic could point out that the Guardian might as well be owned by a billionaire, given the losses it has been able to stomach. It is owned by the Scott Trust, set up in 1936 “to secure the financial and editorial independence of The Guardian in perpetuity”. The trust became a limited company in 2008, but remains trust-like, with all the shares held by the trustees. It also owns most of Auto Trader magazine, a cash cow which usually covers The Guardian’s losses. The idea that journalists like to believe, that the service they provide is more important than any profit it might make, is enshrined in the Scott Trust’s constitution. And Rusbridger says it makes a big difference to what they publish: “The fact that it was The Guardian that did the phone-hacking [story] directly flowed from being a trust.” But being a trust leads, inevitably, to mistrust: rivals depict the Guardian as a trustafarian, not having to make a living in the real world.

“The real world isn’t a real world,” Rusbridger argues, “because there is nobody in our mar-

ket, except The Telegraph, who is making a profit. All the trust ownership does is to get us on a playing field with the big oligarchs, because otherwise we wouldn’t have a chance at all.” This is where he mentions the tidal wave. “It’s slightly different for all of us. In our case, the big thing that’s hit us is that \$62 million of classified advertising in print has gone, out of an overall turnover of about \$360 million. That’s a huge hole in the budget, which no business is going to absorb easily. Is that a sign of crisis? That is the crisis. And unlike the billionaires, we haven’t got endlessly deep pockets, so we don’t have limitless time to sort it out. On the other hand, we’ve got quite a lot of time, because we’ve got quite a lot of money, thanks to the extremely clever management of Scott Trust resources over the years.” At the last count, they had a war chest of \$307 million, but the chief executive, Andrew Miller, warned that it would only last “three to five years”.

The loss of the classifieds—to specialist websites—couldn’t be helped. The web giveth, and the web taketh away. What is more questionable is The Guardian’s insistence on keeping its website free. In 2010 its closest domestic rival, The Times, placed its content behind a pay-wall. In the first year, it claimed to have attract-



The Guardian and Observer offices in London.

Mark Hillary/Creative Commons



ed 101,000 digital subscribers, although that included people downloading the paper on the iPad or Kindle, and it paid a heavy price in traffic: by November 2011, according to Searchmetrics, it was receiving only 256 links a week from social media, one for every 10,000 The Guardian was getting. In 2011 The New York Times, which has been through much the same trauma as the Guardian, moved to a porous paywall or freemium model – you can read a number of articles free (20 at first, now ten), but after that you need a subscription. Within a year, The New York Times had 454,000 digital subscribers. The Financial Times and The Economist also have a porous paywall.

The Guardian is not against all charges for digital reading. It asks a token sum for its iPhone edition (\$7.75 a year), and a more realistic one for the iPad (\$15.50 a month). But it is fiercely resistant to charging for its website—a position it shares with The Mail, The Telegraph, The Washington Post and many others. Some editors stay out of these choppy waters, saying the decisions are made by their commercial colleagues. Rusbridger goes the other way—not only is he happy to defend The Guardian’s stance, he has built a theory around it. He calls it “open journalism”, and in March, in an online Q&A session with readers, he defined it: “Open journalism is journalism which is fully knitted into the web of information that exists in the world today. It links to it; sifts and filters it; collaborates with it and generally uses the ability of anyone to publish and share material to give a better account of the world.”

He has become quite evangelical about it. Where did that come from? “Set aside how you’re going to pay for all this, and say ‘what’s the big story about, what’s happening to information, what is the big challenge for journalism?’ Any journalist who thinks we’re still living in the 19th-, 20th-century world in which a newsroom here can adequately cover the world around us in competition with what’s available on the open web – well, I think that’s very questionable. You can probably do it if you’re The Financial Times or The Wall Street Journal and you’re selling time-critical financial information. For a general newspaper, forgive me if you’ve heard it before but the simplest way of explaining it is this. You’ve got Michael Billington, distinguished theatre critic, in the front row at the National Theatre. Are you saying you don’t need Michael Billington any more? No, he’s The Guardian voice, he is the expert. But what about the other 900 people in the theatre, don’t they have interesting things to say? Well obviously they do, and if we don’t do something with that social experience, somebody else will. And out of those 900 people, 30 will be very knowledgeable. So let’s say Michael Billington is as good as it gets, he’s 9 out of 10, but the experience of these other knowledgeable people is 6 out of 10, so the margin is 3 out of 10, that’s what you’re charging for. You either say ‘we’ll take that then, we’ll build a big wall round Michael Billington.’ Or you say, ‘actually, let’s get them on to our platform as well,’ and you’ve got 9 + 6. So what do you do? If you don’t do this, that’s bad for professional journalism, because you’re hedging against what other people can do. If you do do it, you have a much better account of what happens in a theatre, and you begin to think that it was quite odd to send one person on one night and think that was enough. It’s just obviously better. Then the

question is how do you edit them, and find the people who know their Brecht from their musicals, and that’s probably partly software and partly old-fashioned editing.

“And the next question is, if it works for theatre does it work for other areas of journalism? I think it works for everything—investigative, foreign, science, environment. By building networks, you’re going with the flow of history, and your journalism is going to be more comprehensive and better. If you reduce it instantly to paywalls, you’re not tackling the bigger issue of what’s happening to journalism.”

Rusbridger makes it sound sensible, even stirring, and you can see how earnest roomfuls of Scott Trustees have been swept along. But you do wonder if it is The Guardian’s job to be all things to all theatregoers, and if it overstates the importance of on-line comments, which are seldom half as well written as the articles. Our skeptic might also note the first thing he said there: “set aside how you’re going to pay for all this.” How much can the flow of history do to swell the trickle of cash?

When I saw him, Rusbridger was excited about The Guardian’s new advertising campaign, a post-modern take on the tale of the Three Little Pigs and the Big Bad Wolf—who, in Guardianland, turns out to be the Big Misunderstood Wolf. On February 29th, the ad had its premiere on Channel 4: a lavish production, witty, meticulously detailed, four times the length of most commercials, reckoned to have cost millions. It was clearly made with YouTube in mind, and had reached a million people there by the end of May. It staunchly resisted the bleeding of the print readership, which rose by 0.56 percent month-on-month in March. But it aroused some disdain too.

Juan Senor is a leading expert on newspapers, a Spanish television reporter turned visiting fellow in news media at Oxford University and partner at Innovation Media Consulting, a firm which advises struggling papers. The remedies he prescribes—more explanation, stronger graphics, bolder features, full integration between print and web teams—look much like the medicine The Guardian has taken of its own accord. But when he saw the Three Little Pigs ad, he was unimpressed. “Open journalism?” he wrote in a tweet. “How about Profitable Journalism first. The Guardian lost \$51 million last year and counting. Muddled rhetoric, poor model to emulate.”

“We are very concerned,” Senor tells me on the phone from Los Angeles, “that everybody looks at The Guardian’s success in terms of volume of traffic. That is not a measure of success, because you might as well get into pornography. They’ve played the volume game all along. Open does not need to mean free, but The Guardian associates both things and is almost dogmatic about it, saying that if you put up paywalls you are somehow betraying the spirit of the web. There are Talibans on each side and that’s what is hurting the industry. Both extremes are wrong because they do not make money – The Times with its paywall and The Guardian being free. The truth is somewhere in the middle.” He

points to the New York Times, and to Aftonbladet, a Swedish paper that has been charging on-line since 2003 and, he says, has just reached the point where digital brings in more money than print. “While I love The Guardian’s journalism at times, I just don’t think it’s sustainable. They’re announcing even more lay-offs, it’s a tragedy. And then they spend the money on the Three Little Pigs.”

The lay-offs have been two rounds of voluntary redundancies, one in 2010 which cut about 40 editorial jobs and 60 others from a total of 1,700, and one at the end of 2011, on which The Guardian has declined to put a figure (openness has its limits). Over the winter, the squeeze extended to the reader’s pocket, with a price hike from \$1.50 per weekday to \$1.85. It also showed up on the page. The separate daily sports section, launched in 2005, was

reduced to Monday and Saturday only. The separate Media, Education and Society sections were folded into the main paper; the first time the knife had come close to the patient’s vital organs. But cuts, for an editor, are a chance to sculpt as well as to slash. Rusbridger—who took a pay cut himself in April, from \$684,400 to \$615,900—seized the opportunity to give newspapers another shove to-

wards magazines, adding comment pieces and long profiles to the news pages, and planning some news packages a week ahead, influenced by another Swedish paper, Svenska Dagbladet. He calls it “a slight transformation”. On Valentine’s Day, The Guardian put something on the front page that may never have appeared there before as a main topic: love. The piece, an essay by the novelist Jeanette Winterson, was worth \$1.85 by itself.

The feeling persists that The Guardian may be heading full steam towards an iceberg. At the Open Weekend, I spoke to one of the paper’s senior staff, and said that I was writing about whether The Guardian could survive. “If you find the answer,” he said, “let us know.”

Rusbridger himself mixes optimism with wariness. Ask if the iPad will make a difference, with its ability to display something looking quite like the printed page, and he tells you it’s too early to say. “We had something like 600,000 total downloads when it was free.” How many of those are now paying their \$15.50 a month? “I don’t think we’ve released the figures yet, but it’s a good take-up.” One industry rumor puts it at 28 percent, which would mean that almost as many people are using the iPad app as are buying the weekday paper.

He is more bullish about social media. “The thing that has changed fastest for us in the past three months”, he told me, “is Facebook. It has made a vast difference.” As part of its open policy, The Guardian got into bed with Facebook to try so-called frictionless sharing: if a reader who is signed into Facebook reads something on The Guardian site, the fact that they did so shows up in their Facebook newsfeed, with a link. This irritates some users, but gives The Guardian more young readers and a share of the revenue from any ads. “In the last week Facebook has overtaken Google for referrals. We’ve

“We are very concerned that everybody looks at The Guardian’s success in terms of volume of traffic. That is not a measure of success, because you might as well get into pornography. They’ve played the volume game all along.”



had 6m downloads of the Facebook app, and it has rocket-charged traffic to Guardian.co.uk. An audience of 18-to-25-year-olds who would never have read The Guardian in the past, are falling on Guardian content. Facebook are amazed by it, we're suddenly on the Facebook radar in a big way.

"We're in for about five years of twiddling the knobs on digital. There'll be an HTML5 app, an Android app. Google are doing this quite clever thing, a way of building an instant app in 45 minutes rather than six months, a bit like Flipboard. You could have an app tomorrow, put ads on it and share the revenue with Google. It may be that the Guardian is entering a sweet spot where the two biggest players in new media are intensely interested in our content, because their users are doing so much with it. The giants of the new world are Google, Facebook, Amazon, Apple and Twitter. If you can get into a position where they are sufficiently interested in a little newspaper from London, there are glimmerings of light that tell you that this is beginning to be quite an exciting strategy."

Meanwhile, The Guardian has to find ways of boosting its income. At the end of 2010 it launched Guardian Masterclasses, offering courses ranging from songwriting with one of Adele's co-writers (two days, \$780) to photographing London at dawn (six weeks, \$1,170) to "How to finish a work of fiction" with the author Gillian Slovo (nine months, \$10,900). More than 10,000! The Guardian, never a fan of the private schools, seems to have quietly joined their ranks.

"We're not living in a world in which our revenues are going to come from cover price and advertising," Rusbridger argues. "Where can you take the brand? You'll have myriad small sources of revenue." Hence the Open Weekend, an idea borrowed from Liberation, which holds festivals in several French cities. "The Masterclasses are fascinating, and within a year, it's a million-and-a-half business within the paper. It's not very different from Pearson [owner of The FT, and half-owner of The Economist] having education. The notion of what The Guardian is is changing so far beyond a newspaper."

The central problem remains: younger people seldom buy a paper—on the London tube in the morning, the free McPaper The Metro wins hands down. And the bigger and better Guardian.co.uk is, the less incentive there is for anyone to hand over their \$1.85. Some of the cash spent on the Three Little Pigs might have been better used to show them how much more rewarding the print version is: at The New York Times, it is said that the typical print reader spends half an hour with the paper, while the typical online visit lasts half a minute.

With all the money being lost, it feels as if some drastic change must be coming in the British quality market. If The Guardian is determined to stay free online, wouldn't it make sense to go free in print, as The London Evening Standard has done, with some success? "We've crunched every conceivable number and continue to do so," Rusbridger says. "There are people upstairs with clever models. About five years ago we tried a version of the i [the Independent's \$0.30 mini-me, now outselling its parent] and we looked at 50 pence [about \$0.80], 20 pence [about \$0.30], free..." His tone makes it clear that the numbers didn't add up.

The question hanging in the air is how long

the print Guardian can last. "It depends how quickly Alan reacts," Juan Senor says. "I suspect The Guardian will be a weekend paper soon. Online they will exist as they do now, hopefully charging, and they will focus their commercial energy on the weekend."

Many guesses have been made as to when the last Western newspaper will roll off the last press. Some say 2043, others as soon as 2018. Rusbridger quotes his foe: "Murdoch said at Leveson it would be 20 years. I think we would agree that there will probably be a period when there will be fewer papers, beginning with Monday to Friday. Do we have an economic model built in which we keep testing the assumptions? Yes. And do we ask ourselves what would life be like with no newspaper? Yes. You don't want to be in the position, in eight to ten years' time, of going 'oh shit, we didn't think about that.'"

When he's not editing, tweeting, launch-

ing websites, supervising investigations or defending open journalism, Rusbridger likes to play the piano. Every summer, he goes on a course. "In 2010 there was a bloke like me on the course who played this amazingly difficult piece which brings concert pianists out in night sweats, Chopin's Ballade No. 1 in G Minor. And I thought, if I played it for 20 minutes a day before I come to work, would I be able to do that?"

He kept a diary of the quest and turned it into a book, to be published in September. "When I signed the contract, I had no idea that this was going to be the year of Wikileaks and phone-hacking. So there's some journalism sewn in. But it's a book about amateurism, really. When I started I was 56, and I was also interested in what the middle-aged brain could memorize. I spoke to a couple of neuroscientists who said the brain was very plastic. In your mid-50s, you can learn new tricks."



Guardian reporter Nick Davies, above. Guardian editor-in-chief Alan Rusbridger, below.

Reuters



# Older, Mellow, But Still Woody

With "To Rome With Love" just released in theaters, Woody Allen talks about how he picks his actors, why he makes so many movies and the meaninglessness of existence

By RACHEL DODES • THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Thirty-five years after Alvy Singer obsessed over the universe's inevitable expansion in "Annie Hall," Woody Allen is still grappling with the transience of life in his films. In "To Rome With Love," which opened on June 22, he co-stars as a reluctantly retired American opera director who tries to resurrect his former career by convincing his daughter's future father-in-law—an Italian mortician who happens to sing well in the shower—that he could be a star.

The movie, the director's 45th feature film, also marks Allen's first appearance in front of the camera since 2006's "Scoop." "I'm too old now, is the problem. I like to get the girl," said Allen, 76, adding that his lack of credibility as a romantic lead "is a sad, terrible pill to swallow."

In the film, the classic neurotic male role that a younger Allen would have snapped up for himself is that of Jack (Jesse Eisenberg), an architecture student who falls for Monica (Ellen Page), the charmingly crazy friend of his girlfriend (Greta Gerwig). Page's character complains of "Ozymandias melancholia," a bogus diagnosis inspired by a Shelley poem about an eroding monument. (Allen invented it for his character in 1980's "Stardust Memories" but says he suffers from it, too.)

To distract himself from the fact that even great art will eventually fade into the past, Allen tries to stay focused on the present, making movies—one a year—watching sports, practicing clarinet and spending time with his family. He's currently preparing to shoot his next movie in New York and San Francisco. In his editing room on New York's Upper East Side, he spoke about why he's making so many films in Europe, how he picks his actors and why his characters don't text.

*How did you decide that you wanted to set your recent films in London, Paris, Rome or wherever?*

Well, the Italians call and say, "We want to pay for it." It's strictly economics. It started with "Match Point." I wrote that film, and it was originally going to be about a family in New York, in Long Island and Palm Beach. But it was expensive to do in New York. And they called me from London and said, "Would you like to make a movie here? We'll pay for it." And so I said, "Yes." It was very easy to anglicize it. From then on, other countries call up and invite me

to make movies, which is great because they don't invite me in the U.S. What happens in Europe, in South America, in China and Russia—all these countries call me and say, "Would you make a movie here if we financed it?"

*Do you think maybe Americans are loath to finance your films because you retain so much control over everything?*

Yes, that's a big problem for me. Where it starts is that I feel I've been making films for years. They know what they're buying when they buy into me. I usually have a good cast of actors and actresses. They know that over the years, all of my films cost about \$17 million or \$18 million. They know that none of them are suddenly going to balloon to \$25 million. They can rely on a good cast. And they know I'm not going to do like a medieval religious movie or something like that. So they know what they are buying. But I don't let anybody read a script, so that's an immediate deal breaker for 95 percent of them.

*You are known for being easy to work for. What's a typical shooting day like?*

It's a reasonable workday. If there's a crisis and we've got to get out of a location and we can't get it anymore, I will work late. But I don't know if I am the most dedicated artist in the world. When I first started making movies, everything was sacrificed for the movie. And then I thought, "Wait a minute, I went into this business not to kill myself but because it's fun to make movies, and if I'm not going to enjoy myself I am not going to do it."

*You make a movie every year. It's interesting that you call yourself not dedicated.*

I am prolific but there is nothing special about being prolific. It's not in the quantity. There's no medal for quantity. It's the quality. It's better to do two or three movies in your lifetime that are masterpieces than close to 45 movies without a masterpiece.

*You don't think you've done anything that qualifies as a masterpiece?*

Not as a masterpiece. If you actually think about this for a minute, if you think about "The Bicycle Thief" and "Rashomon" and "Grand Illusion," then no. I don't think I have anything that can be in a festival holding its own with those. Those are masterpieces. I have made some films that are good, some films that are

less good, some films that are pretty good, but a masterpiece? It's hard to make a masterpiece.

*One of the characters in "Rome" is a mortician who can sing brilliantly but only in the shower. Where did this idea come from?*

Over the years I and many people I know sing in the shower. Occasionally it will come up in conversation. People will say, "I can sing better in the shower because of the positive ions in the shower." Others say, "It's resonance from the tiling in the shower." When I was doing that [in the script] I became so anxious. I thought "This must have been done a hundred times, I just don't know about it! It must have appeared on 50 television shows!" But apparently it wasn't.

*"Rome" presents two opposing views of fame. There's this talented opera singer/mortician who just loves to sing in the shower—not for an audience—and then there's Roberto Benigni's character Leopoldo, who suddenly becomes famous for nothing. Which do you identify with?*

I identify more with the guy who sings in the shower. I have been tracked by the paparazzi because I appear publicly. But I think I could be happy the way Salinger was allegedly in his later years, just being at home writing and not publishing. If you are home writing and not publishing, then nobody edits you. You don't have to cut down space, change your phrasing or your grammar, you just write. Nobody criticizes it. Nobody sees it. It's just the joy of writing.

*How do you decide who you want to appear in your films?*

Some I know already, and I think, "Ellen Page would be great for this part." Some I don't have any idea of. Since I began [making movies], I have had the same casting director, Juliet Taylor, and she reads the script and generally what she does is give a whole lot of suggestions for each role. Some I've heard of, like Brad Pitt or something. Others I have never heard of. We talk about each one as a possibility. The ones I have never heard of she shows me on tape. And then we go back and forth and decide to go after that person. It could be a known person or an unknown person. And either we get them or we don't.

*How did you decide on Jesse Eisenberg for his role in "Rome"?*

I did see "The Social Network" and I thought, "This is a young man who could play neurotic." He's kind of in a class by himself. I would have played that part if I was younger.

*Some say your view is that life is pointless, and*





Woody Allen on the set of "To Rome With Love."

Reuters

*others say you're a romantic realist who believes in being true to yourself. Which is it?*

I think that's the best you can do, but the true situation is a hopeless one because nothing does last. If we reduce it absurdly for a moment, you know the sun will burn out. You know the universe is falling apart at a fantastically accelerating rate and that at some point there won't be anything at all. So whether you are Shakespeare or Beethoven or Michelangelo, your stuff's not going to last. So, given that, even if you were immortal, that time is going to come. Of course, you have to deal with a much more critical problem, which is that you're not going to last microscopically close to that. So, nothing does last. You do your things. One day some guy wakes up and gets the Times and says, "Hey, Woody Allen died. He keeled over in the shower singing. So, where do you want to have lunch today?"

*So, what do you do to distract yourself from these depressing thoughts? Knicks games? Or is that depressing, too?*

The Knicks are one kind of distraction. For the two hours you're at the Garden you're only focused on that. I follow them. I go. I have been a season-ticket holder for many years. They have not been very exciting. It was a nice little flurry for a while but then [Jeremy Lin] got hurt, so we'll see what happens next year. I am a big sports fan, baseball and basketball, everything. People will say to me, "Does it really matter if the Knicks beat the Celtics?" And I think to myself, "Well, it's just as important as human existence."

*Really?*

Really. It may not seem so, but if you step back and look they are equivalent. I've often thought that there's a movie in two film direc-

tors. One makes these confrontational films that deal with these problems. The other one makes strictly escapist material. Which one is making the bigger contribution? You are living this terrible life. It's hot. It's sunny. The summertime is awful. Life is miserable. You duck into the movie house. It's dark. It's cold. It's pleasurable. You watch Fred Astaire dance for an hour and a half. And it's great. You can go out and face life, based on the refreshment factor. If you see the confrontational film, you have a different experience and it seems more substantive but I am not sure it does as much for you as the refreshment. A couple of laughs, a couple of dance numbers, and you forget all that garbage for an hour and a half. I hope I am not depressing you.

*No, not at all. But given all that, you must be thrilled that "Rome" is a summer movie.*

You know, I like them in the summer but for other reasons, more crass reasons. I like them in the summertime because I feel that in the summertime everybody comes out with these god-awful movies and grown-ups never have a chance to just go to the movies. There's almost nothing to see. So I like to put my movies out in the summer because I feel like people like to have an option to see something that isn't car chases, toilet jokes, special effects.

*Is there more pressure opening this film, because "Midnight in Paris" was such an unprecedented hit?*

No, but I do feel that whenever you have a very successful movie, invariably when you follow it people have to say, "Well, it's not 'Midnight in Paris.'" After I did "Annie Hall," people said, "Well, it's not 'Annie Hall.'" They're right and they're wrong. Usually they're right. It's a

cliché they use whether it's right or wrong.

*And you don't worry about the response?*

I haven't in 35, 40 years. I never read a review. I never hear a review. I never hear what the box office is. When it's something like "Midnight in Paris" it comes back to me. But I never see the movie again. I never hear about it. I don't have photos of the cast in my office. I have moved on.

*So, you're not living in the past.*

Turner Broadcasting wanted to fly me out to California. They were closing one of their symposiums with "Annie Hall." They wanted me to talk about the movie. I said to them, "I am not one of those people that likes to dwell on the past." They got Tony Roberts to go out there and he spoke about it. When it's over for me, it's really over. I don't want to see it or hear about it. I just want to focus on the new thing. It's not healthy to either regret or luxuriate in stuff that's in the past.

*Sounds like the theme of "Midnight in Paris."*

Yes, unfortunately.

*If you had to watch one of your movies again, what would it be?*

There are a few of my films that I thought were better than others. "Purple Rose [of Cairo]" came out better than some of the others. "Husbands and Wives." There are a couple. But I'd just as soon not see any.

*Jeff Daniels, who starred in "Purple Rose," is going to be in Aaron Sorkin's new show, "The Newsroom," with a lot of other actors you've worked with. Are you planning on watching it?*

I don't watch much television, just sports. We go out to eat and I come back at 10:30 or 10:15 and watch the last few innings of the ballgame. I'm asleep by 11:59.



# Innard Circle

For this eating club in New York City, everything is on the menu



Bo Lee/Creative Commons



By SPENCER JAKAB • THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

You'll never be a member of the Innard Circle if the likes of brains in black butter, Uzbek boiled spleen or Fujianese pig heart make you squirm.

Since 1999, an intrepid band of New York City foodies has been meeting about once a month to indulge their penchant for "nose to tail eating" in a city that provides great opportunity to do so. The city's thousands of ethnic restaurants are constantly refreshed by new waves of immigrants, many of whose cultures serve animal parts that most Americans wouldn't touch with a 10-foot fork.

For the organ-lovers though, what really gets their goat—or pig or sheep or rabbit—is when a restaurant is out of a delicacy they traveled across town to sample.

"I mean really, who eats bull's penis before 7:00 p.m.?" complained Bobby Ghosh at a May meeting, recounting a recent trip to a northern Chinese restaurant in Queens.

They had to settle for the animal's somewhat chewy testicles and a dish called "Big Buckstraps Paddywack." The waitress, who only spoke Mandarin, pointed energetically to her diaphragm when asked what they were eating, Ghosh said. That was as close as the group got to discerning what part of the animal it was.

It was tough but tasty, they say.

Ghosh, originally from Bengal in northeastern India, was Time Magazine's Baghdad bureau chief for five years and worked in Hong Kong—both places where he sampled a wide range of food. Always seeking variety, different types of meat began to taste more or less the same to him.

"But a camel's eyeball is way different from a goat's eyeball," he said.

Digging in to a five-course meal of organ meats specially prepared for the group by Umbrian chef Sandro Fioriti at his Upper East Side eatery Sandro's, journalist Daniel Okrent, one of the group's founders, tries to explain what attracts him to innards.

"Growing up, I was a very picky eater," he said. But his wife Becky, a food critic and a member, introduced him to what's known as the "fifth quarter" of the animal and he's never looked back.

"There's no question there's an element of showing off, but it's great food," he said, between bites of brain, kidney, intestines and sweetbreads with polenta.

Though he has had many memorable meals with the group in New York—and who wouldn't remember the likes of "crispy colorectal," North Korean jellied tripe or a central Asian organ mélange called "geez-beez"—he says the pinnacle of his offal-eating days came in the 1990s during a trip to Italy. An old restaurant near Rome's stockyards served him rigatoni alla pajata—the intestines of a freshly-slaughtered nursing calf still containing the curdled milk of its mother.

"Does that gross you out?" asked Melissa Easton, an industrial designer and the group's unofficial "organ"-izer.

A shrug brings a nod of approval, as if having passed a squeamishness test. Many haven't.

"We've had people join us for a single meal

and never come back, without explanation," Easton said. "There's a certain kind of discomfort that registers on their face when they realize what they've gotten into."

No wonder the late Calvin Schwabe's 1979 book on Americans' disdain for foods that he called "cheap, nutritious and good to eat" is titled "Unmentionable Cuisine." He chalked it up to "prejudice or ignorance."

It is no accident that the Innard Circle, which has about a dozen steady members, isn't only a well-traveled group but, with journalists, authors and a publisher, a well-read one too. After all, the most famous organ-eater of all time is the character Leopold Bloom in James Joyce's "Ulysses." Bloom "ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls. He liked thick giblet soup, nutty gizzards, a stuffed roast heart, liverslices fried with crustcrumbs, fried hencods' roes."

Easton, like most members, struggles to come up with the oddest thing she has eaten because it all seems normal to her and usually delicious. The best thing she has had is seared calf liver sashimi, at a Japanese place in the West Village.

Jeannette Seaver, a publisher and author of four cookbooks, joined the group a decade ago because of her love for her native French food.

"Our cuisine offers many succulent dishes made of innards, so it seemed right for me to be part of the group," she says. "The food is daring, challenging at times, but always terrific."

The group, which is also known as Organ

"This isn't weird—it's perfectly normal for lots of people around the world," said criminologist Leonid Lantsman between mouthfuls of spicy duck tongue and braised goose intestine.

Grinders, finds plenty of humor in the foods. Fond of puns, the word "offal" is particularly ripe for abuse. The word's English etymology speaks volumes about Anglo-Saxon disdain for organs. With origins in the 14th century, it is thought to refer to the "off-fall" from the butcher's block, meaning the less desirable parts.

Some members' attraction to offal stems from their disdain for Western squeamishness and wastefulness.

"This isn't weird—it's perfectly normal for lots of people around the world," said criminologist Leonid Lantsman between mouthfuls of spicy duck tongue and braised goose intestine at a June meeting of the club at Chinatown eatery Rong Hang. "If more people ate entrails and offal then we wouldn't waste so much food."

The seven-course meal began with duck kidney, before moving on to more hardcore offerings: beef large intestine in Fujianese red wine paste and pig stomach. The somewhat lighter frog's legs and pig skin hot and sour soup followed and then gave way to a couple of exotic but non-organ offerings.

"Watch out everyone—there's no offal in this one!" joked Robert Sietsema, a food critic at the Village Voice, as a seafood dish was served.

The one organ the group has yet to sample, despite it being a delicacy for some ethnic groups, is uterus.

"I guess it's more of a home-cooked thing," said Easton.

But she would eat it in a heartbeat.

"Am I missing some part of my brain—the part that screams revulsion? Perhaps. In fact, very likely."



Left page: Sautéed frog legs. Right page: Pig intestines.

Yun Huang Yong/Creative Commons



# The Lady and the Lama

A meeting of peace as Aung San Suu Kyi and the Dalai Lama rendezvous in the U.K.

THE ECONOMIST

Last week two Nobel-peace-prize laureates, both international figures of inspiration, find themselves visiting Britain: the leader of Burma's opposition, Aung San Suu Kyi; and also the Tibetans' exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama.

The rendezvous, on June 19 in London, was not publicized on either of their official schedules and was disclosed by the Dalai Lama's office on Twitter only the next day. The Dalai Lama, who had previously called for Suu Kyi's release from house arrest, is reported to have told her "I have real admiration for your courage." He also gave her his blessing, as one Buddhist to another. The obvious backdrop to any such blessing would be the separate political struggles of Burma and Tibet. The two places have a certain neighbour in common.

China's leaders will not be happy to learn of the meeting. The Dalai Lama's ten-day visit to Britain has given fresh occasion for China to denounce him. In a further measure, the Chinese Olympic Committee threatened to withdraw some of its athletes from training in England. The Dalai Lama shrugged off all this as "routine." He is as accustomed to acting as a hate figure for the Chinese government as he is to being a symbol of hope to many people elsewhere.

Burma has also vexed China, its most involved economic partner, of late. Last year its president, Thein Sein, suspended a hydropower dam being built with Chinese backing in northern Burma. Reforms that have been initiated by his once perfectly authoritarian government—such as those that enabled Suu Kyi to win a parliamentary seat in April—have been seen in part as an attempt to build better relations with other countries, that Burma should not remain so reliant on China's good graces.

One danger for Suu Kyi is that she could develop hate-figure status with the Chinese government. As her role evolves from dissident to politician, she will have to deal with politicians in Beijing. A meeting with the Dalai Lama does nothing to nurture their trust in her, and could frustrate the sort of progress that her party, the National League for Democracy, pursues in Burma.

That meeting may also strain Britain's already tense relations with China. When British Prime Minister David Cameron met the Dalai Lama last month, the Chinese government rebuked Britain and called off a senior official's visit.

On the evening of June 19, Suu Kyi celebrated her 67th birthday at a private garden party in Oxford, her old university and former home. Her return to Britain—by way of Oslo, where she collected the Nobel Peace Prize that was awarded her in 1991, when she was under house



From the official twitter feed of the Dalai Lama  
The Dalai Lama with Aung San Suu Kyi during their private meeting in London last month.

arrest—is part of her second trip outside Burma in the past 24 years. (She visited Thailand earlier in June.) In 1988, when she had returned to Rangoon from Britain to care for her ailing mother, she was caught up in pro-democracy demonstrations. At the time and ever since she chose at great personal sacrifice not to leave Burma, for fear that she would not be allowed back.

Her audience with the Dalai Lama is the product of unusual circumstance. She was long not at liberty to leave Rangoon; he was forced to flee his in Lhasa. She is working to steer her country in a new direction, while he can do little to influence Tibet's fate. Both must hope that China's displeasure at their meeting will not impede the work that Miss Suu Kyi has ahead of her back home.

## Unstressed Syllables

By Merl Reagle

### ACROSS

- 1 Civil protections: abbr.
- 4 Can't stand
- 9 Red-hot types?
- 14 Bar belts
- 19 Waited, perhaps
- 20 Jonathan of "Brazil"
- 21 Give a heads-up
- 22 Gold standard?
- 23 College subject for dentists?
- 25 Famous cowgirl who didn't talk much?
- 27 Gas thief, perhaps
- 28 \_\_\_ contendere
- 29 Caustic stuff
- 30 Pro \_\_\_
- 31 Pro athlete who whipped all of his opponents?
- 38 Pts. of a day
- 40 Bygone bird
- 41 \_\_\_ la Plata
- 42 Words written above a lamb-filled Christmas scene?
- 48 Came up
- 52 Summer Games org.
- 53 Fed first name, formerly
- 54 Flowers that grow near sewers?
- 58 Steak that needs a lot of tenderizing?
- 62 Washington airport
- 63 Boy king
- 64 "The king," in Italian
- 65 Island shimmy
- 67 Guardianship
- 69 Most popular siesta spot in Mexico?
- 75 Actress Hartley
- 78 Dole (out)
- 79 VW intro
- 83 German cry
- 84 Granola alternative
- 86 What Fidel had after his operation?
- 91 Name of Jacques Cousteau's barber's boat?
- 93 Legal scholar Guinier
- 94 Regret
- 95 Hare-hunt cry
- 96 Citizens who don't have it so good?
- 102 Sweet topper
- 106 Weena's race
- 107 Language finch
- 108 Bad first effort from Hollywood?
- 115 Hitch or glitch
- 118 Morrie the Beanie Baby, e.g.
- 119 Actor Erwin and poker legend Ungar
- 120 Sort of
- 122 Great place to see a drama in London?
- 127 Part of the Bible that turns its own pages?
- 128 \*\*\*\* reviews
- 129 Actress Samantha
- 130 Change
- 131 Satisfied
- 132 Film critic with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame
- 133 Core belief
- 134 Noah Jr. of "Red River"
- 135 Before, once

### DOWN

- 1 Largest republic of the USSR
- 2 Actress Shire
- 3 Order to a driver
- 4 Lhasa \_\_\_
- 5 Rodeo horse
- 6 High-strung
- 7 Earth hue
- 8 Actor Fernando
- 9 Big Apple product?
- 10 Start of "California Dreamin' "
- 11 "\_\_\_ My Shadow"
- 12 Hot dog brand
- 13 Angelou's "And \_\_\_ Rise"
- 14 Place to see Superman
- 15 Uris's "The \_\_\_"
- 16 Toothbrush brand
- 17 Singer Tucker
- 18 Pilot
- 24 Be neighborly
- 26 General Hideki
- 32 Tom Swifite wd.
- 33 Not *vous*
- 34 Throw in
- 35 Lethal wrapper
- 36 "She said she'd always been \_\_\_" (Beatles lyric from the "Abbey Road" album)
- 37 Half a deficiency
- 39 Con game
- 42 Poodle's name, perhaps
- 43 Take it easy
- 44 First name of a farm-machine inventor
- 45 Badger
- 46 East Coast cape
- 47 Pres. monogram
- 49 Go \_\_\_ winner
- 50 Self-satisfied
- 51 This, *en espanol*
- 55 Do a Top 10 list, e.g.
- 56 Early Sonny and Cher LP, "Look \_\_\_"
- 57 "None for me, thanks, \_\_\_ already"
- 59 Himalayas sighting
- 60 "So that's it!"
- 61 Olympian PaaVo
- 62 Wish-list receiver
- 66 Whopper, e.g.
- 68 Vanna's concerns: abbr.
- 70 Poisonous plant
- 71 Needle case
- 72 Instruction unit
- 73 Nitti nemesis
- 74 Snowy mo.
- 75 Welcome sights?
- 76 Head problem
- 77 South Korea's Syngman
- 80 Online handle
- 81 Lacking slack
- 82 Deuterium discoverer
- 85 Remove, as branches
- 87 Nth: abbr.
- 88 \_\_\_-relief
- 89 Year, in Madrid (with a tilde)
- 90 Friendly
- 92 Stylish
- 97 Poet's meadow
- 98 \_\_\_-mannered
- 99 Word on a coin
- 100 Hasten
- 101 Japanese immigrant
- 103 "\_\_\_ girl!"
- 104 "I'll tell you when"
- 105 Feeling of resentment
- 108 Raison \_\_\_
- 109 Recovery prog.
- 110 French student
- 111 "Where do \_\_\_?!"
- 112 "Smilla's Sense of Snow" director \_\_\_ August
- 113 Bring together
- 114 Come to a point
- 116 Grant portrayer
- 117 "Beau \_\_\_"
- 121 Limber, though older
- 123 Part of r.p.m.
- 124 WWII troop carrier
- 126 Persian Gulf fed.
- 125 Bodyguard-turned-actor
- 127 "Groovy!"

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The Washington Post



# In India, 'Dr. Oz' Includes Dancing and Singing

On his TV health show, Dr. Sonu Ahluwalia uses much more than expertise to get his point across

By **JASON CHOW**  
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Sonu Ahluwalia is on a mission to prove to India that AIDS can't be transferred by mosquitoes, turmeric isn't a cure-all and a pot belly is not a sign of prosperity but of poor health.

To get his point across, he's enlisted Bollywood, yoga and dancers.

The slim, youthful-looking 42-year-old is the host of "All Is Well," an Indian answer to "The Dr. Oz Show" which debuted in April on the television network Colors. Dr. Ahluwalia, who lives in Los Angeles, returned to his native country earlier this year to shoot an entire season of the show.

Like Mehmet Oz, who hosts "The Dr. Oz Show," Dr. Ahluwalia's style is casual. On set, he alternates between open-collar shirts and medical scrubs and jokes with his audience. On his premiere show, he measured a couple's waistlines to demonstrate the dangers of their increasing weight before discussing irritable bowel syndrome with a 50-year-old woman.

"It's not just medical. It's about happiness and life," said Dr. Oz in a phone interview from New York. "I'm giving information about losing weight, looking sexy."

Part of Dr. Ahluwalia's mission is to break some of the misconceptions that have taken hold in India when it comes to health. "We did a segment on pregnancy, and the myths abound," he said. "People think if the belly points up, it's a boy, and that if you feed the mother fatty foods, the baby passes easier."

Dr. Ahluwalia was born in New Delhi but grew up in Indore, a city in central India. After graduating from Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Medical College, he moved to Framingham, Massachusetts, to take an internship where, he said, he quickly learned to suppress his accent.

"When you're sick and unwell, you lose all pretense of civility," he said. "You presume the doctor is only as good as his language skills are. You want to see someone you see as 'normal.'"

The internship led to a surgical residency at Harvard University's medical school. There Dr. Ahluwalia specialized in orthopedic surgery, eventually relocating to New York where he became an assistant physician for the Jets and the Islanders. In 2004, he moved to Los Angeles to take a job at an orthopedic clinic.



An image from the TV show "All is Well," hosted by Dr. Sonu Ahluwalia

Unsatisfied with the limited reach of his practice, he turned to media, becoming in 2010 the medical expert on the Fox morning show "Good Day, L.A." He credited his Americanized speech with helping make him more attractive to TV producers. "People don't ask me where I'm from," he said.

But Sony Pictures Television, which produces "Dr. Oz," plucked him to host "All Is Well" in Hindi. "India, like China, has a very rich medicinal tradition," said Keith LeGoy, president of international distribution at Sony, who said that the company had long wanted to adapt the show for India as it has in markets such as China, Russia and Egypt. "We spent a lot of time finding the right person."

His familiarity with India's thriving celebrity-news industry doesn't hurt either: He was once married to Bollywood actress Pooja Batra, and local media outlets say he's treated many Bollywood stars, though he declined to confirm which ones he's cared for.

Over three weeks earlier this year, Colors shot 20 episodes with Dr. Ahluwalia, who returned in April to help promote the show. He hopes to come back for a second season, though the ratings will ultimately decide his and the show's fate.

Among the show's challenges are talking about taboo medical subjects, particularly those related to sexual health. "A lot of things we talk about in the U.S. show would be touchy in India," LeGoy said.

"In America, I can use a model of a penis," said Dr. Ahluwalia, "but I would never do that in India. In India or China, you'd use a sock."

Traditional Indian medicine does make occasional appearances on "All Is Well," with segments on yoga and ayurvedic healing, but Dr. Ahluwalia said he hopes it serves as a modernizing force, mirroring India's economic coming of age. "People are a lot more open to health than they used to be in the past," he said. "Now, with more people having medical insurance, they're coming forward with their health issues when before they would just conserve their money and only go to a doctor when they absolutely had to. It's changing. They really want to learn."

But the doctor, who still holds his post as chief of orthopedic surgery at the Cedars Sinai Hospital Medical Center in West Hollywood, knows that for TV, entertainment comes first. He initially resisted celebrity cameos but relented knowing that in a country that worships its stars, they are key to drawing an audience. In the first season, he's talked about osteoporosis with Salman Khan, a Bollywood actor whom he calls a close friend, as well as tennis player Sania Mirza, who suffered a knee injury last year.

And each show ends with an exercise segment, which, more often than not, is a dance number. "The first thing the producers told me that no show in India would work without some sort of dancing or Bollywood music," Dr. Ahluwalia said. "Every show needs that."

Each show ends with an exercise segment, which, more often than not, is a dance number. "The first thing the producers told me that no show in India would work without some sort of dancing or Bollywood music," Dr. Ahluwalia said. "Every show needs that."

Last Week's Solution:

1	T	E	A	B	A	G	S	16	S	A	B	E	R	21	C	O	D	A	S				
2	A	L	L	A	L	I	K	E	22	C	R	A	V	E	R	27	T	I	R	E	S	T	
3	P	L	A	C	E	S	I	N	T	H	E	H	E	A	T	28	L	E	N	T	O		
4	S	E	N	O	R	D	E	E	M	S	31	S	A	R	A	36	I	R	K				
5	N	O	R	R	O	O	M	F	O	R	O	N	E	M	O	E							
6	A	T	M	C	O	I	N	I	O	N	41	A	T	V									
7	C	H	I	N	T	O	W	N	D	R	N	O	D	R	A	F	E	T					
8	R	E	T	U	R	N	T	H	E	O	U	T	O	F	T	O	N	E	R	S			
9	E	N	E	R	O	A	L	A	R	M	S	A	I	R	S	M	U	G					
10	S	O	W	N	Y	M	A	S	T	R	I	P	M	E	T								
11	T	H	E	P	R	I	C	E	A	N	D	T	H	E	P	A	P	E	R				
12	R	O	E	S	O	D	A	S	T	I	A	S	T	A									
13	E	R	L	E	T	E	L	W	I	N	K	A	T	T	I	A	R	A					
14	F	U	L	L	M	E	A	L	J	A	C	K	E	T	G	E	R	M	A	N			
15	S	O	S	A	D	U	R	S	A	W	O	O	D	S	O	C	K						
16	F	O	L	L	O	T	H	E	F	E	E	T	M	O	B	Y	S	K	A				
17	A	T	E	O	N	E	A	T	A	S	T	E	E	M	A	G	S						
18	Z	E	V	O	N	A	N	D	J	U	S	T	I	C	E	F	O	R	A	L			
19	E	R	O	D	E	R	E	C	E	D	E	V	E	T	C	E	T	E	R	A			
20	D	I	N	E	D	S	I	D	E	S	S	O	R	E	A	R	M						



# “The Most Trusted Man in America”

A biography of the longtime TV news anchor covers all the bases but includes jarring editorial outbursts

By **WENDY SMITH** • LOS ANGELES TIMES

**W**alter Cronkite was not prone to introspection, and historian Douglas Brinkley emulates his subject in this thorough biography of the news broadcaster who in 1972 was declared “The Most Trusted Man in America.”

Brinkley’s lengthy narrative spends as much time on Cronkite’s stints as a paperboy as on his father’s alcoholism and his parents’ divorce. The author seems more interested in the ins and outs of Cronkite’s strained professional relationship with Dan Rather than in his 65-year marriage—though smart, sardonic Betsy Cronkite gets her due as the woman who could cut Walter down to size.

Some years after he retired from “The CBS Evening News,” as her spouse was holding forth “with anchorman-like authority,” Brin-

Brinkley [supplies] anecdotes about Cronkite’s ferocious competitiveness, the stamina during nonstop breaking-news reports that earned him the nickname “Iron Pants,” and the tendency to usurp other reporters’ airtime.

kley notes, Betsy remarked tartly, “Walter, you don’t have to be the most trusted man in America anymore!”

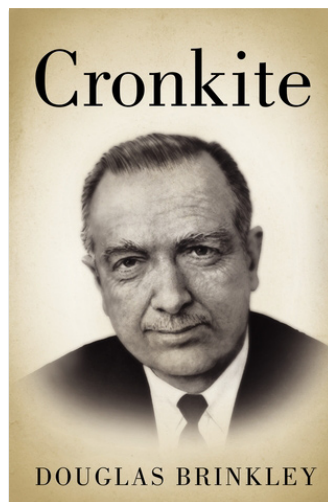
It was difficult for Cronkite to give up that role. He had worked hard and waited a long time to be named anchor of the nightly news broadcast at age 45 in 1962. He had proved himself a corporate team player by acting as straight man to a puppet on “The Morning Show” and covering the 1960 Winter Olympics along with weightier responsibilities reporting on political conventions and space flights. Cronkite wasn’t one of “the Murrow Boys,” the newsmen who worked with Edward Murrow for CBS Radio during World War II

and went on to espouse his brand of unafraid-to-editorialize journalism at CBS Television. Indeed, Cronkite turned down a job offer from Murrow in 1943, preferring to remain a United Press correspondent and a member of the “Murrow-Ain’t-God Club.”

When Cronkite moved into television in 1950, as host of the Washington, D.C., CBS station’s Sunday newscast, he modeled himself not on the intense Murrow but on the breezy, folksy style of radio legend Lowell Thomas. That style suited Cronkite, a Midwestern boy raised in Kansas City, Missouri, and Houston, Texas, who still knew where the best Kansas City barbecue joints were in 1976. He despised bigotry but would never have produced a program like “Who Speaks for Birmingham?,” the unabashedly anti-segregation-documentary that led to Howard Smith’s forced resignation from CBS News in 1961 (a departure that removed Cronkite’s principal rival for the network anchor job).

When Cronkite did take a stand, as he did in his famous 1968 “Report From Vietnam,” he delivered a careful, qualified assessment that concluded, “it is increasingly clear to this reporter that the only rational way out...will be to negotiate, not as victors, but as an honorable people who lived up to their pledge to defend democracy and did the best they could.”

This modest, “middling position,” as Brinkley accurately describes it, was characteristic of Cronkite and the source of his enduring appeal. He was no crusader; it was no accident that he chose as the tag line for his nightly broadcast, “That’s the way it is.” Cronkite believed in facts and in journalists’ obligation to report them objectively. During the turbulent 1960s and early ‘70s, facts led Cronkite and CBS News into hard-hitting coverage—of civil rights, Vietnam, the Pentagon Papers, the Watergate scandal—that infuriated conservatives and earned the network a prominent place in former Vice President Spiro Agnew’s 1969 attack on the perceived liberal media. But the Nixon administration didn’t dare put Cronkite on its notorious 1971 enemies list; he was



## CRONKITE

BY DOUGLAS BRINKLEY

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too enmeshed in the fabric of American life to be stigmatized.

Cronkite’s consummate professionalism in synthesizing fragmented reports from Dallas reassured a frightened public during the frantic hours after President John F. Kennedy was shot; his welling eyes and shocked pause after he read the news of Kennedy’s death expressed the nation’s collective grief. His enthusiastic coverage of the space program, from the first Mercury flights through the Apollo 11 moon landing in 1969, provided respite from an increasingly polarized political climate. Ordinary Americans believed that Uncle Walter shared their values, and his popularity outlasted the Cold War liberal consensus he incarnated.

His retirement from “The CBS Evening News” on March 6, 1981, was well timed. Cable television was fragmenting a once-monolithic market, and a plethora of openly partisan “news” programs would follow over the next 15 years. “There would no longer be must-watch Cronkite personalities,” writes Brinkley. “Before long the

TV news standards he had spent decades establishing would recede into the land of folly.”

That second sentence is regrettably emblematic of the author’s tendency to interject peculiar editorial generalizations into an otherwise bland text. It’s as though Brinkley is uncomfortable that his portrait hews closely to received notions about Cronkite and his times—no sin, if those received notions are correct—and feels obliged to pep things up with occasional, jarringly colloquial outbursts.

Cronkite’s unduly placatory interview with former Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley after the violent 1968 Democratic convention is characterized as “beyond lame.” His famous sign-off is dismissed as “that line of schmaltz.” Press secretary Bill Moyers’ claim that if Cronkite had criticized the Vietnam War sooner, then-President Lyndon Johnson might have de-escalated the conflict is profanely derided.

The verve Brinkley strains for with these tossed-off comments is better supplied by anecdotes about Cronkite’s ferocious competitiveness, the stamina during nonstop breaking-news reports that earned him the nickname “Iron Pants,” and the tendency to usurp other reporters’ airtime that led one enraged colleague to snarl, “If that old son of a b— does that to me one more time, I’m going right up to the anchor booth and put the earphones on him and tell him to interview himself!”

General readers will probably not be bothered by Brinkley’s uneven tone, and there’s no question that the biography comprehensively and capably narrates Cronkite’s life and career through the “Legacy of War” documentary that aired on PBS six weeks before his death in 2009. What’s missing from “Cronkite” is a coherent, sharply articulated point of view of the sort that makes Robert Caro’s multi-volume biography of Lyndon Johnson so stimulating, albeit sometimes maddening. Instead, it settles for a cover-all-bases approach that gets the job done but reveals little about Walter Cronkite that we didn’t already know.

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