



THE LAST GAZETTE
Issue 2

Edited by the Barcelona-based curatorial office Latitudes, and freely distributed from a micro-newsroom at the New Museum for ten weeks, 'The Last Post', 'The Last Gazette', 'The Last Register', etc., are hybrid weekly tabloids that are building incrementally into a surrogate catalogue for 'The Last Newspaper' at the New Museum, New York, 6 October 2010 – 9 January 2011. Latitudes and the volunteer news-team encourage you to pitch in with your suggestions for contributions.

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CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS

Opening gambit: The 'Full Story' referred to on the cover of Issue 1 was the Editorial on page 2, not page 8 as stated.

Flood at Large: On page 9 of Issue 1, Richard Flood's job title was given as 'Chief Curator' in his portrait caption. Shortly after going to press he assumed a new post as the New Museum's Director of Special Projects and Curator at Large.

Wax on, water off?: In the same article Flood discussed Luciano Fabro's *Tautologia-Pavimento* (Pavement Tautology), and stated that, "every morning, one mops the floor and then lays out yesterday's newspaper to absorb the moisture". Our Verona, Italy, correspondent Simone Menegoi proposed an alternate reasoning for this Italian housewives' tradition — protection of floor wax. Read the results of his ongoing investigation in Issue 7.

CAMNITZER • SCHABER • HAACKE • HALPERIN • McEWEN

The Last Gazette

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SORRY FOR THE METAPHOR

Amalia Pica: “My mom has this anecdote from when she was a child: she used to stand up on a chair and say ‘Eva Peron is immortal!’ and she was only five, I have a very outspoken mom! ...” [METAPHOR, PAGE 3](#)

“TIMELY!” • “SAVVY!” • “VIALE!” • “LOOSEY-GOOSEY!”

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34 PEOPLE LIKE THIS



EDITORIAL

By MAX ANDREWS and MARIANA CÁNEPA LUNA

In the October 4th issue of *The New Yorker*, Malcolm Gladwell— bestselling author of *The Tipping Point*— penned a spirited attack on the supposed activist potential of Twitter and Facebook. Such social networks, he proposes, are effective at increasing participation but only by lessening the level of motivation that participation requires.

Gladwell examined the most prominent mass protest of recent times — the civil rights movement — and argued that such activism was founded on the strength of friendships and common experiences, and orchestrated by powerful leadership, and that it could never have arisen from the ‘weak ties’ and associations that characterize the actions of online ‘friends’ and ‘followers’. Clay Shirky (see p.5) comes in for Gladwell’s particular ire for over-egging the social media revolution. “It is simply a form of organizing which favors the weak-tie connections that give us access to information over the strong-tie connections that help us persevere in the face of danger”, he writes.

In *Monocle* magazine’s September issue meanwhile, Robert Bound reflected on social media in TV news and wondered that if “the dialogue-not-the-monologue is what networks think audiences want. It might be truer to say that audiences now *expect* a conversation rather than really want it”. And according to the analytics service Sysomos, in a study reported by a host of other recent articles, Twitter is mostly a broadcast rather than a conversation medium: only 29% of tweets produce a reaction of any kind and virtually all interaction is over within a hour.

This is only the second issue of this in-house 10-week newspaper and catalogue-in-formation for “The Last Newspaper”. As we write, the first issue has just hit our newsstand here at the New Museum, and the exhibition has only just opened. Participation, conversation and connection – with the artists and organizations of the project, and the New Museum’s audience – are going to be, we hope, key to the ambitions of



both as editorial and curatorial explorations of what an exhibition-catalogue can be. The social networks of the museum (over 12,000 Twitter followers and 45,000 Facebook friends) are communities which seem to offer an exciting potential for new kinds of engagement, particularly in inviting



contributions to an ongoing publication project such as this.

As the robust responses to Gladwell which have accumulated on Alexis Madrigal’s blog at TheAtlantic.com have indicated, loose social networks have always existed alongside more organized structures,

information are wildly oversold and don’t really have any teeth and can’t effect real change. They’ve certainly changed the publishing industry.”

Yet this newspaper’s first foray into the New Museum’s social network community — a request for images of local newsstands and kiosks for what we’d hope would lead to a playful snapshot photo-essay of such sites of paper-and-ink distribution — was a resounding disappointment. Amongst a cloud of ‘likes’— well 34 to be precise — it encouraged just five images in response. Although we’re not trying to mobilize a social revolution, and we were doubtless overambitious that mouse clicks would mean camera clicks, we clearly have a lot to understand about how ‘weak ties’ can lead to strong results. And thank you Isadora F. from Belgrade; Bonnie S. from Heerhugowaard, Holland; Goso T. from Tokyo; Annie W. from New York and Anne W. from Berlin: your contributions grace these pages! □

A SYSTEM IS NOT IMAGINED, IT IS REAL

Julienne Lorz – Curator, Haus der Kunst, Munich – on Hans Haacke’s ‘News’ (1969/2008), one of the featured artworks presented in ‘The Last Newspaper.’



“Concorde breaks sound barrier” – “GDR celebrates 20th anniversary” – “Anti-Apartheid Protesters disrupt Frankfurt book fair”. Such headlines and their corresponding stories could be read by visitors to the exhibition *Prospect ‘69* at the Düsseldorf Kunsthalle in 1969. There, Hans Haacke had installed his work *News* (1969) consisting of a telex machine that printed out all current news items transmitted by the German news agency DPA. Initially Haacke collated these printouts, as well as those from his solo show at the Howard Wise Gallery in New York, where the work was shown a couple of months later, preserving and dating them in see-through plastic boxes. For the legendary exhibition *Software. Information Technology: Its New Meaning* (1970) at the Jewish Museum in New York, however, he dismissed this idea so as to avoid turning these paper messages into valued objects. Instead, the telex machines printed out reams of paper which curled in ever growing heaps onto the floor and after the show the once up-to-date information was discarded. The headlines during the *Software...* show recorded events which took place between 16th September and 8th November 1970, such as “Civil war breaks out in Jordan”– “Rock legend Hendrix dies after party” – “Soviet probe collects moon rock”, which had become yesterday’s disposable news.

Haacke has continued to update the technology used in *News*. Today it is a dot matrix printer linked up to a RSS newsfeed. But in an age where computers are ubiquitous and in spite of the – so far – non-existent paperless office, the impression of news being received and printed out is somewhat outmoded. Yet, the changing formal and technological aspects of *News* are not the main aspects of the work. Rather, it is the concept of dissolving the boundaries between two worlds: the exhibition within the context of a gallery or museum and everyday life existing outside of this sphere. News items in all their brutal reality and without the extra filter of a newspaper, TV or radio editor, perpetrate this hermetic space, where the noise of traffic and city life is rarely heard and where windowless white cubes supposedly create complete neutrality.

For Haacke the exterior



Hans Haacke, *News* (1969/2008), RSS newsfeed, paper and printer, dimensions variable.

elements influencing an artwork or a space are crucial, as he stated in Lucy Lippard’s publication *Six Years: The dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*: “A ‘sculpture’ that physically reacts to its environment is no longer to be regarded as an object. The range of outside factors affecting it, as well as its own radius of action, reaches beyond the space it materially occupies. It thus merges with the environment in a relationship that is better understood as a ‘system’ of interdependent processes. These processes evolve without the viewer’s empathy. He becomes a witness. A system is not imagined, it is real.”

Bringing the two domains together through *News* was particularly apposite when Haacke first began exhibiting the work: the Vietnam War was still raging, the aftermath of the tumultuous events in 1968 were still being felt and the Red Army Faction in Germany was just starting its reign of terror. But *News* is, of course, always current whenever it is being exhibited, while simultaneously affecting the past, as Haacke put it in a conversation with Kathleen MacQueen: “New information constantly overlays the old and influences how we understand what we heard and read the previous day”. □

METAPHOR

AMALIA PICA: “My mom has this anecdote from when she was a child: she used to stand up on a chair and say ‘Eva Peron is immortal!’ and she was only five, I have a very outspoken mom! I grew up just with her. She is very politically involved, she is a public figure. If you google her you can see her holding a microphone. I think my fascination with public items like microphones and podiums has more to do with this idea – how thought

happens in conversation. During the dictatorship in Argentina, there was a common enemy. You were either on one side or the other but the objective for both sides was very clear. I feel like I grew up in a malfunctioning democracy. It’s very difficult to know where you stand. I have a longing to be able to have something to say. So to me the microphone is not necessarily that public speech moment, it’s more about the moment in which you



Amalia Pica, *Sorry for the metaphor 2*, 2010. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Diana Stigter, Amsterdam.

homemade politics. It was that overlapping of the two things. I think the obsession with the megaphone is the obsession of actually finding a voice.” □

As told to Michele Robecchi. Originally published in *Mousse* #25, September 2010.

DIRT SHEET

In the first of her regular columns, Janine Armin's examines the ambitions of 'The Last Gazette' to be an exhibition catalogue-in-information.



The notion of newspaper as ephemeral catalogue enacts a kind of 'Marco-Polo journalism', a call and receive that strikes for more than a self-reflexive monologue. It advocates a relationship with the reader. Gallery copy could use such a diffident sparring partner that still upholds the brass-tacks spirit that was central to newspapers' early beginnings. In *The Function of Criticism* (1984) Terry Eagleton writes about England's frenzied 17th century literary scene, one that initially privileged "perpetual circulation", as seen with the writings of Samuel Richardson, before being taken over by the mechanism of subscription exemplified by Alexander Pope's publications. Could an incremental catalogue apply Richardson's circulatory mayhem, while considering not just the call of the gallery, but visitors' response to the exhibition?

The catalogue, destined for libraries and distribution warehouses, stands in stark contrast to ephemera, which can teeter on the edge of the dust-bin. Museums are not built for media with short-term time stamps. These throw-away constructs operate in a state of means and open ends. Yet they fit the moveable society in a McLuhanian sense, with the medium an apt encapsulator of the message. What else can a publication offer when constricted by internalized ideologies or institutions? The incremental remains a tool suited to multiple authorship and to processes of expression and information in a nomadic era.

The demise of literary patronage in the 18th century saw publishing enter a period of domination by classes of

individuals, a "named" readership, as Eagleton illuminates. Alternatives to the market-driven distribution that took over have come and gone, but ephemera continues to wield its exegetic hammer. Zines, dismissed in-part due the flip-pant ring of the nominal, were also the vital publications that on a grass-roots level were the discursive medium for third-wave feminism. Some key works included Sara McCarry's anti-neoliberal Glossolalia and China Martens' fetishistic writings about welfare moms comprising *The Future Generation*. Perhaps disposability heightened the engagement around these easily distributed pamphlets, prompting action instead of text-based debate? Even in projects not declared activist, ephemera takes on some of that fervor, providing an information channel that can problematize the news of the museum, providing life instead of edification. Performances like William Pope.L's *Eating the Wall Street Journal* (2000) which is being re-staged for *The Last Newspaper* are playful ways to ease the discursive lozenge.

Antoni Negri, in a recent text for the *e-flux* journal, considered the space in which the multitude deploys itself in the context of cities. What could this space be in a curatorial/editorial situation? A reciprocal relationship with readership, if messy, can entice collaboration and the generation of ideas for such a space. Ideally it might elicit the "singularities within the collective" that theorist Franco Berardi considers essential to happiness in his 2009 book *The Soul at Work*. Perhaps it's the space on the page where that of the exhibition can engage with a contemporary view.

In an 1831 issue of *The Spectator* an editor determined to offset the retaliation against his bourgeois publication issued the following statement: "A newspaper that should attempt to dictate, must soon perish". In the current context, it's a thoughtful warning to any forum where a community's voice is at stake — print-based or not — and a premise for finding a place where the multitude can adequately, even happily, deploy itself. □



PICTURE AGENT: OUR SINGULAR PICTURE AGENCY

ILANA HALPERIN
ARTIST

After perusing volcanic material the world over, somehow I still come back to Eldfell, an unexpected volcanic eruption which began suddenly on the Icelandic island of Heimaey on 23 January 1973. Not only a dramatic eruption, but a geological myth that happened in real life. A way to think about our place in relation to the volcano — an embrace of a potential catastrophe, a model to live by in these active times. Here we see a geologist, digging in new ash as he works to understand the volcano, mid-eruption. Photo: Courtesy of the Center for Short Lived Phenomena.



THE NEXT NEWSPAPER: Clay Shirky



Wikimedia Commons

Who is he?

'Internet guru', 'digerati' personality, social media theorist, producer, programmer, professor, designer, consultant, and one time theatre director. Author of *Cognitive Surplus: Creativity and Generosity in a Connected Age* (2010) and *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations* (2009) which has

been described as the "bible of the social-media movement".

Who has he worked for?

He is Associate Teacher at Tisch School of the Arts at New York University's Interactive Telecommunications Program. Prior to his appointment at NYU, Shirky was a Partner at the investment firm The Accelerator Group and Professor of New Media in the Media Studies department at Hunter College, New York. He has consulted for the Library of Congress, Nokia, Barnes and Noble, BP, Microsoft and the BBC, amongst others.

What has he written about?

The Internet, the politics of social software, peer-to-peer networks and recently, the collapse of the business model of

newspaper and book publishing and the future of accountability in journalism.

Why should we listen to him?

In his influential March 2009 article 'Newspapers and Thinking the Unthinkable' Shirky argued that in the early 1990s the newspaper industry mistakenly chose to believe that the core form of the newspaper was basically sound and "only needed a digital facelift". It failed to recognize that the internet would destroy its economic model — as "the incredible difficulty, complexity, and expense of making something available to the public had stopped being a problem". Journalism, not newspapers per se, are what needs saving he argues.

What is his solution?

He doesn't have one, and he proposes that there shouldn't be one. "Now is the time for experiments, lots and lots of experiments, each of which will seem as minor at launch as Craigslist did, as Wikipedia did, as octavo volumes did." Journalism needs to "bring in everything the internet has taught us about automation, syndication, parallel effort, and decentralization".

What future does he see for journalism?

Three big changes: an increase in direct participation (events documented and relayed by their participants as they are happening); an "increase in the leverage of the professionals working alongside the amateurs" (editing and shaping raw

material into something suitable for dissemination); and "a second great age of patronage".

What future does he see for newspapers?

"To put it in one bleak sentence, no medium has ever survived the indifference of 25-year-olds."

What do his critics say?

Adrian Monk, Head of Communications at the World Economic Forum has written "Shirky thinks that American newspapers are doomed because of digital technology, and on that he is just plain wrong. U.S. newspapers began their relative decline because the lives of millions of Americans were changed by two things that defined the 20th Century — cars and television". □

PICTURE MINING

INES SCHABER

‘Picture Mining’ focuses on one of the biggest picture collections in the world, the Corbis archive. Stored in a former Limestone mine near Boyers, western Pennsylvania, among its 70 million other pictures, it hosts some of Lewis Hine’s images of child labour in Pennsylvania from the early 1900s. Based on an installation from 2005, the following landscape photographs and text by a fictitious lecturer tell a speculative story of the mine and its contemporary usage.



1. The town of Boyers, where we’ll be for a while now, looks like this. Actually, this is not Boyers, but the area around. Between the two hills we see in this picture, just behind the trees in the valley, lies Boyers. The picture is pretty representative for this kind of area, but you can’t see a lot on this photograph. The landscape’s beautiful to me — with this kind of subtle picturesque quality, that one wouldn’t expect to find here ... although this may be due to the way I photographed it. What you really see in this photograph are some forests on the hills, mowed fields in between and rural flora in the foreground.

2. The goldenrod — the yellow plant — grows on loamy ground, often on former detrital areas. It is a so-called pioneer plant, an in-between vegetation. In this area it grows everywhere, pioneering and preparing the ground for the future.

3 & 4. Boyers is a town in Butler County in western Pennsylvania. In the early 20th century its proximity to the Bessemer and Lake Erie Railroad, which at the time had connected the industries of Pittsburgh with the cities of the Great Lakes, founded its importance. The area had a lot of mineral resources, which were essential for the industries: coal, oil, iron and limestone. There is not a lot left today.



These long endless straight streets cutting through the hills and creeks are typical for this area. They do not conduct you anywhere specifically, but just continue to lead you further. There are all these seemingly useless structures and they call forth some kind of truth about a time long past.

5. Here you can see today’s town center — a lawn. It is accurately trimmed and separated from the street by a beautiful wooden fence. The bush on the right further encloses the place ... and doesn’t the plant give the place a strange appearance? ... somehow it seems to fly ... a bush mimicking clouds.

6. This is the post office, which was a bank in those days. In its front, the national flag. It is the main building of the town today, although it is only open one afternoon per week. If you look closer, and try hard to follow the street to the right, you can see something that seems to be really important for the villagers: nobody is allowed to stop here.

The whole center of Boyers is so de-differentiated that it is really hard to picture it. I couldn’t get a good shot of it. But we shouldn’t stop here for too long; we have to go on.



7. Main Street at the corner of Steel Street, just around the corner from the town center. We went on our journey because we had been informed that somewhere here is a huge underground archive which also hosts one of the biggest picture collections in the world: Corbis. At home in Berlin we could see the pictures of the archive online, but it’s said that Corbis owns the rights to much more, and I was immediately thrilled to learn that they keep their originals far away, underground. Right here.

The sign in the middle gives us directions. It’s the old sign though — the predecessor of today’s archive — and it directs us to the United States Steel Annandale Archives. Obviously, these were the archives of the company that used to mine limestone here. The street does not really suggest an archive. It is more that kind of an old workers’ town with the headquarters of the company at the head of the street and the houses of the foremen on the sides. Today there is neither U.S. Steel nor any other company still present in the village. The former headquarters houses a hairdresser’s salon that can only be visited by appointment. If the hairdresser does your hair, he tells you stories of an Italian village, with gambling places and a cinema. He used to work for U.S. Steel himself as a guard and only became a hairdresser later. He stores his tools in the old vault at the company office, where they used to deposit the weekly payments for the workers. Together with a thrift shop in the center of the town, the salon is the only private enterprise here.

8 & 9. Starting from here, the expedition becomes tricky. The area just behind Main Street is private ground. On every other corner stands a sign saying “no trespassing.” Walking around between these signs, I am thinking of the photographer Lewis Hine and his photo series for the Child Labor Committee in the 1910s in Pennsylvania. He had to hide or disguise himself in order to take his photographs of children — he had to be invisible; people did not want him to take pictures. They were afraid of any information that could be communicated about the children working. A photographer and a researcher ... a spy and a counter-spy at the same time. Trying to take photographs here today, we come upon no people at all. No one, just the hairdresser.

I think these pictures work very well in black and white. Definitely second could be from the Farm Security Administration Project, the New Deal program



by the federal government that produced the iconic pictures of rural areas in the 30s. I guess the building is from that time too; it’s abandoned today.

The tree in the second picture irritates me. Its size doesn’t fit somehow — it’s way too tall in relation to my memory of the photographs of the time that the houses remind me of. The little shacks baffle me, too. I still cannot imagine what they’re possibly made for. They are opening in too many directions. One could be a garage — then again I’ve never before seen a garage with a lawn entry.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8...



10. Later in the afternoon, within walking distance from Main Street: this is the last stop sign we pass on our way to find the archives. Until the 1950s U.S. Steel mined limestone here for a couple of decades. The Boyers mine was one of the most productive facilities in the area — tons and tons of limestone were mined here. Limestone was necessary for the manufacturing of iron and steel, for the building of railroads and public roads and for making cement. It was this mineral resource that made the area profitable for a whole century only to be abandoned later. The area is still owned by U.S. Steel, but their main business lies elsewhere. The entire area that we have so far been walking on is tunneled. The underground space must be huge. It is impossible to envision the logic of the whole place from outside. I'm dying to go underground, into the dark, and get hold of at least some of the place's mysteries.

11. A five minute drive from the center, on the other side of the hill. It is completely forbidden to take a photograph of the underground picture archive on this side of the mountain, but the place where I took the picture from was a convenient spot. I took a picture — and here it is ... although I cannot possibly imagine what one could see on this photograph.

The parking lot is the only visible sign of the presence of people working underground today. In the morning, there are all these cars arriving from both sides of the mountain. People park and then disappear. It looks like there is a lot of work to be done in the archive underground. I've been told that there are more people working here today than there were then. The limestone workers have built perfect conditions for archiving all sorts of materials, and the vastness of the space can still not be filled.



Hine's pictures are said to be here too. And they are now part of a picture holding that controls the market — not only around Boyers, but in the whole world. Corbis stores the originals here, while their copies wander around. If you download a photograph from their page on your PC, it has a their watermark inscribed, naming the proprietor of the picture archive here. I assume every fifth image we see comes from here. What is mined here today are the images of yesterday.

12 & 13. There is a discrepancy between the handling of the landscape and the business with the images picturing it. It really makes me want to deal with photographs myself — if only to wander around ... them and me ... appear and disappear whenever it pleases me ... and look out for some of the mysteries which might — also here — still be.

The expedition comes to an end. We have seen a little town called Boyers and we have been walking on ground that is grooved. We can only go a little bit farther toward an entrance on the far south of the mine, more than a mile away, still above the tunnels. We do not expect to enter here nor anywhere else, but this was not the reason to come here anyway. The pictures underground and the landscape above it leave us in the midst of a blind alley.

Everything's so green — lush green. Even the former entrance to the mine, flooded and mossy, but green. Does the green want to tell us another story? The color of universality and global cohesion? — doesn't help us too much here. In the middle ages green represented evil, demonic beings. Walking around here, this makes more sense. In North America green is the sign that denotes a rise in stock markets — speculations — strange relations — being here. And here is where I leave you now and let you return to another space.

SORRY WE'RE DEAD

Andrew Losowsky – twice a speaker at the Great Obituary Writers Conference – plays tribute to 'The Last Newspaper' artist Adam McEwen.

OBITUARY

British-born, New York-based artist Adam McEwen, who has not died of a heart attack aged 45, was and is a creator of celebrated artwork that has included oversized text messages paintings and the placing of used chewing gum onto gallery walls. Perhaps his best known works so far, however, are an echo of his previous career as a journalist and obituary writer for the U.K.'s *Daily Telegraph* newspaper.

His series of fake obituaries, first included as part of his 2004 exhibition *History is a Perpetual Virgin endlessly and repeatedly Deflowered by successive generations of Fucking Liars*, at Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery in New York caused some consternation among visitors. He told *Interview* magazine's website, "I'm interested in that brief second when you aren't sure whether Bill Clinton is alive or dead. I only need that moment in order to disorient [you] enough to sneak through to some other part of the brain to achieve that split second of turning the world upside down".

These creations by McEwen, who did not collapse and die during preparation for his exhibition *Fresh Hell* in Paris last week, are an echo of the obituary editor's worst nightmare: publishing an obit too early.

As of a few years ago, the undecayed McEwen's former employer *The Daily Telegraph* had files on around 7,000 living celebrities of one kind or another – some of collections of cuttings and random facts to be inserted by the journalist when the time comes, others fully written and edited pieces. By the time that Bob Hope finally died aged 100 in 2003, many of his obituarists had already themselves passed away.

All of which means that, due to a whispered rumor or a slip of the mouse, an obituary can be published prematurely without much effort. It has happened thus far to, for example, Ernest Hemingway, Steve Jobs, Alice Cooper, Rudyard Kipling, and Mark Twain, whose reaction to the publication of his obituary in the *New York Times*

was to declare "I will make an exhaustive investigation of this report that I have been lost at sea. If there is any foundation for the report, I will at once apprise the anxious public".

Such a mistake can happen for many reasons. *The Daily Telegraph* published an obituary of an aged former screen actress, on the authority of a friend of hers who had gone to visit her in a nursing home, and had been told that her friend "had moved on to a better place." The better place, it turned out, was a room on the floor above, and it was another two years before she was actually interred at a more permanent location.

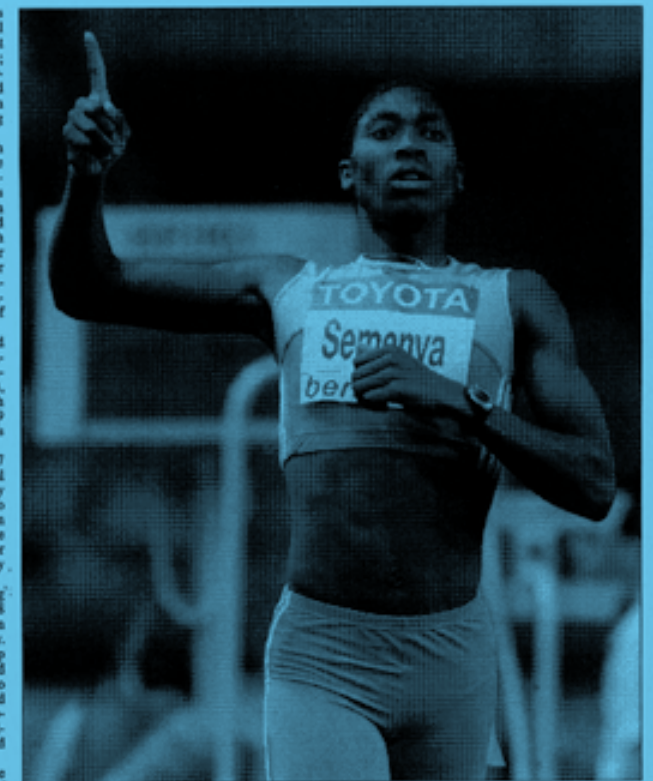
The internet age has led to an increase in such errata. Mischievous Wikipedians notwithstanding, in 2003, CNN inadvertently published some of its pre-written obituaries online. They weren't quite finished, however, as the text from the obituaries of the Queen Mother and Ronald Reagan had been substituted at various points in other people's tributes, leading to such revelations as Dick Cheney being the UK's favorite grandmother, that Pope John Paul II had a love of horse racing, and that Fidel Castro was a lifeguard, athlete, and movie star before going on to become the 40th President of the United States.

The work of Adam McEwen, who we must reiterate has not passed away tragically at an early age, once described his premature obituaries as "accounts of certain people's actions taken in an attempt to make their lives better". As with genuine obituaries, they read as the first drafts of history, an attempt to put lives and achievements in some sort of context. In this case, however, as their subjects aren't dead, there is still an opportunity for them to rewrite their own narratives.

According to legend, this was what happened to Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite. He was mistakenly obituarized in a French newspaper, who described his legacy as being "the merchant of death". In an attempt to clear the family name, he bequeathed much of his fortune to found the Nobel Prize as a celebration of more lofty human achievements.

Caster Semenya

World Champion middle distance runner whose gender came under intense public scrutiny



Semenya (2009): ran into the headlines of sports, gender and their politics

CASTER SEMENYA, who has died aged 19, won the gold medal in the Women's 800m race at the 2009 World Championships; her victory sparked controversy about her true gender and plunged her into a maelstrom of racial, sexual and sporting politics.

Semenya grew up in South Africa's poorest and most remote region, on its northern frontier with Zimbabwe, and was unknown to most South African athletes when she was entered for the 2008 Commonwealth Youth Games, held in India. Her gold medal in the 800m was for most the first sight of her unusually powerful physique and efficient style, more characteristic of a male middle distance runner.

Yet what began to excite and surprise observers in equal measure was her startling improvement over the next six months, culminating in her triumph in the same event at the 2009 African Junior Championships in Mauritius.

Her winning time of 1:56.7 was not only a new national senior record, and the fastest by any woman that year, but it also clipped four seconds off her own best time to date. That year, she had also reduced her time for the 1500m by an extraordinary 25 secs.

Some ascribed her startling progress to the fact that until 18 months earlier she had never run on a track nor trained properly. Indeed, she had only taken up running, among the scrub and thorn of Limpopo Province, to stay fit for soccer, her preferred sport. Her times, said her supporters, were simply the fulfilment of previously unharmed natural potential.

Others, including the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), the worldwide governing body of the sport, felt instead that there might be other explanations, such as doping, and that it was incumbent on them to investigate.

When the 18-year-old Semenya crisscrossed into the final of the 800m at the World Championships in Berlin, the global media spotlight fell on her. Then, three hours before the race on August 19, a leak to the press that the IAAF had forced Semenya to undergo a gender test triggered a media frenzy.

Despite the shock of this, she displayed no sign at the start of feeling any additional pressure, and having taken an early lead on the first lap surged home more than 2.5 secs clear of her rivals. Nevertheless, privately she felt humiliated.

Accordingly, she told the president of Athletics South Africa, Leonard Chuse, that she was considering boycotting the presentation of her gold medal. She also refused to accept a prize at her investment. She had to be persuaded reluctantly to return to the stadium to accept it.

Yet despite an increasing

berage of insinuating articles about her – stories with which she was visibly uncomfortable – Semenya was greeted as a heroine on her return to South Africa.

It therefore came as even more of a blow when it was revealed in September that Chuse himself had ordered secret gender examinations on Semenya even before she had left for Berlin. He had led to her about the nature of the tests, telling her that they were standard procedures for detecting steroids. Neither the results of these tests nor those of the IAAF were made public, leading to further rumors.

It was evident that Semenya's exceptionally muscular form far exceeded that of other women athletes, and there was speculation that she was genetically male.

There had been several notable cases of this before in the sport. The winner of the 1973 Olympic Gold in the 100m, Polish athlete Stella Walsh, was revealed after being killed in a street robbery in 1980 to have had male genitalia but both male and female chromosomes, a condition known as transsexual.

In the 1960s, meanwhile, field events were dominated by a pair of powerfully built Soviet stars, Tamara and Irina Press, whose careers were abruptly ended by the introduction of chromosome tests. There had also long been suspicions about Olympic champion Jarmila Kratochvílová, the Czechoslovakian runner whose record for the Women's 800m, set in 1985, still stands.

In the case of Semenya, however, it became clear that advances in science had made a simple determination of sex more and not less difficult.

Better understanding of genetics and physiology indicated that transgressing could take many forms, and while it was known that a straightforward check of external organs was no longer a sufficient test of femininity, a determination of sex might depend on many subtle factors, including psychology.

But much of the press seemed determined to define Semenya's sexuality. One Australian newspaper went as far as to claim that

the basis of their physical characteristics. Athletics also has a history of controversy in South Africa. For instance, the junior women's record time Semenya surpassed in Mauritius was none other than Zola Budd, who had become a British citizen in order to compete in the Olympics during the era of sanctions against apartheid.

Certainly, the one person for whom it was possible to feel sympathy in all this was Semenya – not least when she was prevailed upon to submit to a "feminine makeover" for the pages of *Elle*, a South African glossy magazine.

She appeared wholly surprised and sobriety at what had overtaken her, and few sensed that she had somehow cheated her competitors or deliberately deceived officials. Indeed, while her plight had become something about which everyone had an opinion, and of which many were taking advantage, it was she who had the least control over the situation, and the most to lose.

Makgadi Caster Semenya was born on January 7 1991 at Ge-Mashong, a remote village near Pekaeweng (now Pekaeweng). Her father was a municipal gardener who was often absent from home, looking for or away at work. She and her three sisters therefore grew up largely in nearby Pekaeweng, in a house without electricity or running water where her grandmother lived.

Even when young, teachers sometimes thought her a boy because of her liking for her sports and their company. She became used to being taken into lavatories to be inspected because of her strong build, but nothing seemed obviously sinister – although at 14 she was teased from playing soccer with girls because she was too rough.

She attended Ntshema Secondary School and at 18, her talent having been discovered, entered Pretoria University as a student of sports science.

It was not sufficient to dismiss simply that she had, for instance, male chromosomes or masculine levels of testosterone in her blood. There are for example medical conditions in which a person can lack the enzymes that enable the body to benefit from these characteristics. Such a case can fluctuate during their lifetime, perhaps being present in childhood but then overwhelmed by a flood of hormones in puberty.

Further adding to the furor surrounding Semenya were accusations – made for instance by the ruling African National Congress party – that she was a victim of racial discrimination.

There were also heightened sensitivities both about the status of women in the country and, given the recent legacy of apartheid, about the classification and potential disgrace of someone on

In November 2009, the entire board of Athletics South Africa, including Chuse, was suspended pending an enquiry. Later that month, the IAAF announced that Semenya was to be allowed to keep her gold medal and her prize money, but although the publicity spared her intention of competing in 2010, it was unclear if she would ever have run professionally again.

She is survived by her parents, three sisters and a brother.

Adam McEwen, *Untitled (Caster)*, 2010, C-Print in yellow Plexiglas artist's frame
Courtesy the artist and Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery, New York

However, reading one's own accidental obituary doesn't guarantee such a positive result. The black nationalist Marcus Garvey apparently came across a mistaken obituary of himself

in a Chicago newspaper that described him as having passed away "broke, alone, and unpopular". The shock was such that it caused him to suffer two strokes; he died soon after. □

Andrew Losowsky blogs at www.losowsky.com/magtastic Fresh Hell / Carte Blanche à Adam McEwen is at the *Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 20 October 2010–16 January 2011*



The micro-local ‘Last Gazette’ – whose contributors are participating pro bono – asked Adam Chadwick to respond to the hyperlocal-citizen journalist reporter trend in big news

Fit to Print

It has always been the tradition of legacy news organizations to cater to wealthier neighborhoods in order to attract bigger advertising. Newspapers, until 2003-04, had enjoyed double-digit profit margins by focusing on advertising which attracted people who would be sure spenders. Gone was the mentality of serving the need of the public over the greed of Wall Street. Organizations such as the *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Miami Herald*, *Newsday* and *Baltimore Sun* were only a few of the newspapers which made impressive efforts from the late 1960s to the 1990s to cater to wealthier neighborhoods. With the rise of 24-hour cable news during the early 1980s, news executives from television networks quickly discovered how profitable news could actually be. The newspaper industry was quick to follow in their lead. Geneva Overholser, who worked for a number of years at the Gannett Corporation – the biggest newspaper chain in the country for the past forty years – has stated, “we extended our reach to wealthy areas because that was where the money was. It got so bad that newspaper companies even

started removing newspaper dispenser boxes from lower-income communities”. If we examine the ‘hyperlocal’ mentality many newspapers are now zeroing in on, it’s easy to see how they continue to cherry-pick wealthier neighborhoods for experimentation. Take for example, the *Washington Post’s* embarrassing hyperlocal experiment LoudounExtra, which targeted Loudoun County, Virginia. It’s no surprise that Loudoun is one of the most affluent counties in the U.S.. According to author Jeff Kaye, in the “potential readership of big spenders, the site fizzled”. Jump to the *New York Times’* The Local East Village Blog, and again, it’s no surprise to see a major newspaper reach for a more affluent neighborhood in order to test a hyperlocal experiment. Except this time, there’s another added bonus: free writing from NYU journalism students (the Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute at New York University). Why not knock two birds out with one stone? Especially since the *Times* recently (again) reported a quarterly loss. The idea behind the hyperlocal wave is not something to be dismissed. It can, and will provide citizen journalists with the opportunity to engage with their communities on a much larger and more organized platform. But the The Local East Village Blog? The start-ups for hyperlocal news should begin in poorer communities, not rich ones. The *Times* should be making the South Bronx, Bushwick or

Bed-Stuy the priority. Those are the local neighborhoods which need well-rounded community interaction in the form of journalism. Maybe if the *Times* made an effort to work exclusively in these poorer areas where crime and poverty are higher, we would have a clearer understanding of where the problems in the city stem from. Big newspapers are desperately trying to keep up with the latest trends in journalism instead of creating them. They shouldn’t have to resort to citizen journalists in the first place. That’s why they pay reporters to cover local areas (or once did). Oddly enough, many of those former newspaper reporters are now teaching journalism courses. The same courses which stress the importance of writing for an over-hyped *New York Times* blog. Why? Because it looks good on a resume. The significance of newspaper company branding is dead, and should stay dead. If you’re a journalism student with enough confidence to turn over your work to a newspaper company that has the balls to work their unpaid interns to death, while at the same time lay-off salaried staffers, you should have enough confidence to start your own hyperlocal news website and self-promote. With the emergence of blog reference sites like Technorati, there is no need to worry about whether or not people will see your work. If it’s well done, people will find it. That’s the beauty of the web. Self branding is the name of the game. □

100 YEARS AGO... ‘Daily Public Ledger’ (Maysville, Kentucky) 1892–1968 (merged with ‘The Daily Independent’ to form ‘The Ledger Independent’), October 13, 1910.



The Library of Congress / University of Kentucky, Lexington.

IN BRIEF

SAC BEE CUTS

Sacramento, California: Effective 15 October, twenty-nine employees of the *Sacramento Bee* (established 1857) including the sports editor, two photographers, an artist and a newsroom assistant, have accepted buyout offers or have been laid off. The majority of the jobs go in circulation and production as the newspaper moves to a ‘computer to plate’ printing system. The *Sac Bee’s* parent company, the McClatchy Company, has previously cut 153 jobs at the title this year and last, and more than 4,150 jobs company-wide since June 2008. □ *Source: Sacramento Business Journal / Paper Cuts*



MEDIA HABITS: LUIS CAMNITZER

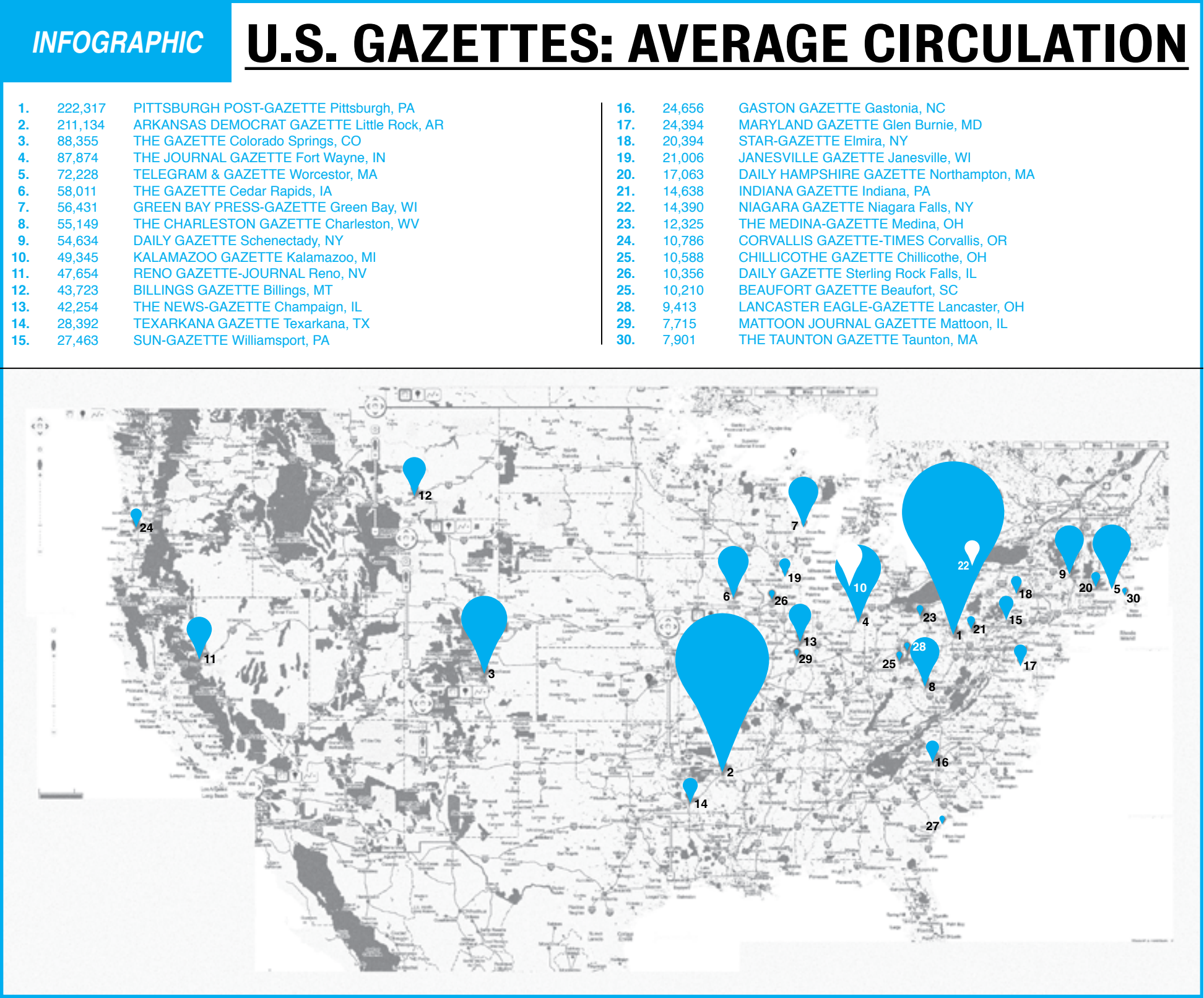
The German-born Uruguayan artist and writer, who has lived in the U.S. for the past three decades, on his love for novels (and hate for ‘30 Rock’) ahead of his retrospective at El Museo del Barrio next year

NEWSPAPERS I get the *New York Times* every morning, I’m subscribed and it’s read over breakfast. Over the course of the day online I’ll check *La República* and *El País* (both from Montevideo, Uruguay) and *El País* from Spain. Weekly: *Brecha* from Uruguay. I mostly read the international and local news, art and culture, and business sections. I try to mix left and right wing reading and to escape New York provincialism as much as possible. Occasionally I’ll also look online at *The Guardian* and *The Independent* (U.K.). **MAGAZINES** I read *Der Spiegel* (online) from Germany, as well as *The New Yorker*, *The New York Review of Books*, and *Art in America* – I read quickly at home, and more deeply when articles sound interesting. I’m also subscribed to *Wired* and *Scientific American*. **ONLINE** I spend a lot of time

online, mostly through Google and Wikipedia. The internet is invaluable to me. Since I often make work based on documentation, I can often find what I’m looking for immediately on the web. In 1990 I started research about the *Batallón de San Patrio*, the battalion of U.S. deserters that from 1846–1848 went over to the Mexican Army during the U.S. invasion of Mexico, and I had to travel all over to find material. Today I probably could do most of that with my computer. Productivity is greatly improved. **TELEVISION** I’m a fan of HBO series and usually watch them on demand, most recently *The Office*. I hate NBC’s *30 Rock* and all other overacted and dumbed down programs. **RADIO** I’ll listen to NPR while driving. **BOOKS** I’ve recently read Roberto Bolaño’s posthumous

novel *El Tercer Reich* (The Third Reich); Jonathan Franzen’s *Freedom*; and Barbara Kingsolver’s *The Lacuna*. All three books are excellent in their own way. Bolaño’s novel is an early one, and not yet in his signature style, which is refreshing. It is full of wonderful insights when he describes moods and events. Franzen’s *Freedom* I found much more coherent and solid than he was in *The Corrections*, and I found it to be a great class analysis in the tradition of what we call the *novela de costumbres* (novel of manners). Kingsolver’s novel is a great description of Mexican cultural history, and it’s very insightful about Kahlo, Rivera and Trotsky. But also in relation to U.S. Depression. I had never heard about the Bonus Army, the veterans of WWI who camped and demonstrated in front of the White House in 1932 because they

had not received their promised bonuses, and the subsequent massacre of the protesters that was led by General MacArthur with the help of Eisenhower and Patton. Quite amazing. I use AbeBooks.com and ZVAB.com to find used books. But Amazon is probably my biggest source, and although I am fighting for the survival of printed books, I must confess that for fiction I use their Kindle device. It allows me to keep my library space for reference books. My wife is my pre-reader for fiction in English. I try to keep up with Spanish fiction, but recommendations come late and books are less accessible here. I try to make up for that when I travel, but there is always the problem of luggage limitation! German fiction is less interesting for me, although I don’t have arguments to justify my assertion. □



Average Daily Circulation; Source: Audit Bureau of Circulations 3/31/2010; Illustration: Irina Chernyakova