

**T**hanks to the continuing support of our sponsors Review continues to grow. This edition brings a number of changes: a move to a larger format, a new designer and the decision to include both the award-winning typography and design journal, *Ragged Right*, as well as our new acquisition, *Cold Type*, as inserts in every copy from now on.

The format change is partly a practical response to these new inserts and partly because, as a university-based magazine, it was always the intention

to experiment. The arrival of a new designer in the department, Ulla Otte, an Essen University graduate, simultaneously with *Cold Type*, seemed to provide the impetus to rethink Review.

Some readers are sure to remember Tony Sutton, who started as a linotype operator in Horncastle (on the Tyneside) and came out to South Africa to work on Drum. He moved from there to start Freelance Editors with Kerry Swift and the duo won many awards on the Reef. Tony is now design director for Thomson Newspapers

in Canada and recognised as one of America's top designers, working on both sides of the Atlantic.

*Ragged Right* and *Cold Type* are both Tony's work and he has been characteristically generous in letting us have the litho's free. TML and Ton Vosloo of *Nasionale Pers* have matched that generosity in picking up the tab for the printing of these two publications in South Africa.

The material in *Cold Type* and *Ragged Right*, combined with our penchant to occasionally lift an article from the

British Journalism Review, may lead to the accusation of Eurocentrism in the total product. (We have already in past editions been accused of being sexist, middle-class and, thankfully, politically incorrect.) The Eurocentric bias is a more worrying one, however, and presents the challenge for the coming year. Can South African journalism produce articles to rival those reproduced in *Cold Type*? We believe so and will be looking for them in 1995 together with scouts in the industry, with the intention of printing the best.

## guest editorial

By Bill Ketter

**Make way for market-driven content. Stand aside for an avalanche of colourful and snappy pages. Hold your breath for big changes in the form and function of newspapers everywhere.**

That, in essence, was the central message coming out of the first World Editors Forum held recently in Vienna, Austria, under the sponsorship of the International Federation of Newspaper Publishers (FIEJ).

One hundred editors from 27 nations spent two days discussing ways to reverse declining readership and make newspapers more relevant to people's everyday lives.

FIEJ Director General Timothy Balding arranged the unusual session in response to global concern of newspaper executives over dramatic changes in the information industry and how they might affect traditional press values.

"These competitive challenges will undoubtedly intensify, the pace of technological change will increase and new barriers will fall, revealing an entirely different communications landscape," Balding said.

"Thus a new dialogue is clearly needed between editors worldwide. They feel the need to exchange and debate fundamental professional issues."

The everyday problems, it turned out, are remarkably similar — from illiteracy in South Africa and Slovenia to smaller editorial budgets in the United States and United Kingdom to young people with no time to read in Indonesia and Ireland to newsroom discomfort with marketing departments in Belgium and Brazil.

So, too, the suggested solutions — imaginative content, improved appearance, innovative newsrooms. And with more emphasis on what readers want and less accent on what editors think they need, like it or not.

"If newspapers deliver what the readers want — and when they want it — the rest will flow ... circulation and advertising," said Terry Quinn, editorial director for Thomson Regional Newspapers of England.

Quinn, whose newspaper group has

bucked the 1990s trend of falling readership in England, said editors must "work much harder to make life easier for readers" by:

- \* Focusing on the precise news demands of their markets.

- \* Printing high-quality full-colour newspapers.

- \* And employing a diverse work force that reflects the community.

"Most of our publications were written and edited by men, for men," Quinn said. "The result? Half of our potential audience was being, at best, patronised; at worst, alienated."

To overcome this obstacle to growth, Thomson Regional Newspapers assembled a research team of senior women journalists and marketers. The findings, Quinn said, "identified real gaps in coverage and serious concerns about traditional news values and judgments. The project challenged conventional newsroom wisdom and exposed a fault line running right through the entire daily process of story selection and projection."

Gene Cryer, editor and vice president of the Fort Lauderdale, Sun Sentinel, gave essentially the same appraisal of the problem in the United States.

"US newspapers are not dying; they are committing suicide," said Cryer. "They are produced by journalists for other journalists and/or their sources. They are, for the most part, irrelevant to most reader groups."

The answer, Cryer went on, is "really not complicated. All the editors have to do is listen to their readers. Not talk. Listen. And keep listening."

At Fort Lauderdale, he said, friendly ears resulted in a newspaper that has grown three-fold over the past 15 years in one of America's most competitive markets.

"We took the necessary steps to make sure we never lost touch with our readers," Cryer said. "I wanted to make sure whatever we did would become a part of the culture of our newspaper, not just a quick-fix programme that would go away as soon as I quit pushing it."

Significant changes included assigning a senior editor to the fulltime job of

making sure the Sun-Sentinel talks daily with its readers and gives them a voice in what the paper does and how it does it. This, in turn, resulted in several additions to the Sun-Sentinel that improved circulation, such as:

- \* Full-colour Sunday science page aimed at young readers but which also appeals to older, loyal readers.

- \* Teentime, a weekly page in the entertainment section which carries movie and record reviews by teenagers.

- \* Weekly reports by a corps of 50 high school journalists on news they're interested in.

- \* Weekly television book.

- \* Separate, sassy alternative newspaper for adults who are not regular newspaper readers.

- \* Bilingual tabloid (EXITO!) aimed at South Florida's exploding Hispanic population.

"I'm sure some of you are sitting out there mulling, 'What's with all this touchy-feely stuff?'" Cryer told the editors forum. "Newspapers are supposed to be tough, confrontational, aggressive and so forth. So please explain to me why a newspaper can't be both. In fact, if you will listen to your readers, they will tell you they expect you to be both."

But Jos Huypens, editor-in-chief of *Gazet van Antwerpen* in Belgium, worried that journalists may be pandering to marketing gimmicks more common to selling toothpaste than newspapers.

"Isn't there any danger that the newsroom becomes the prisoner of the marketing department, the budgetary control, the informaticians and the personnel manager?" he asked. "To what extent will editorial offices still be doing real journalistic work?"

The answers, Huypens said, probably lie in a better relationship between the editorial and marketing departments, reorganization of the newsroom and different hiring practices.

"The editorial office is no longer the only one to decide about the content and the layout of the newspaper," he said. "The results of reader inquiries and the activities of the competitors have their influence. And for the Bohemien-like, lonesome journalist

there certainly is no room anymore. Consultations, planning, team work and organisation are the key words now."

Frank Daniels, executive editor of the Raleigh, News and Observer, urged the editors to think beyond the printed paper to the new electronic media. He told of establishing an electronic bulletin board for students and teachers throughout North Carolina, and hooking up with the Internet international on-line computer service.

"You have to be prepared to change both the form and function (of newspaper organizations) to respond to this new demand" among young people for electronic information, said Daniels.

Bill Walker, assistant to the editor of the Hull, England, Daily Mail, said he changed the form of his newspaper-in-education programme by building a computerized classroom at the paper and bringing students there.

"It was an instant success," said Walker. "Youngsters have produced their own newspapers and topic work and have been inspired to read our newspaper. It has made us an established part of the education and upbringing of thousands of young people."

Representatives of the Society for Newspaper design told how and why good design and photographs help sell newspapers, especially in the age of multi-channel television. Kelly Doe, art director for the Washington Post magazine, urged the use of artistic layouts to draw the reader into the story. She also expressed regret that many newspapers are avoiding controversial photos and graphics because they don't want to rattle their readers.

"We're losing our bent for risk-taking," said Doe. "We're too concerned with being politically correct."

There was little disagreement among the assembled editors.

**Ketter is editor of the Quincy, Patriot Ledger, and vice president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. He served as chairman of the first World Editors Forum.**