



**Committee on Chicano Rights, Inc**

August 17, 1998

Ms. Karin Winner, Editor  
San Diego-Tribune  
P.O. Box 120191  
San Diego, CA 92112-0191

Ms. Winner:

Below are statements and quotes attributed to yourself and others from a June 20, 1998, San Diego Union-tribune article entitled " Trust in journalists takes a hit", written by Mark Sauer.(enclosed)

- 1) " I am stunned that someone with such a passion for our business would violate our most cherished value. Our credibility is the essential ingredient in our relationship with our readers. We take our responsibility to our readers very seriously." Karin Winner, Editor San Diego Union
- 2) "The currency of journalism is facts, our daily transactions are structured around fairness, balance, perspective and the elusive quest for truth" Mark Sauer, San Diego Union.
- 3) "The standard of truth is deteriorating in this country and it is a great problem" Richard Reeves, syndicated columnist.

I quote the above, and bring it to your attention, because I would like to file a complaint, the difference is between the unprofessional, shoddy, incompetent and unethical journalism which Patricia Smith, Boston Globe, Stephen Glass, The New Republic and Janet Cooke, The Washington Post stand accused of, and the enclosed August 12, 1998 San Diego Union article by Leonel Sanchez entitled " A Bishop and the search at the border."?

In my opinion, the enclosed article by reporter Sanchez (or his editors) is not an article, but rather a thin veiled editorial which attempts to "white wash" and even "cover-up" a very serious issue and practice at the U.S./Mexico border. In fact, why didn't reporter Sanchez and his editors just didn't allow U.S. Custom Director Rudy Camacho to write the article? Because it is apparent that they swallowed his version....hook, line and sinker!

I find it incredibly, that a responsible reporter, or newspaper editor would begin an article (without an investigation) with a sub-title "Story of his being stripped by custom just isn't true" and conclude that it never happened when the following was never investigated:

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1) Reporter Sanchez never interviewed Bishop Guerrero, who according to the Calexico Chronicle, after he was "stripped search" immediately returned to Mexicali and filed a complaint with Mexicali Mayor Eugenio Elorduy, Councilman Alfredo Arenas, and the Mexican Consulate.

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3) Reporter Sanchez appears never to have interviewed Calexico Chronicle Editor Hildy Carrillo-Rivera who broke the story (27 days before the San Diego Union) who had the Bishop complaint (which she published), and who to date stands by her article (which she had a constitutional right to print) and which she refuses to retract!

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5) Reporter Sanchez never bothered to interview me, even though I faxed him the letter <sup>WHICH I SEND</sup> to both Senator Boxer and Feinstein in which I requested an investigation on the "strip search", a "cover-up" by U.S. Custom, violation of the constitutional right of freedom of the press (Calexico Chronicle) and also the failed U.S. government policies at the U.S./Mexico border.

I am assuming that common sense or sound journalism standards would of dictated an investigation of the above, if a fair, balanced, truthful and objective article was to be written. I also would assume that due to the contradictory statements i.e. the Bishops complaint, Councilman Arenas complaint filed with the Chamber, Executive Director Fred Knuchel's statement, "if we would of known what we now we would've destroyed that complaint", and U.S. Customs' position that it didn't happen and a retraction was demanded, shows that someone is either fabricating or lying! What is disturbing (and our reasons for calling for an investigation) is that even though disruption (the blockade) has taken place and numerous question remain, no one appears to be in any rush to investigate or get to the truth. In other words those in power including the San Diego Union are not doing their job.



# Trust in journalists takes a hit

Readers betrayed by Boston writer's mix of fact, fiction

By Mark Sauer  
STAFF WRITER

The currency of journalism is facts, our daily transactions are structured around fairness, balance, perspective and the elusive quest for truth.

But that currency was badly devalued yesterday.

The *Boston Globe* reported that it has forced Patricia Smith, its award-winning, dynamic and widely heralded metro columnist, to resign after she admitted inventing some of the people and quotes in her columns.

A Pulitzer Prize finalist this year, Smith, 42, wrote with deep passion and eloquence about race and poverty and gang violence, about "grocery clerks and bartenders and single mothers," as she put it in her last column yesterday, an apology to readers.

But for all of her talent and compassion, Smith — who is also a poet, actress and playwright — ultimately betrayed those whom she worked so hard to reach and move with her words: her readers.

Smith was known to blend poetry and journalism to dramatic effect; it turns out she blended fact and fiction as well.

"I wanted the pieces to jolt, to be talked about, to leave the reader indelibly impressed," Smith wrote in her farewell. "And sometimes as a result of trying to do too much and cutting corners, they didn't. So I tweaked them to make sure they did."

See SMITH on Page A-18

B1  
A-18

## Smith

Columnist produces story of betrayal

Continued from A-1

In a May 11 column, "The Cruel Truth About Cancer," for example, Smith made up Claire, a patient with a brain tumor, who reacted to the promising news about experimental treatments on mice:

"I'm not proud," Smith had Claire say. "Rub it on my skin, pop it to me in a pill, shoot me up with it. If I could find a way to steal it, I would. Hell, if I could get my hands on it, I'd swallow the whole . . . mouse."

"Great stuff . . . if only it were true.

The news of Smith's fabrication has sent shock waves from Boston to St. Petersburg, Fla., home of the Poynter Institute, a highly regarded training center for professional journalists.

"It has left me with a deep sadness and that is shared by many colleagues here, several of whom knew Patricia well," said Bob Steele, director of Poynter's ethics program, who did not know Smith personally.

Smith, he pointed out, was a featured speaker and taught several of the institute's writing workshops and seminars and is featured in Poynter's soon-to-be-published annual compilation of the best newspaper writing in America.

"The harshest critics of journalism will probably use the Patricia Smith case to crystallize their an-

ger at the media, and use it as an example of all that's wrong with journalism," Steele said. "I don't think there's a person among us who has not taken a shortcut at some point. But she took a shortcut through a minefield and hit one of those mines; the harm to her and others in journalism is very, very great."

"When I heard the news, it felt like a member of the family just betrayed us," said Karin Winner, editor of *The San Diego Union-Tribune*.

"I am stunned that someone with such a passion for our business would violate our most cherished value. Our credibility is the essential ingredient in our relationship with our readers.

"We take our responsibility to our readers very seriously."

### 'A grave mistake'

It happens that the National Society of Newspaper Columnists is convening in San Diego this weekend. Not surprisingly, the self-generated demise of Smith, the 1997 winner of the Distinguished Writing Award from the American Society of Newspaper Editors, had the place buzzing.

"I couldn't guess why she did it," said Regina Brett, columnist at *The Beacon-Journal* in Akron, Ohio, and incoming president of the columnists' association. "Perhaps she felt limited by the box of journalism. But it was a grave mistake.

"Anytime someone does something like this it is a blow to journalism in general, to the sacred trust that people have in the newspaper," she continued. "When a person vio-

lates that trust, it is a real betrayal — to her editor, her colleagues and to her readers.

"The public understands that at the core, the majority of journalists out there with their notebooks and pens are telling the news truthfully, honestly and fairly."

But certain polls appear to challenge that observation.

Asked how much trust and confidence they have in the mass media, 46 percent of respondents to a recent poll by the University of Connecticut's Roper Center said either "none" or "not very much."

And in a Harris Poll this week, journalists earned "very great prestige" from just 15 percent of those asked.

"There is a great merging between fiction and nonfiction in this country and that's the single biggest problem for journalism today," said Richard Reeves, whose syndicated column on national and international affairs appears in more than 160 newspapers nationwide.

"I call it the Oliver Stoning of America, the blurring of truth in docudramas and pseudo-news shows and tabloids (both print and electronic)," Reeves continued. "Patricia Smith is just the latest in a long chain of this sort of thing."

### Similar cases

Underscoring his point was the high-profile firing recently of Stephen Glass, associate editor of *The New Republic*, for fabricating material in 27 of 41 articles he wrote for the weekly magazine over the past three years.

Smith's dismissal in Boston also calls to mind the Janet Cooke fiasco

of 1981. A rising young star at *The Washington Post*, Cooke was fired and forced to return her Pulitzer after it was discovered she had fabricated her moving piece about a ghetto child addicted to heroin.

The fate of Cooke, Glass and Smith aside, Reeves sees the penalty for lying by journalists, filmmakers and others in media as far too lenient.

"The truth is that lots of people make things up and get away with it these days," he said. "And the public is too accepting, too complacent about this unless the lying hits them personally. The standard of truth is deteriorating in this country and it is a great problem."

Along with reporting excesses in the O.J. Simpson case, the death of Princess Diana and the Paula Jones/Monica Lewinsky/Bill Clinton scandal, the Internet's emergence as a source of news, commentary and gossip for the masses also has become part of the debate over journalistic credibility.

Matt Drudge, a quasi-journalist trafficking in rumor, was so successful on the Internet that he has moved his gossip-based reporting to a weekly gig on Fox TV.

And among issues raised at a recent conference at UC Berkeley — titled "New Media: The on-line community takes a critical look at itself" — was that the World Wide Web provides virtually unlimited opportunities for points of view and information.

It can cost only a few million dollars to launch a major Internet publishing operation, which pales in comparison to the costs of starting

a traditional newspaper or magazine.

### 'A compelling voice'

But Internet readers are left to sort out for themselves the credibility of the information — and even whether values of fairness, accuracy and balance are goals of the "publisher."

Thus, it becomes "incumbent on readers to establish 'truth values,'" said Jack Shafer, deputy editor of *Slate*, Microsoft's Internet magazine.

In response, some Internet publishers have developed "codes of conduct" and posted them on their Web sites.

"If you are honest, you need to flaunt it," said one panelist.

The *Boston Globe's* Patricia Smith was less than honest and her newspaper sought fit to flaunt that, begging the question of whether she can ever be "rehabilitated" as a journalist — a question the writer herself ponders in her farewell column.

Steele of the Poynter Institute said it's possible for Smith to return and once again gain trust of readers.

But the important thing, he added, is to view her with "a level of compassion and understanding."

"She has a huge heart and a profound passion for people and societal issues," Steele said. "She was a compelling voice on behalf of the voiceless and we need more of that in journalism."





Committee on Chicano Rights, Inc

June 23, 1998

Karin Winner, Editor

San Diego Union

Editor Winner:

From a June 20, 1998, San Diego Union article. "the currency of journalism is facts, our daily transactions are structured around fairness, balance, perspective, and the elusive quest for truth." "The standard of truth is deteriorating in this country and it is a great problem." (see enclosed article)

MS. W. M. Tell me, what is the difference, between what Patricia Smith of the Boston Globe is accused of, and what the San Diego Union did in there published June 17, 1998 article "INS unveils strategy to improve safety of illegal border crossers"?

ask, didn't the San Diego Union in only publishing the INS's self serving public relations propaganda, and choosing to omit, slant, manipulate, by deciding not to publish known opposition to the INS plan? Opposition, which the Union had knowledge of (your reporter spoke to several individuals) and which it also

had in its possession (the enclosed press release was sent to one of your reporters) also guilty of the same charge that Ms. Smith stands accused of??

I believe that the Union is GUILTY! Guilty, just as Ms. Smith for leaving out the facts, fairness, balance, perspective, truth from your June 17, article; and also of contributing to the "deteriorating, standard of truth in this country."

I raise the above charges, because whether the Union agrees/disagrees, the facts remain that:

- 1) The INS/Border Patrol is a self serving bureaucracy, with a long history of violating the rights of Mexicans (Undocumented, documented, and citizens)

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Handwritten notes and corrections in blue ink, including phrases like "MS. W. M.", "ask", "did", "self serving", "omit", "manipulate", "opposite", "violating", "guilty", "GUILTY!", "facts, fairness, balance, perspective, truth", and "self serving bureaucracy".





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August 18, 1998

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I would assume, that either common sense, or sound journalist standards would of dicated that an investigation of the above would of taken place to write and publish a fair, balanced, truthful and objective article. I would also assume that, due to the contradictory statements i.e. the Bishop complaint, Councilman Arenas complaint filed with the Calexico Chamber, Calexico Chamber Executive Director Fred Knuchel's statement that "if we would of known what we know now we wouldn've destroyed that complaint", and U.S. Customs position that it never happened that your staff would of concluded that someone is either fabricating or outright lying! Whatever the reason(s) it is obvious that the San Diego Union did not do its job.



Also in reading the said article, I find it incredible that a supposedly responsible reporter (or his editors) would begin an article (without an investigation) with a sub-title "story of his being stripped by custom just isn't true" and conclude that it never happened when the following was never investigated:

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2) The bankrupt U.S. immigration policy, specifically the 1987 Simpson/Rodino legislation which has resulted in the militarization of the U.S./Mexico border, along with the INS/Border Patrol <sup>IS</sup> are responsible for the increasing <sup>DEATHS</sup> number of Mexican workers.

3) <sup>THE</sup> ~~The~~ <sup>THE SO-CALLED</sup> so-called immigration plans or "solutions" such as the INS "safety program" <sup>1)</sup> which in our perspective <sup>OF THE</sup> is extremely dangerous <sup>PROGRAM</sup> because it <sup>CA/</sup> deputizes <sup>PRIVATE INS</sup> (anyone) and offers a "bounty" <sup>CUT TO \$5000.00</sup> to <sup>STOP, LIVE, STOP & DRUGS</sup> bring in <sup>THE SO-CALLED SAFETY PROGRAM</sup> Mexicans will sooner or later affect the rights of 35% of <sup>GET WORKERS + CITIZEN OF MEX WHO</sup> the population who live, reside, and pay taxes in San Diego county.

In closing, I ~~as a subscriber (over 30 years), and an organizational head,~~ let me suggest, that before the kettle <sup>THE</sup> (San Diego Union) calls the pot <sup>BY THE PEOPLE</sup> (Ms. Smith) black, that you (as you <sup>HAVE</sup> stated) "we take our responsibility to our readers very seriously." inquire into the above matter, and move to correct the actions of some of your underlings, as to why they have (as you stated) violated "our most cherished value....our credibility." Thank you in advance, for your time.

Sincerely;

Herman Baca, President

cc. La Prensa  
Reader  
L.A. Times





# CCR

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STAFF WRITER

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A-18

## Smith

Columnist produces story of betrayal

Continued from A-1

In a May 11 column, "The Cruel Truth About Cancer," for example, Smith made up Claire, a patient with a brain tumor, who reacted to the promising news about experimental treatments on mice:

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"Great stuff . . . if only it were true.

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"Anytime someone does something like this it is a blow to journalism in general, to the sacred trust that people have in the newspaper," she continued. "When a person vio-

lates that trust, it is a real betrayal — to her editor, her colleagues and to her readers.

"The public understands that at the core, the majority of journalists out there with their notebooks and pens are telling the news truthfully, honestly and fairly."

But certain polls appear to challenge that observation.

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### Similar cases

Underscoring his point was the high-profile firing recently of Stephen Glass, associate editor of *The New Republic*, for fabricating material in 27 of 41 articles he wrote for the weekly magazine over the past three years.

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of 1981. A rising young star at *The Washington Post*, Cooke was fired and forced to return her Pulitzer after it was discovered she had fabricated her moving piece about a ghetto child addicted to heroin.

The fate of Cooke, Glass and Smith aside, Reeves sees the penalty for lying by journalists, filmmakers and others in media as far too lenient.

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### 'A compelling voice'

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 La Jolla, CA 92035-1530

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B. Received by (*Printed Name*)*S. Grondona*

C. Date of Delivery

*10/14/03*D. Is delivery address different from item 1?  YesIf YES, enter delivery address below:  No

3. Service Type

- Certified Mail     Express Mail  
 Registered     Return Receipt for Merchandise  
 Insured Mail     C.O.D.

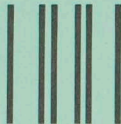
4. Restricted Delivery? (*Extra Fee*) Yes

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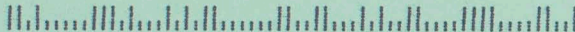
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE



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Postage & Fees Paid  
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Permit No. G-10

- Sender: Please print your name, address, and ZIP+4 in this box •

Mr. Herman Baca  
710 E. 3rd St  
National City CA  
91920







**Committee on Chicano Rights**

710 East Third Street • National City, CA 91950 • (619) 477-3800 • Fax: (619) 477-3829

12/09/00

Chris Moran

SD Union

Re; 12/9/00 article

Mr. Moran;

Your 12/09/00 article can only be described as another “puff” piece for the Sweetwater Union High School District and the Board of Trustees. I believe that the above is borne out by the fact that you had to resort to quoting a hired employee of the district, and a contributor (\$50,000) to Prop. BB, who received a ? (million) contract from the Board of Trustees. Not only is your article a “puff” piece, but it is also shallow reporting and smacks of the worst type of yellow journalism. You and the SD Union can continue to write as many “puff” pieces on the SWUHSD, but the fact remains that the Board of Trustees is a “rubber stamp” for Superintendent Brand and the minority white educational, political and business establishment.

So the question is when are you and the SD Union going to stop playing public relations agency for the SWUHSD, and start doing serious reporting on other issues that include the following:

1. The historically racism that continues to exist in the SWUHSD.
2. The good old boys network which has historically and politically controlled both the school board and the economic purse string of the SWUHSD.
3. The SWUHSD Board of Trustees historically and politically being controlled (the so-called minority board included) and serving as political lackeys for the superintendent's and the “good old boy network”.
4. The district's majority (Mexican parents and taxpayers), have no voice, involvement or political representation with the either the SWUHSD Administration or Board of Trustees.
5. The payoff's from Prop. BB to the good old boy network!

Yours truly,

Herman Baca, President





**Committee on Chicano Rights**

710 East Third Street • National City, CA 91950 • (619) 477-3800 • Fax: (619) 477-3829

December 13, 2000

James O. Goldsborough  
P.O. Box 120191  
San Diego, CA 92112-0191

Mr. Goldsborough:

I read with great interest your November 27, 2000 column, "Newspapers aid their executioners". In the column, you gave a number of reasons for the "rapid decline of newspaper in America", that included the following:

1. "Single papers rarely serve their communities as they once did."
2. "Newspapers always had one central role: To serve their communities."
3. "Ideological newspapers that prefer to peddle the views of proprietors and editors rather than reflect the diversity of changing communities."
4. "Editors are like baseball scouts: They look at dozen of prospects each day and, with trained eyes, they can tell a cherry from a lemon. Untrained eyes cannot do that." Unfortunately, too many editors cannot do it either."

I couldn't agree with you more, but in my opinion you forgot to include the following two reasons:

- Unresponsive editors who feel that they do not have to bother (see attachment A) to address issues forwarded to them from subscribers, or individuals who live and work in the community that the editors claim that their newspapers purport to serve.
- Mediocre, shallow and "system" conditioned field editors and reporters, who are more interested in currying favor with the established political and business order than reporting the news, (see attachment B) in communities that have drastically changed.

In closing, let me state that while your column addresses causes and reasons, blaming outside factors (such the internet), for the sad demise of newspapers, in my opinion there are other simple factors. Factors, such as simply looking out your door, to see what fellow editors and reporters are doing, or not doing. They too are responsible for contributing, what you state is, "the rapid decline of newspapers in America."

Sincerely,

Herman Baca, President





**Committee on Chicano Rights**

**710 East Third Street • National City, CA 91950 • (619) 477-3800 • Fax: (619) 477-3829**

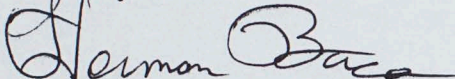
**December 13, 2000**

**Ms. Gina Lubrano  
Readers Representative  
SD Union  
P.O. Box 120191  
San Diego, CA 92112-0191**

**Ms. Lubrano:**

**As a 30-year subscriber to the SD Union, I am lodging a formal complaint with you as reader representative on the enclosed (see attachments) against your editor Ms. Karin Winner. I expect an investigation into my complaint and a formal response.**

**Thank you in advance,**

  
**Herman Baca, President**

**CC. Ms. Karin Winner, Editor  
Mr. Gene Bell, SD Union President, CEO**





**Committee on Chicano Rights**

710 East Third Street • National City, CA 91950 • (619) 477-3800 • Fax: (619) 477-3829

**Ms. Karin Winner,  
Editor  
San Diego-Tribune  
P.O. Box 120191  
San Diego, CA 92112-0191**

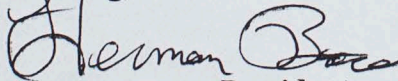
**Ms. Winner:**

For the record, on November 6, 2000 I wrote to you regarding policy issue statements, attributed to you, on journalism ethics, and of the SD Union's coverage, or lack of coverage on Proposition BB. I, as a 30-year subscriber to the SD Union, and as an organizational head stated the enclosed concerns because:

- I had assumed (incorrectly) that as editor of the SD Union, (a large metropolitan newspaper) that you would want to hear input, grievances, and concerns from a subscriber and input from someone from the community, whom the SD Union purports to serves.
- I also (incorrectly) assumed, that as editor that you would address any and all issues (whether you agreed or not) which were brought to your attention, that concerned and effected the SD Union.
- I further assumed (also incorrectly) that at the very, very minimum, you as editor would have the "professionalism" courtesy to either acknowledge or respond to the issues that I raised.

In closing, let me state that I believe that you (as editor) still have the duty and responsibility to officially acknowledge or respond to the enclosed correspondence, and that I will wait for your official respond.

Waiting,

  
Herman Baca, President

**Cc. Mr. Gene Bell, SD Union President, CEO  
Mr. James O. Goldsborough, SD Union Columnist  
Ms. Gina Lubrano, Readers Representative**





Committee on Chicano Rights

710 East Third Street • National City, CA 91950 • (619) 477-3800

January 15, 2003

Reporter, Jennifer Vigil  
SD Union

Facsimile: (619) 293-1896

Ms. Vigil:

For the record.

Regarding your one sided-puff piece January 10, 2003, "**Council Oks raises for its members**" SD Union article. You state in the article that, "the increases met with little fanfare."

If there was "little fanfare" or opposition to the salary increase in National City, it was because:

- You (or your editors) chose to sit, stonewall, and ignore the detailed information of opposition, which our organization provided you with for over 3 weeks, thereby insuring that there would be little criticism or "fanfare" from National City residents.
- The SD Union (once again) employed "yellow journalism" tactics. First by not reporting opposition and then, when you wrote the article (after the salary increase was passed and approved), by down playing, restricting, slanting and manipulating the information of opposition which was provided.

On the other hand, maybe I am incorrect and the reason was simply due to the everyday unprofessional, lazy and shoddy reporting that one sees from SD Union, South Bay reporters.

Once again, the SD Union has done a great disservice to those whom it purports to serve; the public, its readers, taxpayers and voters, especially in National City.

In closing,

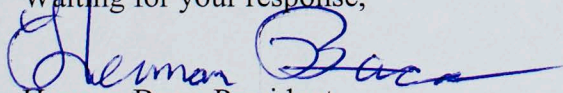
**"The standard of truth is deteriorating in this country and it is a great problem."**

Ms. Karen Winner, San Diego Union-Tribune Editor (6-20-98)

**"The diversity of opinion is what newspapers are all about. News stories give readers factual information; columns give them a range of opinions. Both are intended to give readers the information they need to make informed decisions. Its healthy to have a marketplace of ideas."**

Ms. Karen Winner, San Diego Union-Tribune Editor (12-16-02)

Waiting for your response,

  
Herman Baca, President

Cc. Ms. Karen Winner, Editor





Committee on Chicano Rights

710 East Third Street • National City, CA 91950 • (619) 477-3800

January 15, 2003

To: Ms. Karen Winner, Editor SD Union

From: CCR

Re: Copy of letter to reporter Jennifer Vigil.

**Facsimile: (619) 293-2148**





Committee on Chicano Rights  
710 East Third Street • National City, CA 91950 • (619) 477-3800

June 24, 2003

Ms. Karin Winner,  
Editor  
San Diego-Tribune  
P.O. Box 120191  
San Diego, CA 92112-0191

Facsimile: (619) 293-1896  
(Hard copy to follow)

*"The diversity of opinion is what newspapers are all about. News stories give readers factual information; columns give them a range of opinions. Both are intended to give readers the information they need to make informed decisions. Its healthy to have a marketplace of ideas."*

*Ms. Karen Winner, San Diego Union-Tribune Editor (12-16-02)*

Ms. Winner:

Is Jayson Blair journalism being practiced at your San Diego Union, South Bay office?

As a 30-year SD Union subscriber and head of a community organization, for the record note the following:

Your, South Bay, SD Union reporting staff is again practicing what it does best, covering for and protecting National City's political establishment (mayor and most council members endorsed by San Diego Union) by:

*Not reporting, stonewalling, down playing, restricting, slanting, manipulating information and ignoring opposition on issues affecting National City residents, homeowners, taxpayers, voters and small businesses.*

Case in point:

June 12, 2003 - San Diego Union article, "**National City seeks to double sewer rates for some over 3 years**, by Terry Rodgers" reports extensively on city's reasons (quoting city bureaucrats) why doubling of sewer rates is necessary. Of course, your reporter conveniently forgot to include or report any **opposition**.

June 17, 2003 – The National City Council after giving residents 5-day notice met and voted unanimously to approve doubling of sewer rates. The vote is taken with full knowledge that National City is the poorest city in SD County, is facing a 3.9 million dollar deficit, residents have to repay 3 million dollars of unpaid sewer bills, a provisions is probably illegal, and taxpayers must pay recent 18% salaries, which the mayor (with a 9.3 million dollar portfolio) and city council voted themselves, along with increased trash fees.



(2)

At the council meeting no one spoke (other than city bureaucrats), in favor of the increase. Opposition was raised in a letter written by our organization (faxed to the SD Union), and citizen's voiced opposition, which your South Bay reporters failed to report.

**Even worse than the above is the fact that the SD Union has not published (to date) one follow-up article to inform National City readers and residents of the decision of their elected representatives to double their sewer rates!** One can understand biased reporters not wanting to report opposition, but for reporters to stonewall an entire city, on a vote cast by their elected representatives, which is going to cost them millions dollars, sets a new low in journalism standards that is comparable to what Jayson Blair is accused of doing.

Whatever the reason(s) the facts remain that your South Bay office has once again done a great disservice to those whom it purports to serve, the public, your readers, taxpayers and voters, especially in National City.

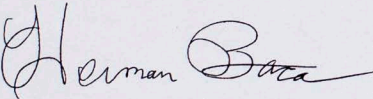
In closing, either Jonathan Alter, columnist is correct in his column for Newsweek 5-26-03, "An Erosion of Trust," that:

"For journalist, one of the most depressing dimensions of the Jayson Blair fiasco is this: why didn't more of the subjects of his dozen of bogus stories in the New York Time complain about the phony details and concocted quotes? Are some readers so jaundiced about the press that they no longer even expect us to get stuff right? Do they just assume we make it up? Ouch!

Or is incorrect because you as editor of the SD Union do not condone that practice and are going to correct, make changes, and clean-up your South Bay office, so reporters are finally able (as you are quoted above) to inform and, **"give readers (especially in National City) the information they need to make informed decisions?"**

In conclusion, as I stated in my letter to the NC council, who represents the interest and welfare of National City's poor people, residents, homeowners, taxpayers and small businesses?

Waiting for your response,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Herman Baca". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Herman Baca, President

Cc. News Media



- Ombudsman Gina Lubrano's failure to do her job (which supposedly is to represent readers, by making sure she knows what readers are saying and what concerns them), **taking 3 years to respond, shielding** Editor, Karin Winner, CEO, Gene Bell, South Bay reporters, and politicians endorsed by the SD Union, **and lying** as she admitted above **"yes, I'm guilty of ignoring it"** after stating on (8-12-03) that **"I do not recall receiving any such letters.**

Issues (partial) that both Editor Winner's and "ombudsman" Lubrano have failed to address (over 3-year period) or respond to are as followed:

1. **November 6, 2000** - Letter to SD Union C.E.O Gene Bell, Editor Karen Winner and Columnist James Goldsborough opposing Proposition BB, the \$197,000,000.00 Sweetwater Union High School bond, which the San Diego County Grand Jury recently faulted.
2. **December 9, 2000** - Letter to SD Union reporter Chris Moran, accusing him of writing "puff" pieces for Sweetwater High School (prop BB) and practicing the worst type of yellow journalism.
3. **January 15, 2003** - Letter to SD Union reporter Jennifer Vigil, (copy to Editor Karin Winner) over failure to report any meaningful opposition to National City's Mayor and Council's obscene vote to increase their salaries by 18%.
4. **May 20, 2003** - Letter to National City opposing trash increase by NC Mayor and Council.
5. **June 24, 2003** - Letter to Editor Karin Winner accusing SD Union South Bay office of practicing **Jayson Blair journalism**, for failure to report **any opposition** of doubling of sewer rates by NC Mayor and Council, that will cost NC residents millions of dollars in the coming years.
6. **June 26, 2003** - Letter to NC Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, accusing chamber of **"panhandling"** donations for purchase of \$7,000.00 dog for National City Police Department due to budget cuts.
7. **July 15, 2003** - Press release to SD Union reporter Greg Gross (who failed to report opposition) to appointment of "killer cop" (population 65% persons of Mexican ancestry) as acting Chief of Police, which (at the time) NC Mayor and Council approved!

All of the above are documented and can be forwarded (including additional correspondence) if you so desire.

In my opinion August 4, 2003 e-mail above from "ombudsman" Gina Lubrano to Editor Karin Winner represents yours and the SD Unions **Jason Blair** issue, question is what are you going to do about it?

Waiting for your response,

Herman Baca



6. June 26, 2003 - Letter to NC Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, accusing chamber of "**panhandling**" donations for purchase of \$7,000.00 dog for National City Police Department due to budget cuts.

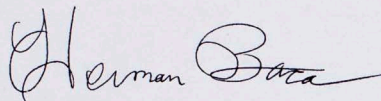
7. July 15, 2003 - Press release to SD Union reporter Greg Gross (who failed to report opposition) to appointment of "killer cop" (population 65% persons of Mexican ancestry) as acting Chief of Police, which (at the time) NC Mayor and Council approved!

It is apparent by the above, that your job is not to be an ombudsman (at least not to the Chicano community), but a **shield** to protect your SD Union bosses.

In closing, if you are going to pontificate that the New York Times needs an ombudsman due to the Jayson Blair incident, it is then my opinion that because of your dismal failure to do your job of "**knowing what readers are saying and what concerns them**" as ombudsman, the SD Union also needs one.

As I have been doing since 2000, I will be waiting for your prompt response regarding the above.

Waiting,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Herman Baca". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Herman Baca, President

Cc. News Media  
Community organizations  
SD Union, Editor Karin Winner





Committee on Chicano Rights

710 East Third Street • National City, CA 91950 • (619) 477-3800

June 25, 2003

Starnews  
Michael C. Burgess, Editor  
321 E. Street  
Chula Vista, CA 91910

Facsimile: (619) 426-6346

Mr. Burgess:

Enclosed for your information is a letter to Ms. Karin Winner, editor of the SD Union accusing her South Bay office of practicing Jayson Blair type journalism regarding the issue of NC elected officials doubling sewer rates in National City.

I am forwarding you the enclosed, and writing you to inquire how is it also possible for the Star-News not to cover or publish one word of an issue that will affect National City and cost its citizens/residents millions of dollars?

Case in point: Elected officials in National City, the poorest incorporated city in San Diego County with one of the highest crime rates, 2/3 of its residents living in official poverty, worst police community relations, unemployment, home-ownership barely 35%, youth, etc. problems and a myriad of unresolved social economic and political issues, facing a 3.9 million dollar deficit, **vote (5-day notice, no public hearings, minimal public input, no one in favor) to double residents sewer rates!**

Under the increase, residents will have to pay 3 million dollars of past-unpaid sewer bills, on top of a recent trash increase and the mayor (with a 9.3 million dollar portfolio) and city council's recent 18% salary increase, which they voted themselves.

While I understand (unlike the SD Union) that the Star-News is limited both in space and personnel, I do not believe that excuses your journalism responsibility to report and inform National City residents, taxpayers, homeowners, of the above vote, issues surrounding it, the questionable details, and cost. ,

People in National City are in the dark because the Star-News has failed to report or publish one word on the issue, and the SD Union is stonewalling the issue. Hopefully you as editor will address this matter and make the necessary correction. Waiting for your response.

Sincerely,

Herman Baca, President

Cc. Community organizations.





Committee on Chicano Rights  
710 East Third Street • National City, CA 91950 • (619) 477-3800

June 24, 2003

Ms. Karin Winner,  
Editor  
San Diego-Tribune  
P.O. Box 120191  
San Diego, CA 92112-0191

Facsimile: (619) 293-1896  
(Hard copy to follow)

*"The diversity of opinion is what newspapers are all about. News stories give readers factual information; columns give them a range of opinions. Both are intended to give readers the information they need to make informed decisions. Its healthy to have a marketplace of ideas."*

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(2)

At the council meeting no one spoke (other than city bureaucrats), in favor of the increase. Opposition was raised in a letter written by our organization (faxed to the SD Union), and citizen's voiced opposition, which your South Bay reporters failed to report.

**Even worse than the above is the fact that the SD Union has not published (to date) one follow-up article to inform National City readers and residents of the decision of their elected representatives to double their sewer rates!** One can understand biased reporters not wanting to report opposition, but for reporters to stonewall an entire city, on a vote cast by their elected representatives, which is going to cost them millions dollars, sets a new low in journalism standards that is comparable to what Jayson Blair is accused of doing.

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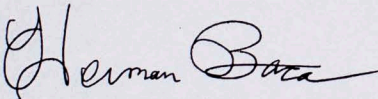
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In conclusion, as I stated in my letter to the NC council, who represents the interest and welfare of National City's poor people, residents, homeowners, taxpayers and small businesses?

Waiting for your response,



Herman Baca, President

Cc. News Media





**Committee on Chicano Rights**  
**710 East Third Street □ National City, CA 91950 □ (619) 477-3800**

June 25, 2003

Starnews  
Michael C. Burgess, Editor  
32 IE. Street  
Chula Vista, CA 91910

Facsimile: (619) 426-6346

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Sincerely

Herman Baca

Community organizations





**Committee on Chicano Rights**

**710 East Third Street □ National City, CA 91950 □ (619) 477-3800**

June 25, 2003

Starnews  
Michael C. Burgess, Editor  
32 IE. Street  
Chula Vista, CA 91910

Facsimile: (619) 426-6346

Mr. Burgess:

It's your newspaper, but my opinion. Star-News, SD Union what's the differences? Under Editor Ms. Karin Winner the SD Union doesn't reporting news, stonewalls, down plays, restricts, slants, manipulates information and ignores opposition on issues affecting National City residents if they reflect badly on National City political establishment. Under your editorship the Star-News is doing the same, what's the differences? Obviously Star-News does the same allows the practice of Jayson Blair journalism,

Both the SD Union and Star-News fail to report (letters of opposition were forwarded to both) regarding National City Mayor and city council increasing their salaries 18%, doubling sewer rates, which will cost National City residents millions of dollars, increased trash fees and lately the appointment of a killer cop as police chief places you in the same company and publishing very little on their vote to i. Answer, NOTHING! SD Union a cheerleader for the National City Mayor and the city council?

Sincerely

Herman Baca

Community organizations



# N.Y. Times creates ombudsman post

## Paper also adds 'standards editor'

By Larry McShane  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — After an 11-week internal investigation of the Jayson Blair scandal, *The New York Times* said yesterday it will create the first ombudsman position in its 152-year history and re-examine the newspaper's policies on datelines, bylines and anonymous sources.

The ombudsman, to be known as "public editor," will examine coverage, review reader complaints and write a periodic column in the newspaper, Executive Editor Bill Keller said yesterday, his first day on the job.

In addition, the paper will create two masthead-level jobs for a "standards editor" and an editor to oversee hiring and career development.

The measures come in response to a 94-page report prepared by a committee convened after the Blair debacle. The report, which included a separate section on Blair, "closes a chapter" at the paper, said Allan Siegal, *Times* assistant managing editor and head of the 28-member committee.

Siegal's committee was assembled after the *Times* found it had published three dozen stories by Blair that were plagiarized, inaccurate

or otherwise false.

The fallout from the scandal led to the resignations of Executive Editor Howell Raines and Managing Editor Gerald Boyd in June.

Keller said yesterday he was adopting some of the Siegal committee's recommendations immediately and is pursuing several others.

"The shock to our system — to its morale and reputation — has created an important opportunity. Most important, it has created a consensus for change," Keller said in a staff memo.

In its report, the committee acknowledged that concerns over diversity may have helped Blair, who is black, advance at the *Times*, but emphasized that the paper should not turn away from its commitment to a diverse newsroom.

The report found the "real culprits" in the Blair scandal were "deeply flawed structures, attitudes and processes." In particular, the committee cited a "failure to communicate" among editors.

It said Blair "apparently worked via cell phone and e-mail to lead his editors to believe he was on the scene (of the stories) when he was apparently either on another floor of the Times Building or at home in Brooklyn."



**Gina Lubrano** READERS REPRESENTATIVE

8-4-03  
S.A. Jones

# New York Times adds an ombudsman

**W**ord that *The New York Times* plans to appoint an ombudsman after years of institutional resistance is bittersweet. Like other ombudsmen, I'm delighted the *Times* plans to appoint a public editor, but it's sad that it took rogue reporter Jayson Blair for the newspaper, the best in the United States, to acknowledge it had to find a way to let readers know how deeply it cares about them and credibility.

Over the years, the *Times* has been adamant in its refusal to appoint an ombudsman, a position established at *The San Diego Union-Tribune* 28 years ago next month. In the United States, at last count, only 38 newspapers have ombudsmen, but among them are some of the nation's largest and most influential including the *Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe*, *Los Angeles Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Sacramento Bee*, *Oregonian*, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, *Minneapolis Star Tribune* and *Chicago Tribune*.

Why don't more newspapers have ombudsmen? Like the *Times* until recent events, some editors and publishers are philosophically opposed to having an ombudsman, who is known variously as a readers representative, public editor or reader advocate. They believe editors should talk with readers. That would be ideal, of course, but in reality, editors are often too busy with daily deadlines to hear readers out. Other editors and publishers believe they cannot afford one when the truth is they cannot afford not to have one. Some simply do not want attention drawn to their mistakes.

Of course, there are newspapers that have small staffs, and it's understandable that a publisher or an editor could choose to spend limited resources on a journalist who is involved in the daily production of the newspaper as opposed to one who is not. However, some newspapers that

truly cannot afford an ombudsman but are committed to readers have found a way around that by rotating the job among staff members or by hiring a part-time ombudsman. The point of the ombudsman's job is to let readers know the newspaper cares about them and that there is someone to listen to them.

Now, because Jayson Blair besmirched the name of the *Times* with his plagiarisms and fabrications, the newspaper will join those that let readers know they consider credibility and accountability high priority.

In a note to the *Times* staff, newly named executive editor Bill Keller acknowledged the *Times*' resistance to an ombudsman. "We worried that it would foster nit-picking and navel-gazing, that it might undermine staff morale and, worst of all, that it would absolve other editors of their responsibility to represent the interest of readers."

However, a report by a committee that included *Times* staff members and three outsiders suggested an ombudsman and two other positions, a standards editor to act as an "internal guardian" and a staffing and career development editor.

Keller acknowledged in his note to staff members that he agrees with the committee recommendation that the *Times* "can profit from the scrutiny of an independent reader representative. A pair of professional eyes, familiar with us but independent of the day-to-day production of the paper, can make us more sensitive on matters of fairness and accuracy and enhance our credibility."

Among the outsiders who conducted the *Times* investigation was Joann Byrd, recently retired editorial page editor at the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* who served as ombudsman at the *Washington Post* from 1992 to 1995.

Byrd, who said she did not know if the recommendation for an ombudsman was going to be accepted, called the decision to appoint one "a huge

statement" for public accountability. Byrd said there are other ways of letting readers know the newspaper cares, by devoting more space for letters to the editor for example, but appointing an ombudsman is probably "the most ostentatious way of doing it."

Byrd, who was philosophically opposed to ombudsmen before she became one, said her two favorite recommendations from the committee that conducted an exhaustive examination of the newsroom culture that allowed Jayson Blair to flourish are for appointment of an ombudsman and a standards editor. The two will work hand-in-hand. The standards editor is to oversee the setting of journalistic standards for the newspaper, be the internal guardian for staff members who have journalistic concerns about works in progress and oversee corrections and editor's notes. Byrd said she was impressed with the *Times* staffers who had an "absolute devotion to fixing ... whatever needed to be fixed."

Had Jayson Blair never entered the *Times* newsroom, the paper would still have had need for an ombudsman. An ombudsman does not operate as a shield for editors, but has an obligation to make sure they know what readers are saying and what concerns them.

With its decision to appoint an ombudsman, the *Times* has given readers a clear signal it cares about credibility, accuracy, fairness and accountability. It's a huge step, one long overdue.

• • •

*Gina Lubrano's column commenting on the media appears Mondays. It is the policy of The San Diego Union-Tribune to correct all errors. To discuss accuracy or fairness in the news, please write to Gina Lubrano, readers representative, Box 120191, San Diego, CA 92112-0191, or telephone (619) 293-1525. Send e-mail to: readers.rep@uniontrib.com.*





Committee on Chicano Rights

710 East Third Street • National City, CA 91950 • (619) 477-3800 • Fax: (619) 477-3829

Ms. Karin Winner,  
Editor  
San Diego-Tribune  
P.O. Box 120191  
San Diego, CA 92112-0191

Facsimile: (619) 293-1896  
(Hard copy to follow)

Ms. Winner:

Quotes attributed to you and the San Diego Union-Tribune June 20, 1998.

- "The currency of journalism is facts, our daily transactions are structured around fairness, balance, perspective and the elusive quest for truth."
- "Our credibility is the essential ingredient in our relationship with our readers." "We take our responsibility to our readers very seriously."
- "The standard of truth is deteriorating in this country and it is a great problem."

Nice quotes, but they remind me of an old Mexican saying that states,  
\* "ENTRE EL DICHO Y EL HECHO, HAY MUCHO STRECHO."

Translation:

\*BETWEEN THE WORD AND THE DEED, THERE IS A LOT OF DISTANCE."

Case in point:

The SD Union's coverage (or lack) of Sweetwater Union's \$187,000,000 Proposition "BB," for readers, voters and taxpayers. Compare the above statements (the words), and the following (the deeds) reported by your reporter staff below:



(2)

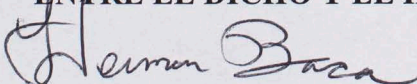
- Numerous press releases on Prop. "BB," forwarded (since August 2000) to reporter Chris Moran, John Gilmore, and SD Union City Editors. An extensive opinion piece was also sent (last week) to Mr. Bernie Jones, editorial department, all which have been ignored.
- Press releases and the opinion piece accused Prop. "BB" proponents with serious charges of stonewalling, withholding vital tax information, tampering with the voting process by stacking the yes vote, offering rebates (bribes) to procure the necessary 2/3 required for passage, lying, legal issues and unequal taxation, which were not investigated.
- The financial impact of the costly \$187,000,000 Proposition "BB," on both affluent and (especially) poorer homeowners of the district have never been addressed, even though reporter Chris Moran and SD Union Editors have been aware of Prop. "BB" since July, 2000.
- Proponents including the following; Congressman Bob Filler, Supervisor Greg Cox, San Diego Mayor Susan Golding, National City Mayor George Waters, Chula Vista Mayor Shirley Horton, Mayor Diane Rose, National City, South Bay, Chula Vista, Imperial Beach Chamber of Commerce, and San Ysidro, South Bay, Chula Vista, and National City school districts, who supported Prop. "BB," were never interviewed.
- The city of National City (Mayor George Waters and City Council) meet, voted, and went on record to support Prop. "BB." Voters voice opposition, and the SD Union (who was informed) fails to report the deliberation's to taxpayers/homeowners and residents of National City.
- A public debate (10/23/00) between Superintendent Ed Brand and myself is hosted for the public by a citizen's civic non-partisan political organization, (South Bay Forum) to inform voters/taxpayers of the pros and cons of Prop. "BB," and SD Union Editors, including reporter Chris Moran "stonewall" the public debate.

I bring the above matter to your attention, as a subscriber (30 years) and a person involved in the community to remind you, that it was you and the SD Union who made the comments about journalistic ethics that,

- "We take our responsibility to our readers very seriously," and
- "The currency of journalism is facts, our daily transactions are structured around fairness, balance, perspective and the elusive quest for truth."

Journalistic ethics, that SD Union reporters have made a mockery of, and failed (because of shoddy and lazy reporting) to live up to. However in my opinion, the greatest dis-service (by your reporting staff) has been done to those who the SD Union purports to serve; your readers, the public, taxpayers and voters.

In closing, I leave with (whether you address this matter or not) the old Mexican saying, "ENTRE EL DICHO Y EL HECHO, HAY MUCHO STRECHO," true or not?



Herman Baca,  
President



Dear Mr. Baca,

Thank you for your letter. You mention a number of letters you say you forwarded to me. I will have to take your word for it. I do not recall receiving any such letters. I searched my e-mails for the latest letters you mentioned and did not find them.

When I get a letter from a reader with specific complaints about a news story, I take it to the reporter and editor involved. If there are errors, they are addressed in corrections. If there are questions about the reporting, I discuss that with the reporter and editor. I don't make up my mind before looking into the matter. If the letter expresses an opinion the reporter should know about, I forward the note to the reporter.

If you have a complaint about specific errors or questions of fairness and accuracy in news stories, please write me a note explaining what you think the error is or how the story is unfair. The more specific you are, the better. Thank you for writing.

Respectfully, Gina Lubrano



EDITOR  
KAREN WINNER  
FAX 619-293-1896



Committee on Chicano Rights  
710 East Third Street • National City, CA 91950 • (619) 477-3800

August 10, 2003

Gina Lubrano  
San Diego-Tribune  
P.O. Box 120191  
San Diego, CA 92112-0191  
E-Mail: readers.rep@uniontrib.com

***"San Diego Union's Ombudsman and Chicano Community"***

**"An ombudsman does not operate as a shield for editors, but has an obligation to make sure that they know what readers are saying and concerns them."** *Gina Lubrano, SD Union Ombudsman August 4, 2003.*

Ms. Lubrano:

Nice quote above except for the facts below. Facts that prove your obligation and job is not to your readership, but to SD Union Editor, Karin Winner, CEO, Gene Bell, South Bay office staff members, and politicians endorsed by the Union.

For the record, as a 30 year subscriber to the SD Union and head of a community organization, note issues below, **all which have been forwarded to you**, effecting National City and South Bay's Chicano communities, which you have failed to acknowledge or respond to:

1. **November 6, 2000** - Letter to SD Union C.E.O Gene Bell, Editor Karen Winner and Columnist James Goldsborough opposing Proposition BB, the \$197,000,000.00 Sweetwater Union High School bond, which the San Diego County Grand Jury recently faulted.
2. **December 9, 2000** - Letter to SD Union reporter Chris Moran, accusing him of writing "puff" pieces for Sweetwater High School (prop BB) and practicing the worst type of yellow journalism.
3. **January 15, 2003** - Letter to SD Union reporter Jennifer Vigil, (copy to Editor Karin Winner) over failure to report any meaningful opposition to National City's Mayor and Council's obscene vote to increase their salaries by 18%.
4. **May 20, 2003** - Letter to National City opposing trash increase by NC Mayor and Council.
5. **June 24, 2003** - Letter to Editor Karin Winner accusing SD Union South Bay office of practicing **Jayson Blair journalism**, for failure to report **any opposition** of doubling of sewer rates by NC Mayor and Council, that will cost NC residents millions of dollars in the coming years.



(2)

At the council meeting no one spoke (other than city bureaucrats), in favor of the increase. Opposition was raised in a letter written by our organization (faxed to the SD Union), and citizen's voiced opposition, which your South Bay reporters failed to report.

**Even worse than the above is the fact that the SD Union has not published (to date) one follow-up article to inform National City readers and residents of the decision of their elected representatives to double their sewer rates!** One can understand biased reporters not wanting to report opposition, but for reporters to stonewall an entire city, on a vote cast by their elected representatives, which is going to cost them millions dollars, sets a new low in journalism standards that is comparable to what Jayson Blair is accused of doing.

Whatever the reason(s) the facts remain that your South Bay office has once again done a great disservice to those whom it purports to serve, the public, your readers, taxpayers and voters, especially in National City.

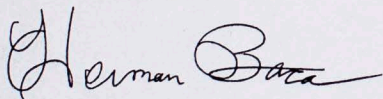
In closing, either Jonathan Alter, columnist is correct in his column for Newsweek 5-26-03, "An Erosion of Trust," that:

"For journalist, one of the most depressing dimensions of the Jayson Blair fiasco is this: why didn't more of the subjects of his dozen of bogus stories in the New York Time complain about the phony details and concocted quotes? Are some readers so jaundiced about the press that they no longer even expect us to get stuff right? Do they just assume we make it up? Ouch!

Or is incorrect because you as editor of the SD Union do not condone that practice and are going to correct, make changes, and clean-up your South Bay office, so reporters are finally able (as you are quoted above) to inform and, **"give readers (especially in National City) the information they need to make informed decisions?"**

In conclusion, as I stated in my letter to the NC council, who represents the interest and welfare of National City's poor people, residents, homeowners, taxpayers and small businesses?

Waiting for your response,



Herman Baca, President

Cc. News Media



August 12, 2003

Dear Mr. Baca,

Thank you for your letter. You mention a number of letters you say you forwarded to me. I will have to take your word for it. I do not recall receiving any such letters. I searched my e-mails for the latest letters you mentioned and did not find them.

When I get a letter from a reader with specific complaints about a news story, I take it to the reporter and editor involved. If there are errors, they are addressed in corrections. If there are questions about the reporting, I discuss that with the reporter and editor. I don't make up my mind before looking into the matter. If the letter expresses an opinion the reporter should know about, I forward the note to the reporter.

If you have a complaint about specific errors or questions of fairness and accuracy in news stories, please write me a note explaining what you think the error is or how the story is unfair. The more specific you are, the better. Thank you for writing.

Respectfully, Gina Lubrano

August 10, 2003

Gina Lubrano  
San Diego-Tribune  
P.O. Box 120191  
San Diego, CA 92112-0191  
E-Mail: readers.rep@uniontrib.com

"San Diego Union's Ombudsman and Chicano Community"

"An ombudsman does not operate as a shield for editors, but has an obligation to make sure that they know what readers are saying and concerns them." Gina Lubrano, SD Union Ombudsman August 4, 2003.

Ms. Lubrano:

Nice quote above except for the facts below. Facts that prove your obligation and job is not to your readership, but to SD Union Editor, Karin Winner, CEO, Gene Bell, South Bay office staff members, and politicians endorsed by the Union.

For the record, as a 30 year subscriber to the SD Union and head of a community organization, note issues below, all which have been forwarded to you, effecting National City and South Bay's Chicano communities, which you have failed to acknowledge or respond to:

1. November 6, 2000 - Letter to SD Union C.E.O Gene Bell, Editor Karen Winner and Columnist James Goldsborough opposing Proposition BB, the \$197,000,000.00 Sweetwater Union High School bond, which the San Diego County Grand Jury recently faulted.
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3. January 15, 2003 - Letter to SD Union reporter Jennifer Vigil, (copy to Editor Karin Winner) over



**"An ombudsman does not operate as a shield for editors, but has an obligation to make sure that they know what readers are saying and concerns them." Gina Lubrano, SD Union Ombudsman August 4, 2003.**

## **Censorship or Baca is outrageous?????**

Ms. Lubrano:

Baca to Lubrano 8-10-03 I wrote to, again you (the readers ombudsman) as a 30 year subscriber (one of the pesons who pays your abnd Winners salary) to the SD Union and head of a community organization, filing a formal complaint against you for not doing your job, accusing you of sheilding SD Union Editor, Karin Winner, CEO, Gene Bell, South Bay office staff members, and politicians endorsed by the Union and not covering issues effecting the Chicano community. Note the following below and tell me who is outrageous?

**Lubrano – 8-12-03 to, Dear Mr. Baca,**Thank you for your letter. You mention a number of letters you say you forwarded to me. I will have to take your word for it. I do not recall receiving any such letters. I searched my e-mails for the latest letters you mentioned and did not find them.

When I get a letter from a reader with specific complaints about a news story, I take it to the reporter and editor involved. If there are errors, they are addressed in corrections. If there are questions about the reporting, I discuss that with the reporter and editor. I don't make up my mind before looking into the matter. If the letter expresses an opinion the reporter should know about, I forward the note to the reporter.

**Baca, 8-13-03, to Lubrano, Classical Rope-a-Dope?**

After waiting almost 3 years for a reply to our complaints, you as an ombudsman have finally responded! In closing, I am still waiting for you as reader's ombudsman to response to all the issues raised in our 8-10-03 correspondences

**Lubrano, 8-13-03, to Karin, (Karin Winner SD Union editor)** Baca is outrageous. He talks here about a "formal complaint" against you that he sent me. I do remember receiving something like that. And, yes, I'm guilty of ignoring it. I didn't receive any of the other material he cites. I would have forwarded those to the reporters and editors involved. I think there's nothing to gain by engaging him. Gina





**Committee on Chicano Rights**  
**710 East Third Street • National City, CA 91950 • (619) 477-3800**

August 13, 2003

## **Classical Rope-a-Dope?**

Gina Lubrano  
San Diego-Tribune  
P.O. Box 120191  
San Diego, CA 92112-0191  
E-Mail: readers.rep@uniontrib.com

After waiting almost 3 years for a reply to our complaints, you as an ombudsman have finally responded! In your response (see 8-12-03 response below), in reference to our correspondence of 8-10-03 you state:

- 1) "I do not recall receiving any such letters," and " I will have to take your word for it, etc."
  - I don't know if you received our e-mails, and you do not have to take my word for it. I do know that I can forward you a letter (December 13, 2000) in which a formal complaint was lodged against your Editor Karin Winner (c.c. to Union CEO Gene Bell), which you NEVER responded to!
  
- 2) "If you have a complaint about specific errors or questions of fairness and accuracy in news stories, please write me a note explaining what you think the error is or how the story is unfair."
  - That's what our 8-11-03 letter, which we e-mailed, and faxed to you was! Specific complaints against you as reader ombudsman for not doing your job, shielding SD Union bosses, reporters and politicians endorsed by the Union. It was also forwarded to point out the Union's lack of coverage of issues affecting the Chicano community, and for you as reader ombudsman to respond and address the forwarded complaints! I would recommend that you re-read our correspondence; as I cannot make our specific complaints any clearer.

In closing, I am still waiting for you as reader's ombudsman to response to all the issues raised in our 8-10-03 correspondences.

Waiting,

Herman Baca, President





**Committee on Chicano Rights**  
710 East Third Street • National City, CA 91950 • (619) 477-3800

August 22, 2003

Gina Lubrano  
San Diego-Tribune  
P.O. Box 120191  
San Diego, CA 92112-0191  
E-Mail: readers.rep@uniontrib.com

**"An ombudsman does not operate as a shield for editors, but has an obligation to make sure that they know what readers are saying and concerns them."** *Gina Lubrano, SD Union Ombudsman August 4, 2003.*

### ***Baca is outrageous?????***

Ms. Lubrano:

Note the following below and tell me who is outrageous?

- **Baca – 8-10-03, Baca to Lubrano,**  
Facts prove your obligation and job is not to your readership, but to SD Union Editor, Karin Winner, CEO, Gene Bell, South Bay office staff members, and politicians endorsed by the Union. For the record, as a 30 year subscriber to the SD Union and head of a community organization, note issues below, **all which have been forwarded to you**, effecting National City and South Bay's Chicano communities, which you have failed to acknowledge or respond to:
  1. **November 6, 2000** - Letter to SD Union C.E.O Gene Bell, Editor Karen Winner and Columnist James Goldsborough opposing Proposition BB, the \$197,000,000.00 Sweetwater Union High School bond, which the San Diego County Grand Jury recently faulted.
  2. **December 9, 2000** - Letter to SD Union reporter Chris Moran, accusing him of writing "puff" pieces for Sweetwater High School (prop BB) and practicing the worst type of yellow journalism.
  3. **January 15, 2003** - Letter to SD Union reporter Jennifer Vigil, (copy to Editor Karin Winner) over failure to report any meaningful opposition to National City's Mayor and Council's obscene vote to increase their salaries by 18%.
  4. **May 20, 2003** - Letter to National City opposing trash increase by NC Mayor and Council.
  5. **June 24, 2003** - Letter to Editor Karin Winner accusing SD Union South Bay office of practicing **Jayson Blair journalism**, for failure to report **any opposition** of doubling of sewer rates by NC Mayor and Council, that will cost NC residents millions of dollars in the coming years.



6. June 26, 2003 - Letter to NC Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, accusing chamber of "**panhandling**" donations for purchase of \$7,000.00 dog for National City Police Department due to budget cuts.

7. July 15, 2003 - Press release to SD Union reporter Greg Gross (who failed to report opposition) to appointment of "killer cop" (population 65% persons of Mexican ancestry) as acting Chief of Police, which (at the time) NC Mayor and Council approved!

It is apparent by the above, that your job is not to be an ombudsman (at least not to the Chicano community), but a **shield** to protect your SD Union bosses.

In closing, if you are going to pontificate that the New York Times needs an ombudsman due to the Jayson Blair incident, it is then my opinion that because of your dismal failure to do your job of "**knowing what readers are saying and what concerns them**", the SD Union also needs one.

- **Lubrano – 8-12-03 to, Dear Mr. Baca,**

Thank you for your letter. You mention a number of letters you say you forwarded to me. I will have to take your word for it. **I do not recall receiving any such letters.** I searched my e-mails for the latest letters you mentioned and did not find them.

When I get a letter from a reader with specific complaints about a news story, I take it to the reporter and editor involved. If there are errors, they are addressed in corrections. If there are questions about the reporting, I discuss that with the reporter and editor. I don't make up my mind before looking into the matter. If the letter expresses an opinion the reporter should know about, I forward the note to the reporter.

If you have a complaint about specific errors or questions of fairness and accuracy in news stories, please write me a note explaining what you think the error is or how the story is unfair. The more specific you are, the better. Thank you for writing.

Respectfully, Gina Lubrano

- **Baca, 8-13-03, to Lubrano, Classical Rope-a-Dope?**

**After waiting almost 3 years for a reply** to our complaints, you as an ombudsman have finally responded! In closing, I am still waiting for you as reader's ombudsman to response to all the issues raised in our 8-10-03 correspondences

- **Lubrano, 8-13-03, to Karin, (Karin Winner SD Union editor)**

Baca is outrageous. He talks here about a "formal complaint" against you that he sent me. I do remember receiving something like that. And, yes, I'm guilty of ignoring it. I didn't receive any of the other material he cites. I would have forwarded those to the reporters and editors involved. I think there's nothing to gain by engaging him. Gina



Subj: **Re: revised letter to Copley**  
Date: 8/31/03 3:37:04 PM Pacific Daylight Time  
From: [davalos@csusm.edu](mailto:davalos@csusm.edu)  
To: [AztecBaca@aol.com](mailto:AztecBaca@aol.com)  
File: **finalrevise.doc** (31744 bytes) DL Time (TCP/IP): < 1 minute  
*Sent from the Internet (Details)*

NOTE: Deletions are crossed through and corrections are in blue. Once you have made the corrections be sure that all of the text is in black. These marks [ ] before and after a comment in blue are explanations and these explanations are not to be included in your final draft. The attached Word document may or may not be easier to work with. Call me with questions only after you have read my revisions, seen how they work in your final draft and after you have emailed your final draft to Norma for her take on this. All of the best.

September 2, 2003

Mr. David Copley  
President/Publisher  
San Diego [Union](#) -Tribune  
7776 Ivanhoe Avenue  
La Jolla, CA 92038-1530

Facsimile: <<mailto:readers.rep@uniontrib.com>> (858) 456-0486

Mr. Copley:

As a 30-year subscriber to the [SD Union](#) and then the SD Union-Tribune (one of the persons that pays your company's bills) and as the [chair](#) of a 33-year old community organization, I am writing to file a formal complaint against your employees, Editor Karin Winner and "ombudsman" Gina Lubrano.

I am writing to you because of a [Jason Blair type problem](#) involving your two employees who for the last 3-years have failed to [professionally](#) address formal complaints concerning issues affecting the Chicano community, especially in National City. In particular I am writing to ask you for clarification of an e-mail dated 8-13-03 from "ombudsman" Gina Lubrano below, which was in response to an e-mail I forwarded her earlier that day. I am certain that the e-mail was inadvertently sent to me, because in her opening sentence she addresses "Karin". [I think that it's safe to assume she intended the email for your Editor, Karin Winner.](#)

[\[Since you are using a different point size and italics there is no real need to use quotation marks, but have 'Karin' at the same size as the remainder of the quote.\]](#)

***Karin,***

***Baca is outrageous. He talks here about a "formal complaint" against you that he sent me. I do remember receiving something like that. And, yes, I'm guilty of ignoring it. I didn't receive any of the other material he cites. I would have forwarded those to the reporters and editors involved. I think there's nothing to gain by***



***engaging him.***

[In a written format all of the enlarged point size and bold style comes across as shouting. The quote above is the only thing that should be bolded or enlarged! Otherwise, it starts to look like something the perennial Chula Vista candidate Barajas would do. It is unnecessary – you have the damning evidence in your hands. That’s what is the attention getter.]

Does the communication from your ombudsman to editor Winner represent the SD Union-Tribune’s policy toward subscribers who file “formal complaints”? What do such actions and statements say about the sincerity of “ombudsman” Gina Lubrano’s August 4, 2003 statement in the SDU-T that:

"An ombudsman does not operate as a shield for editors, but has an obligation to make sure that they know what readers are saying and concerns them."

In an 8-12-03 email to me, Lubrano wrote concerning my inquiry regarding past complaints, “I do not recall receiving any such letters”. But, she admits in the 8-13-03 email that, “yes, I’m guilty of ignoring” at least one of my, Baca’s complaints.

Mr. Copley, do you condone Lubrano’s lying to me, shielding her Editor Karin Winner (despite her public declaration to the contrary), as well as shielding CEO Gene Bell, the SDU-T South Bay reporters and South Bay politicians endorsed by the SD Union Tribune? Why has there been no effort on the part of your editors to monitor or correct these failings on the part of your ombudsman for the last three years?

Editor Karin Winner wrote a piece on journalistic ethics for the Union-Tribune’s readers on June 20, 1998. It read in parts:

**“The currency of journalism is facts, our daily transactions are structured around fairness, balance, perspective, and the elusive quest for truth.”**

**“Our credibility is the essential ingredient in our relationship with our readers, we take our responsibility to our readers very seriously.”**

**“The standard of truth is deteriorating in this country and it is a great problem.”**

Despite the rhetoric, your Editor Karin Winner has:

1. played politics with issues affecting the Chicano community by not reporting, stonewalling, down playing, restricting, slanting, and manipulating information,
2. failed to acknowledge and respond to community opposition to National City official’s actions on issues such as the voter approved proposition “L,”
3. condoned her subordinate’s cover-up and lying,

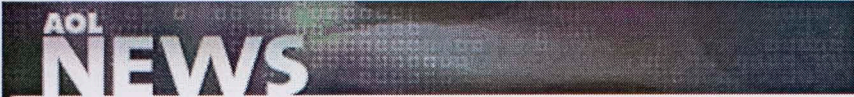
The unwillingness of Editor Karin Winner to properly train and supervise “ombudsman” Gina Lubrano proves that the SD Union-Tribune and you, Mr. Copley have a Jason Blair type problem. The New York Times has done something about their Jason Blair problem; the question now is what are the SD Union-Tribune and you going to do about your Gina Lubrano problem? Note, that I am forwarding copies of a partial number of past correspondences including the emails in question. More are available upon your request.

In closing, I am requesting an investigation of the above, a meeting with you, and a prompt response. The San Diego Union-Tribune’s coverage of issues affecting the Chicano community must be corrected and changed to conform to the journalistic principles your subordinates espouse but do not put into action. Thank you in advance.

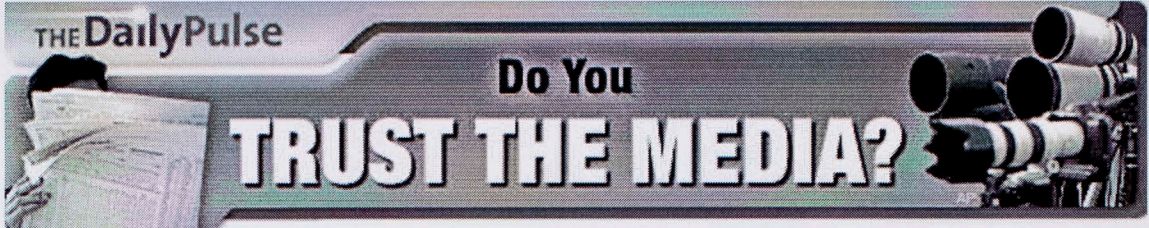
Waiting for your response,

Herman Baca





- Top News
- Business
- Entertainment
- Sports



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**Editors Move to Tighten Safeguards**

*The New York Times*  
By JACQUES STEINBERG

(March 22) -- There have been times since the Jayson Blair scandal broke at The New York Times last spring that Romenesko, an online compendium of developments in the news media, has resembled a crime blotter.

In the last two weeks, the site has posted links to articles about the punishment or dismissal of reporters at The Vancouver Sun (over a sex and dating column that closely mirrored an article in The Times), The Iowa State Daily (a film review that was similar to one in The Star Tribune of Minneapolis), The News Tribune of Tacoma, Wash. (a reporter who could not verify the existence of five sources in a column) and The Macon Telegraph of Georgia (a reporter's uncredited borrowings from The San Diego Union-Tribune.)

Each of those cases preceded USA Today's report on Friday about its continuing investigation of Jack Kelley, a former foreign correspondent. A team of USA Today journalists, it said, "found strong evidence that Kelley fabricated substantial portions of at least eight major stories" and "lifted nearly two dozen quotes or other material from competing publications."

**Talk About It**  
Post Thoughts | Chat

At least 10 papers, as large as The Chicago Tribune and as small as The Sedalia Democrat in Missouri, have confirmed instances of plagiarism or fabrication since The Times reported last

May that Mr. Blair had made up or copied portions of at least three dozen articles. Whether this outbreak of journalistic wrongdoing is a sign of reporters' running amok in a world where vast electronic databases are just a mouse click away, or has just come to light because of greater vigilance, is impossible to determine.

Judging from surveys and interviews of editors around the country, in the last 10 months many newspapers have instituted safeguards against journalistic fraud. More than 350

**Which do you trust most for accurate reporting?**

- Newspapers
- Television news
- Internet news sites
- News magazines

**Do you think the news media is biased?**

- Yes, it's too liberal



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editors told the American Society of Newspaper Editors, in answer to a survey question last summer, that they had undertaken some "specific action" with their staffs or with their readers, "since The New York Times Jayson Blair scandal became public."

Fifty-one percent said they had addressed readers directly, publishing columns about their policies on such matters as news gathering or ethics; 21 percent said some of those policies were new; 7 percent said they had sent questionnaires to readers seeking feedback; and a number of others wrote that they had begun systematically reaching out to people quoted in the newspaper to ask if they thought they were treated fairly.

## How You Voted

May 2003

### Do you trust the media?

Yes, the vast majority of reporting is accurate 12%

Somewhat, but too many mistakes are made 52%

No, there is no credibility left 36%

## Cast Your Vote

March 2004

### Do you trust the media?

- Yes, the vast majority of reporting is accurate
- Somewhat, but too many mistakes are made
- No, there is no credibility left

Vote

"My sense is that Jayson Blair awakened a lot of people," said Vicki Gowler, the editor of The St. Paul Pioneer Press and chairwoman of the ethics and values committee of the society of newspaper editors. "It made people feel like, 'Can that happen here?' or 'That couldn't happen here, we're not a big

enough place, my readers would tell me if someone was making it up.' "

"Every editor," she added, "now has to worry about this."

The profusion of such cases comes at a time when the Internet has made it relatively easy for a reporter to appropriate the work of another writer - and perhaps just as easy for an editor (or colleagues or competitors) to detect plagiarism or falsehoods. It is also a time when the public perception of journalistic credibility is low, though not demonstrably lower than in recent years. (A survey last summer by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press found that 56 percent of those questioned believed that news organizations "often report inaccurately," the same percentage as a year earlier.)

Mindful of the extent of Mr. Blair's deceptions, The Times recently tightened its rules on the use of anonymous sources, following the lead of 16 other news organizations that last summer signed a similar declaration.

One of those news organizations was The Washington Post. Leonard Downie Jr., the newspaper's executive editor, in a column earlier this month wrote that The Post had recently reviewed all of its reporting policies. He explained, for example, that although the cloak of anonymity was occasionally the only way to convey important information, The Post would strive to explain to readers why a particular source was not named.

In an interview on Friday, the day USA Today announced preliminary findings on Mr. Kelley, Mr. Downie said that such cases notwithstanding, "most of the journalists I know work extremely hard to be accurate, to be fair, to not cut corners."

"The main reason I think we're hearing about it more is people get caught more," he added. Yet, he said, some reporters and

## Recent Reporting Scandals



**The New York Times**  
May 2003: Reporter Jayson Blair



editors had permitted themselves to be seduced into making bad decisions by "the celebrification of journalism," including the pursuit of Pulitzer Prizes, television exposure and lucrative book contracts.

As an additional check against any temptation to fabricate or embellish, The Albuquerque Journal is one of a number of newspapers that has begun interviewing people quoted in its pages. Starting last summer, it has sent out survey forms to one or two such people a day, asking questions like "Were the facts and details of the story correct?" and "Were important facts or details left out of the story?"

Kent Walz, the newspaper's editor, said that people invariably confirmed how careful the reporter had been, but that the number of corrections the newspaper runs each day had doubled, to an average of two.

"It's not foolproof," Mr. Walz said of the policy. "I think it helps in terms of reinforcing the culture."

Nonetheless, other editors remain skeptical that such efforts will make much difference.

"It's still a craft built on trust," said Dean Baquet, managing editor of The Los Angeles Times and a former national editor of The New York Times. "I don't think I've seen an invention yet that can change that."

"We work in a craft where an individual files a story from Baghdad telling you he interviewed a guy on the side of a road who you as his editor will never see in your life," Mr. Baquet said. "You can bend over as far backward as you'd like to create a system to police that. In the end, you have to accept the word of that reporter or not."

Still, Mr. Baquet said that in recent months his newspaper had redoubled its efforts to "make sure our readers' rep takes calls from readers and that we listen when readers have complaints."

So, too, at newspapers far smaller than The Los Angeles Times.

After a reader telephoned the Sedalia Democrat last May to suggest that one of its staff-written movie reviews contained passages similar to those in a syndicated column by the critic Roger Ebert, the newspaper's editor, Oliver Wiest, said he was initially inclined to accept the reporter's explanation that he had been merely careless.

But a telephone call he made to the Poynter Institute, a nonprofit journalism center in Florida, seeking guidance set him on a different path. Mr. Wiest, whose daily newspaper has an average circulation around 12,000, said that Kelly McBride, an ethics instructor at Poynter,

New York Times/AP resigned. His multiple deceptions sparked a major internal investigation and national attention. Blair published his account of the scandal this month.

• Sluggish Sales for Blair Book

#### **The Sedalia Democrat**

June 2003: Reporter Michael Kinney, then 29, was fired for plagiarism in several reviews and columns. A reader's call prompted the Missouri paper's investigation.

#### **The Chicago Tribune**

March 2004: Freelance reporter and former staffer Uli Schmetzer admitted to making up the name and occupation of a source for a February story about riots in Australia, after a reader from Sydney wrote to say the quote didn't "ring true."

#### **USA Today**

March 2004: The paper said it had "strong evidence" former reporter Jack Kelley "fabricated substantial portions of at least eight major stories," among other deceptions. Parts of a story that helped make him a 2001 Pulitzer Prize finalist were found to be untrue. Story



USA TODAY/AP

Sources: New York Times, USA TODAY, Chicago Tribune, AP



invoked the name of Mr. Blair and urged him to investigate further. In the end, Mr. Wiest found that the reporter, Michael Kinney, then 29, had copied the work of others without attribution in at least two dozen movie reviews and sports columns.

#### **More From The New York Times**

- A Question of Ethics: How to Teach Them?
- Welfare Rolls Shrank Despite Sluggish Economy
- Issue in Pledge Case: What Does 'Under God' Mean?

Mr. Wiest fired the reporter early in June. He said he was a different editor as a result of the experience. "I realize that one of my responsibilities is to challenge my reporters and to critically evaluate their work," he said.

In a telephone interview, Mr. Kinney did not dispute Mr. Wiest's assertions, saying, "I know I made some mistakes."

He said he was grateful that another newspaper, The State Gazette in Dyersburg, Tenn., about the size of the Sedalia paper, was willing to give him a second chance, hiring him as a sports writer several months ago.

Mr. Kinney's new editor, Chris Rimel, who said he considered Mr. Kinney's writing to be of "Sports Illustrated quality," said he had nonetheless been running numerous phrases from each of Mr. Kinney's articles through the Google search engine to ensure that the writer has not fallen back on old practices.

Asked what he had found thus far, Mr. Rimel said, "Not a thing."

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In a message dated 8/13/2003 11:33:44 AM Pacific Daylight Time, Gina.Lubrano@uniontrib.com writes:

Karin,

Baca is outrageous. He talks here about a "formal complaint" against you that he sent me. I do remember receiving something like that. And, yes, I'm guilty of ignoring it. I didn't receive any of the other material he cites. I would have forwarded those to the reporters and editors involved. I think there's nothing to gain by engaging him. Gina

-----Original Message-----

**From:** AztecBaca@aol.com [mailto:AztecBaca@aol.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 13, 2003 10:27 AM  
**To:** readers.rep@uniontrib.com  
**Subject:** response

Committee on Chicano Rights  
 710 East Third Street · National City, CA 91950 · (619) 477-3800

August 13, 2003

Classical Rope-a-Dope?

Gina Lubrano  
 San Diego-Tribune  
 P.O. Box 120191  
 San Diego, CA 92112-0191  
 E-Mail: readers.rep@uniontrib.com

After waiting almost 3 years for a reply to our complaints, you as an ombudsman have finally responded! In your response (see 8-12-03 response below), in reference to our correspondence of 8-10-03 you state:

1) "I do not recall receiving any such letters," and " I will have to take your word for it, etc."

· I don't know if you received our e-mails, and you do not have to take my word for it. I do know that I can forward you a letter (December 13, 2000) in which a formal complaint was lodged against your Editor Karin Winner (c.c. to Union CEO Gene Bell), which you NEVER responded to!

2) "If you have a complaint about specific errors or questions of fairness and accuracy in news stories, please write me a note explaining what you think the error is or how the story is unfair."

· That's what our 8-11-03 letter, which we e-mailed, and faxed to you was! Specific complaints against you as reader ombudsman for not doing your job, shielding SD Union bosses, reporters and politicians endorsed by the Union. It was also forwarded to point out the Union's lack of coverage of issues affecting the Chicano community, and for you as reader ombudsman to respond and address the forwarded complaints! I would recommend that you re-read our correspondence; as I cannot make our specific complaints any clearer.

In closing, I am still waiting for you as reader's ombudsman to response to all the issues raised in our 8-10-03 correspondences.

Waiting,

Herman Baca, President





Committee on Chicano Rights  
710 East Third Street • National City, CA 91950 • (619) 477-3800

September 4, 2003

Mr. David Copley  
President/Publisher  
San Diego-Tribune  
7776 Ivanhoe Avenue  
La Jolla, CA 92037-1530  
Facsimile: (858) 456-0486

Mr. Copley:

As a 30-year subscriber to the SD Union (one of the persons who pays your company's bills) then the San Diego-Tribune and head of a 33-year old community organization, I am writing to file a formal complaint against your employees, **Editor Karin Winner** and "**ombudsman**" **Gina Lubrano**.

I am writing to you because of a **Jason Blair type problem** involving your two employees who for the last 3-years have failed to professionally address formal complaints concerning issues affecting the Chicano community, especially in National City. In particular, I am writing to ask you for clarification of an e-mail dated 8-13-03 from "ombudsman" Gina Lubrano below, which was in response to an e-mail I forwarded to her earlier that day. I am certain that the e-mail was inadvertently sent to me, because in her opening sentence she addresses "Karin." I think it is safe to assume she intended the e-mail for your editor.

***Karin***

***Baca is outrageous. He talks here about a "formal complaint" against you that he sent me. I do remember receiving something like that. And, yes, I'm guilty of ignoring it. I didn't receive any of the other material he cites. I would have forwarded those to the reporters and editors involved. I think there's nothing to gain by engaging him.***

Does the communication from your ombudsman to Editor Winner represent the SD Union-Tribune's policy toward subscribers and community members who file legitimate "formal complaints? Further, what do such actions and statements say about the sincerity of "ombudsman" Gina Lubrano's SD Union-Tribune (August 4, 2003) statement that:

**"An ombudsman does not operate as a shield for editors, but has an obligation to make sure that they know what readers are saying and concerns them."**

In her 8-13-03 e-mail to me, Ms. Lubrano wrote concerning my inquiry regarding past complaints, "**I do not recall receiving any such letters,**" but admits to "Karin" that, "**yes I'm guilty of ignoring it.**"



Mr. Copley, is lying to me by Ms. Lubrano, shielding her Editor Winner (despite her public declaration to the contrary) as well as shielding CEO Gene Bell, SD Union -Tribune South Bay reporters, and South Bay politicians endorsed by the SD Union-Tribune, condoned?

Why have there been no efforts on the part of your editor to monitor or correct these failing on the part of your ombudsman for the last three years?

Could the reasons be because of the contradictory policies followed by Editor Winner? Note, that in an interview with the SD Union-Tribune (June 20, 1998) regarding **journalism ethics**, she pontificated that:

- **“The currency of journalism is facts, our daily transaction are structured around fairness, balance, perspective, and the elusive quest for truth.”**
- **“Our credibility is the essential ingredient in our relationship with our readers, we take our responsibility to our readers very seriously.”**
- **“The standard of truth is deteriorating in this country and it is a great problem.”**

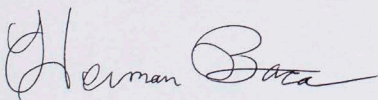
While pursuing policies of:

1. playing politics with issues affecting the Chicano community by allowing no reporting, stonewalling, down playing, restricting, slanting, manipulating information and ignoring opposition;
2. failing to respond or acknowledge community opposition to National City official’s action on issues such as the voter approved proposition “L,” and,
3. condoning her subordinate’s cover-up and lying,

Whatever the reason(s) it is obvious by Editor Winner policies above, and her unwillingness to properly train and supervise staff, reporters and especially “ombudsman” Gina Lubrano that the SD Union-Tribune and you Mr. Copley have a **Jason Blair type problem**. The New York Times to their credit has done something about their **Jason Blair problem**; the question now is what are the SD Union-Tribune and you going to do about your **Editor Karin Winner** and “ombudsman” **Gina Lubrano problem**? Note that I am forwarding you copies of a partial number of past correspondences including the e-mail in question. More are available upon your request.

In closing, I am requesting an **investigation** of the above, a **meeting** with you to discuss why journalistic principles that Editor Winner and her subordinates espouse are not being adhered to, and the SD Union-Tribune’s **coverage** of issues affecting the Chicano community.

Thank you in advance for your prompt response,



Herman Baca  
Cc. Community organizations  
News Media  
New York Times  
4 Attachments Included



# New York Times adds an ombudsman

**W**ord that *The New York Times* plans to appoint an ombudsman after years of institutional resistance is bittersweet. Like other ombudsmen, I'm delighted the *Times* plans to appoint a public editor, but it's sad that it took rogue reporter Jayson Blair for the newspaper, the best in the United States, to acknowledge it had to find a way to let readers know how deeply it cares about them and credibility.

Over the years, the *Times* has been adamant in its refusal to appoint an ombudsman, a position established at *The San Diego Union-Tribune* 28 years ago next month. In the United States, at last count, only 38 newspapers have ombudsmen, but among them are some of the nation's largest and most influential including the *Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe*, *Los Angeles Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Sacramento Bee*, *Oregonian*, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, *Minneapolis Star Tribune* and *Chicago Tribune*.

Why don't more newspapers have ombudsmen? Like the *Times* until recent events, some editors and publishers are philosophically opposed to having an ombudsman, who is known variously as a readers representative, public editor or reader advocate. They believe editors should talk with readers. That would be ideal, of course, but in reality, editors are often too busy with daily deadlines to hear readers out. Other editors and publishers believe they cannot afford one when the truth is they cannot afford not to have one. Some simply do not want attention drawn to their mistakes.

Of course, there are newspapers that have small staffs, and it's understandable that a publisher or an editor would choose to spend limited resources on a journalist who is involved in the daily production of the newspaper as opposed to one who is not.

However, some newspapers that

truly cannot afford an ombudsman but are committed to readers have found a way around that by rotating the job among staff members or by hiring a part-time ombudsman. The point of the ombudsman's job is to let readers know the newspaper cares about them and that there is someone to listen to them.

Now, because Jayson Blair besmirched the name of the *Times* with his plagiarisms and fabrications, the newspaper will join those that let readers know they consider credibility and accountability high priority.

In a note to the *Times* staff, newly named executive editor Bill Keller acknowledged the *Times*' resistance to an ombudsman. "We worried that it would foster nit-picking and navel-gazing, that it might undermine staff morale and, worst of all, that it would absolve other editors of their responsibility to represent the interest of readers."

However, a report by a committee that included *Times* staff members and three outsiders suggested an ombudsman and two other positions, a standards editor to act as an "internal guardian" and a staffing and career development editor.

Keller acknowledged in his note to staff members that he agrees with the committee recommendation that the *Times* "can profit from the scrutiny of an independent reader representative. A pair of professional eyes, familiar with us but independent of the day-to-day production of the paper, can make us more sensitive on matters of fairness and accuracy and enhance our credibility."

Among the outsiders who conducted the *Times* investigation was Joann Byrd, recently retired editorial page editor at the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* who served as ombudsman at the *Washington Post* from 1992 to 1995.

Byrd, who said she did not know if the recommendation for an ombudsman was going to be accepted, called the decision to appoint one "a huge

statement" for public accountability. Byrd said there are other ways of letting readers know the newspaper cares, by devoting more space for letters to the editor for example, but appointing an ombudsman is probably "the most ostentatious way of doing it."

Byrd, who was philosophically opposed to ombudsmen before she became one, said her two favorite recommendations from the committee that conducted an exhaustive examination of the newsroom culture that allowed Jayson Blair to flourish are for appointment of an ombudsman and a standards editor. The two will work hand-in-hand. The standards editor is to oversee the setting of journalistic standards for the newspaper, be the internal guardian for staff members who have journalistic concerns about works in progress and oversee corrections and editor's notes. Byrd said she was impressed with the *Times* staffers who had an "absolute devotion to fixing ... whatever needed to be fixed."

Had Jayson Blair never entered the *Times* newsroom, the paper would still have had need for an ombudsman. An ombudsman does not operate as a shield for editors, but has an obligation to make sure they know what readers are saying and what concerns them.

With its decision to appoint an ombudsman, the *Times* has given readers a clear signal it cares about credibility, accuracy, fairness and accountability. It's a huge step, one long overdue.

• • •

*Gina Lubrano's column commenting on the media appears Mondays. It is the policy of The San Diego Union-Tribune to correct all errors. To discuss accuracy or fairness in the news, please write to Gina Lubrano, readers representative, Box 120191, San Diego, CA 92112-0191, or telephone (619) 293-1525. Send e-mail to: readers.rep@uniontrib.com.*