The lives of journalists in court, on the page, finding funds, on stage and with governments.

Journalism and freedom of the press in Korea.

Journalism and the history of the Stars and Stripes.

Journalism and funding stories.

Journalism and performance poetry.

Journalism vs diplomacy.
At 200 km/h, the proudest moment in Japanese technology

In 1964, just as all eyes were turning to the Tokyo Olympics, Japan amazed the world with debut of the Shinkansen, the so-called “bullet train” speeding from Tokyo to Osaka at the unprecedented speed of 200 kilometers per hour. It was the proudest moment in Japan’s technological history. And although NSK was not in the forefront, it was the proudest moment in our history, too. That’s because almost every Shinkansen train from then till today has run on NSK bearings.

Developing the original Shinkansen bearings able to operate at 200 km/h required NSK to set new benchmarks in stability at high speed and durability over long distances. Just as we helped Japan National Railways to pioneer the Shinkansen, NSK played an equally vital role in the growth of the automakers, shipbuilders and electronics companies that won Japan a global name for excellence in engineering. Today, we offer the same commitment to our customers around the world.
THE FCCJ GREETED 2016 with our traditional Hacks and Flacks Party, bringing correspondents and journalists together with foreign and Japanese dignitaries, business figures and PR managers who were invited to support better networking and sharing of information. The annual party, as always, was well attended – with drinks and food at hand. This year marks yet another crucial one for the FCCJ as we strive to increase our membership numbers and strengthen our services to ensure the stability of this organization, both economically and professionally. To assist the Club in this important mission, I recently established an ad hoc Futures Committee, comprised of respected older journalists who will work with correspondents dabbling with online journalism. The Committee also includes associate members, invaluable members of the Club who bring legal and business talent to the table. Their numbers are increasing and no doubt they expect the future of our Club is to continue to be the dynamic journalism hub it has always been. How this pans out in the next decade is an important challenge. As I have said previously, I believe the current diversity of our correspondent members is a solid platform to build a futuristic vision. An Asia Journalist Forum has also been formed, including correspondents from Taiwan, Singapore, Bangladesh and Vietnam, among others. Our new little group will provide a space in our Club for turning the spotlight on news in the region and will also act as a catalyst to increase the number of correspondents who are interested in this specific area. Indeed, the FCCJ’s koeki status is contributing to the global journalism debate.

Other important news is that we will soon be replacing the grand piano that has served our wonderful Club for so many decades. The purchase is being facilitated by a financial contribution from our dearly loved but now departed member, koeki. It was a poignant evening, as those who worked with the grand piano that has served our journalism debate.

About 10,200,000 Google search results for “David Bowie Japan”

The two of us were sitting at the bar by the beach... when an attractive young woman passed by [and] exclaimed, “OH MY GOD, I DON'T BELIEVE IT. IT’S ROGER PUHLERS!” I was the one who couldn’t believe it, and Bowie gave out a hearty laugh. . . . “That was wonderful,” Bowie said, turning to me and smiling generously. “JUST ABSOLUTELY WONDERFUL.”

Rogier Pulvers remembering a break with David Bowie during the filming of Nagisa Oshima’s Merry Christmas Mr. Lawrence. The Japan Times, Jan. 14, 2016

Edward Seidensticker became well known for his dept translations of Japanese literature, both modern and ancient. Translations of works by Kawabata Yasunari, particularly Snow Country (1956) and Thousand Cranes (1959), led to Kawabata winning the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1968. During the same time frame he also translated two books by Tanizaki Junichiro, Some Prefer Nettles (1955) and The Malice of Others (1957), and then In Praise of Shuncho (1977) two decades later. Equally well known are his translations of the Heian-era Kapero Nikki, which he rendered as The Gossamer Years (1964), and the exceedingly difficult Tale of Genji (1976). As an author, Seidensticker followed up in 1980, High City with a second book, Tokyo Rising: The City Store the Great Earthquake (1990), that continued his history of this great city. (Both volumes were combined into one in 2010, with a preface written by his old friend, Donald Richie.)

Seidensticker, born in 1923 in Colorado, was a graduate of the University of Colorado (1942) where he also studied Japanese at the U.S. Navy’s Language School. Following service as a language officer with the U.S. Marines during WWII and a stint in Japan as a translator, he obtained a master’s degree from Columbia University before going on to study Japanese literature at the University of Tokyo.

Seidensticker was also an educator. As one of his former students I can report that he was a good one, with a sense of humor. His course, “The Cultural History of Japan,” was quite popular at Sophia University at the end of the ’50s and early ’60s. Those years were no doubt a good warm up for his later teaching positions at Stanford, University of Michigan, and finally Columbia, from 1978 until retirement in 1985. After retirement, he divided his time between Japan and Hawai (where it was again my good fortune to meet him at a house party in Honolulu in 2003 and review the good old days at Sophia).

He died in 2007 following a fall while on his customary stroll around Shinobazu pond in Ueno. A head injury eventually led to his death in a Tokyo hospital at the age of 86. Among the honors he had received over the years was one of the highest, the third-class Order of the Rising Sun, for his work in introducing Japanese literature to the outside world.

– Charles Pomaray

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– Charles Pomaray
Is freedom of the press at stake in South Korea?
Some recent actions by the authorities seem to hint at a disturbing trend.

By a rather narrow margin, it seems. Korea avoided punishing someone whose work had been more than a little infuriating. The exoneration of Kato, who had reported from Seoul on a rumor that President Park was unreachable for seven hours in April 2014 while the cruise ferry Sewol was sinking off the southern coast on the way to the scenic island of Jeju with hundreds immersed in such difficult issues with Japan as the ongoing controversy over the comfort women who served as sex slaves for Japanese troops in World War II, did not want to have to deal with yet another annoying problem. A conviction would have made Kato a hero, a martyr, in Japan. The case would have provided material for endless stories about freedom of expression between German law and the U.S. Constitution on one side and the Korean Constitution with presidential elections every five years on the other. The defendants are fighting to keep their reputations intact.

The danger is that the Korean judiciary has been so concerned about Kato's report, which he had written from an unconfirmed tip in Chuseok Ibo, Korea's biggest-selling newspaper, the scrupulous attention given to his testimony by the court was a revelation in itself. For four hours one day in June, I listened to the questions from lawyers of the defense and prosecution lawyers while an interpreter translated everything into Japanese. At one point the chief judge asked if I understood the difference between German law and the U.S. Constitution on free speech. The first amendment of the latter states unambiguously, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press...." However, under German law, the judge told me, an insult to an individual human dignity would be libelous. Somehow, as I looked back on the point that he had made, chances of Kato's acquittal did not seem good.

Considering how sure I was of a conviction, I was not only happily surprised but incredibly relieved when news came of Kato's acquittal. Nonetheless, the elaborate, protracted nature of the case aroused questions. Why did the prosecution go to such lengths over a trivial gossip story, and why did the court schedule only one hearing a month, doing nothing other than listen to my testimony on the day of my appearance? A month later the court heard the next defense witness, Yiuchii Ueda, Seoul bureau chief for Nihon Keizai Shimbun, the leading daily in western Japan. One month after that the turn for the third and final witness, Dr. Yaziyako Tajima, journalism professor from Sophia University in Tokyo. Perhaps more importantly, why did President Park, so hurt by gossip linking her reported absence to a liaison with a gentleman friend, want the system to dedicate such trouble and expense to pillorying an obstreperous foreigner? Why is libel a criminal rather than civil offense in Korea — and would the prosecution exercise its right, under Korean law, to appeal?

The answer to that final question was, no, the prosecution wisely decided not to appeal, but the reason is not so simple as the folly of the case. It is that the foreign ministry, so immersed in such difficult issues with Japan as the ongoing controversy over gay marriage, is the one whose work has been most closely watched. Korea has made Kato a hero, a martyr, in Japan. The case would have provided material for endless stories about freedom of expression. It is that the foreign ministry, so immersed in such difficult issues with Japan as the ongoing controversy over the comfort women who served as sex slaves for Japanese troops in World War II, did not want to have to deal with yet another annoying problem. A conviction would have made Kato a hero, a martyr, in Japan. The case would have provided material for endless stories about freedom of expression.

Kato's acquittal was also a triumph for me personally. I had testified as a defense witness, arguing that his report was trivial, that it was not deliberately slanderous, that foreign journalists often pick up stuff from the local media and the case only publicized a story that one never knew existed. Evidently, the court agreed. To everyone's immense relief, the judge's decision distinguished Korea from other countries that claim to be democracies but abuse their systems by bringing libel charges, and worse, against critics and political foes. In a sense, the decision appeared to show the independence of the Korean judiciary. I had predicted, over cups of coffee with Kato's successor, Sankei bureau chief Kinya Fujimori, that I had to find him guilty and levy a fine but not send him to jail.

I WAS GLAD to testify for two reasons. For one thing, I was curious about how a Korean court would be like, and for another, I found it hard to believe that anyone could have been so concerned about Kato's report which he had written from an unconfirmed tip in Chuseok Ibo, Korea's biggest-selling newspaper. The scrupulous attention given to my testimony by the court was a revelation in itself. For four hours one day in June, I listened to the questions from lawyers of the defense and prosecution lawyers while an interpreter translated from Korean to English and English to Korean and another interpreter translated everything into Japanese.

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A veteran AP reporter reflects on creative passion and the poetics of journalism.

The many lives of Yuri Kageyama

by TIM HORNYAK

I t is human duty to perform this act regularly, like a reli-
gious ritual, in homage, in honor, to give thanks, no mat-
ter its futility,” writes Yuri Kageyama. She’s writing about
sex — specifically menopause sex — in the middle of a short sto-
y about her family. The prose is unwrinkled, unfurling
personally and adroitly in quickly juggling themes of child abuse,
racism and sexuality while maintaining a narrative flow.

Japan watchers and reporters in Tokyo may be familiar with
Kageyama from seeing her at press conferences and reading
her stories or her updates on Twitter, where she has more than
20,000 followers. She’s a veteran reporter who has been with
Associated Press in Tokyo and the U.S. for 25 years. Her recent
articles have covered everything from Takashi Murakami’s
artistic evolution to electronics giant Toshiba’s damaging
accounting scandal and Tokyo Electric Power’s struggle
to dismantle the crippled Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power
plant — as well as the campaign by Japanese activists to allow
married couples to have different surnames.

That versatility is also manifest in her creative side. Pub-
lished in 2009, the short story “The Father and the Son”
reflects one of the many facets of Kageyama as a creative
writer. She has published two books of poetry and prose and
her work has been included in literary journals and websites.

“I became a writer because I want to be honorable,” Kagey-
ma says at a cafe in Shiodome, home to the AP’s Tokyo bureau.
“I want to do beautiful things and live my life in a way that is
meaningful. I became a journalist because I like to write and
that was one way you could get paid.”

Serendipity knocks

Kageyama is also a self-described novice filmmaker and a
performance artist who draws upon her background and
experiences living in two cultures. Born in Aichi Prefecture,
where her father, an engineer, worked on NASA’s Apolo-
gest Program, which landed Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin
on the moon in 1969. While studying sociology in the 1970s
at UC Berkeley, Kageyama met her mentor Ishmael Reed,
who was in charge of putting out the weekly edition and then the
help-wanted ads.

“I walked in and told the subscriptions desk that I needed
the ad section,” Kageyama recalls. “And then the managing
editor walked up and said, ‘Why don’t you just work here?’

It was the easiest job interview ever — especially since she
didn’t even submitted her resume. At the Japan Times, she
was in charge of putting out the weekly edition and then
worked in the general news department, doing everything
from reporting to captions to layout. In 1990, she joined the
AP and has since produced investigative reports, such as a
2012 story showing that scientists who helped determine
radiation exposure limits in Japan accepted trips paid for
by Japanese nuclear plant operators. A 2014 article, written
with Richard Lardner and based on Freedom of Informa-
tion Act requests, uncovered questionable handling of sexual
abuse cases among U.S. military personnel serving in Japan.
The story added fuel to a campaign to change the way sexual
assault cases are prosecuted by commanders.

Rock me like a Hurricane

While at UC Berkeley, Kageyama met her mentor Ishmael
Reed, an author and educator who published her first poem,
“A Song for the Big White Bitch.” Reed later compared the
raw power of her writing to a hurricane, and dubbed her
the Yuricane, which is now the name of her spoken word
project. “A Song for the Big White Bitch” is a multilayered
dance, music and spoken-word piece that was staged at New
York’s La MaMa Experimental Theater in September 2015. It’s one example of a subject that Kageyama has explored
both as an artist and journalist, having spent many days covering press confer-
ences at Tokyo Electric Power’s office after the March 11, 2011 cataclysm and
later visiting the disaster zone, it also incorporates elements of racism, sex-
ism and abortion as well as friendship between women.

“I always felt that literature was supe-
rior to journalism — that it took more
talent to write a real poem than an article,” Kageyama says, “but when the
disaster happened, I realized how pow-
erless poetry can be, and that people
need journalism in the wake of a disas-
ter. When Fukushima happened, I real-
ized it was the story of my life.”

Switching from an objective, fact-
oriented writing approach for an AP
story (while observing AP style, of
course) and then going home to write
a free-form poem or essay about the
same topic, yet with a deeply personal
angle, has never been a problem for
Kageyama. For instance, she has writ-
ten both articles and a poem about the
story of Kenji Goto, the Japanese video journalist beheaded by Islam-
estic militants in January 2015.

“Have you all of this emotion, and you contain that to do the
AP story — what are you going to do with all the emotion that’s left?” she asks.

“It has to come out in some way. Then I have to write a poem. By being engaged
in the world, your poems are certainly going to be better.”

Wearing many hats

Kageyama’s lyrics were recently high-
lighted in “I Will Bleed,” a song she
wrote with Indian singer-songwriter
Trupti Pandkar that was inspired by
Chikamatsu’s Sonnensuijitu. The famous
bunraku puppet play about love
suicides. It speaks of crossing bound-
aries, with lines such as “Not afraid of
different tongues/Our blood joined will
make us one.” The slow, soulful tune
was a finalist in the R&B category in
the 2015 UK Songwriting Contest and
will be included on a forthcoming CD that
Kageyama, Trupti and bassist Hiroshi
Tokieda are working on. Mean-
while, Kageyama is trying to get her
Fukushima piece staged in another city
and has a children’s book in the works
with an illustrator. She’s determined
to keep up her creative output despite
the demands of her reporting job and
will continue to draw inspiration from
news events and collaborations with
other artists.

“I’m not that inhibited about what
art is or where borders lie, because
my life has been about defying borders,
so I don’t think that there’s such a thing
as what is proper,” Kageyama says. “I’m
not writing to please anybody. I think rules are there to be broken and you cross the borders and you see what happens.
That’s one of the better things we have going in life.”
I t was 1964, I was sitting in the middle of the Kremlin around the green baize table; on the other side was Kosygin, the premier, and Gromyko, the foreign minister. On our side was the Australian foreign minister, Hashock.”

An interview that kicks off in that fashion would seem to suggest an eventful career and some good yarns; Gregory Clark qualifies on both counts.

After graduation from Oxford University (he was accepted at 16) and some adventures in Europe, Clark headed back home to Australia in 1956 to begin a diplomatic career in the Department of External Affairs. It was to include a year of Chinese studies in Hong Kong, which would help stimulate a lifelong fascination with Asia.

After a couple of years as the China Desk officer in Canberra, he was posted to Moscow, where the Kremlin meeting above took place after the Australian foreign minister “arrived demanding a meeting with the top Soviet leadership for whom he had an urgent message.”

The message contained what Clark describes as not only a misunderstanding of geopolitics in inviting Russia to join the Vietnam War to stop China – which Canberra believed was pulling the strings – but basic geography, mistakenly identifying the province of Sinkiang as Russian territory coveted by China.

“The Russians were amazed,” says Clark, and after correcting the visitors’ geography, they informed the Australians that they would support the “brave struggle of our Vietnamese comrades against American imperialism, and wished the Chinese would do more to help.”

After resigning in disgust at what he saw as ignorance about the Vietnam War, in October 1964, Clark was offered the chance to express his views on Vietnam in Rupert Murdoch’s newly-launched newspaper, “People forget, but the Australian was a very progressive newspaper at the beginning, launched by Murdoch to oppose the Vietnam War.”

The article detailed what Clark believes was the myth that the conflict was caused by Chinese aggression. Finding outlets for his contrarian view on China difficult to come by, he took a year off from his studies to write a book on the subject. The research for In Fear of China brought him to Japan, where he would meet his wife and future mother of his two sons. Translated into Japanese after it was published in 1967, it later opened doors for him in the country.

OFFERED THE CHANCE TO launch the Australian’s Tokyo bureau in 1969, which also began his long FCCJ membership, Clark was sent for a two-month journalism crash course at the paper’s HQ. There he witnessed a pivotal episode that Clark says helped change Murdoch from a liberal to a scourge to Sydney for printing. The print unions knew this. So sure enough, come five o’clock in the afternoon, a demand would come through, threatening a 24-hour strike.”

The reporters and management, including Murdoch, would have to go down and lay out the type themselves, a laborious and messy process in those days. “You could see the look on Murdoch’s face as he did this: ‘If this is what they do to the one progressive newspaper in Australia, to hell with the unions and the left wing.”

Setting up the paper’s bureau on the sixth floor of the Nikkei’s building turned out to be serendipitous, as Clark was able to see the Japanese business daily before it was put to bed. His Japanese reading ability, which he says was already an advantage over his Australian rivals, was now put to use for scanning for stories.

After what he calls “four great years at the Australian,” and a year back in Canberra working for the government, Clark was approached in the 1970s to write a book for the Japanese market. “The Japanese were getting very curious to know how the rest of the world saw them.”

Clark already had an idea for a book about why the Japanese and Chinese were so different. On delivering the manuscript, the publishing company boss gave it the title The Japanese: Origins of Uniqueness, although that wasn’t really its theme, recalls Clark.

THE TITLE DID GENERATE enough publicity to sell the book, and more importantly, made Clark a fixture on the corporate lecture circuit. He spent the next 20 years being paid handsome fees for 90-minute talks on the theme of “Japanese uniqueness” to audiences across the country a few times a week. The higher profile also boosted his career at Sophia University, where the faculty upgraded him from visiting lecturer to full professor.

The lucrative lecture gig came to an abrupt end when the Sankei ran an article by Yoshio Kono, putting a damper on the the North Korean abduction issue as a fiction. Clark says this was entirely inaccurate, but the damage was done.

Shortly afterward, in 1995, Clark was asked to be vice president of Tama University, stepping up to president a few months later when the incumbent suffered a heart attack. Later Clark served as vice president of Akita International University from 2004 to 2008.

Along the way, he has found time to write half a dozen more books, serve on numerous government committees, appear as a commentator on Japanese TV and write regularly for publications from the International Herald Tribune to the Japan Times – his eventual path being very different from the one he envisaged as a young diplomat.

“I’ve enjoyed the transition, but I never had the chance to properly use the Chinese and Russian that I learned. That’s a big regret in my life, particularly the Chinese.”

“..."You could see the look on Murdoch’s face: ‘If this is what they do to the one progressive newspaper in Australia, to hell with the unions.’”
U.S. military newspaper still publishing in Japan

For over 70 years since it began printing in war-ravaged Japan, the Stars and Stripes has offered its military community readers a taste of press freedom, U.S. style.

MARK SCHREIBER

A typical edition, selling for 50 cents (“Free in deployed areas”) consists of about 32 pages, of which nine are devoted to sports coverage. Most of the military-related stories are generated by in-house writers, with other news and op-eds from the Washington Post, Los Angeles Times and syndicated wire services like AP.

Delivered to homes in some areas as well as sold from vending machines, Stripes print editions are issued Monday through Thursday and special Weekend Editions on Friday. In addition to the regular newspaper, readers in Japan, Okinawa, South Korea and Europe receive weekly or biweekly supplements carrying area-specific news and feature articles, along with local advertising.

The Stripes greatest risk, growth, not surprisingly, has been in its electronic versions, and the paper is making an effort to move from printspin to digital. “Visits to the stripes.com website, which grew from 5 to 4 million sessions a month, said Choate. “Quite a few folks from outside the region log on, looking for information on this region.” Choate gives especial praise to the 147 Japanese nationals employed by the paper, a highly skilled labor force involved in print design, web development, distribution and other tasks. Printing of the daily edition and work on the electronic edition, along with the advertising sales are conducted at Harvy Barron in Roppongi, across the street from Aoyama Cemetery. The building’s ground floor features a small Navy exchange and surprisingly large fitness gym.

The Roppongi facility also once housed the Japan Times and was outsourced to the Nippon Times (renamed itself from 1943 to 1956), but before long the Stripes had its own building and was being typeset and printed in Roppongi, on a site that originally quartered the Third Imperial Guard of the Imperial Japanese Army.

In the years after the occupation ended the Stripes enjoyed its golden age as a city newspaper with extensive local coverage. Its Tokyo bar operated considerable local content, running columns by such popular regulars as entertainment columnist Al Rickets and sportswriter Leo Kavetski. The late special correspondent Hal Drake, long a fixture at the Japanese Main Bar, proved a virtuoso at compiling oral histories, tracking down and interviewing Japanese who willingly gave personal testimonies about their involvement in the Pacific War.

Another celebrated Stripes alumna was Texas native Millard “Corky” Alexander, who in February 1970 launched another tabloid, the free community newspaper Tokyo Weekender. “We had a bar, and the manager, a master sergeant, lived right next door,” Alexander once recalled to a UPI reporter, about what the Stripes had been like in its heyday. “He’d open the bar at 8:45 in the morning, but he’d consent to open earlier if it was an emergency.”

In 1985 the Tokyo Weekly became the Tokyo Newsroom, now maintained an editorial staff of 82 – 44 military personnel and 38 civilians. That figure was to shrink drastically in the ensuing years, as the Washington headquarters assumed control over editorial work. “We used to have several versions of the paper, up to six at one point,” said current commander, Air Force Lt. Colonel Brian Choate. “We now have just one. We used to have a lot of folks scattered all over the Pacific. Today we have 16 offices located around the Pacific.”

Choate emphasized that under the Department of Defense, the Stripes is “the only entity with such privilege, and I think that makes us extremely unique.”

“Thursday’s child

Empire and emperor to share a Dec. 27, 1945 edition of the paper.
always been that way, and it’s enforced today more than ever.”

So with U.S. politics virtually certain to become ensnared in a bellicose presidential campaign in the months ahead, I asked Choate how the paper would navigate the tightrope between the two parties’ candidates. His response – and who can blame him? – was to cringe in mock terror. “When we pass on our news and information, it’s the most up-to-date and accurate that we can manage, without any taint at all.”

Not leaving such matters to chance, in the early 1990s Congress created the post of ombudsman, to ensure that “journalists operate with editorial independence and that … readers receive a free flow of news and information without taint of censorship or propaganda.”

Choate emphasized that since the Department of Defense is the “only entity with such privilege, and I think that makes us extremely unique.”

Five pages of Yamahata’s photos originally appeared in the Feb. 4, 1946 issue of Life magazine, under the headline “Sunday at Hirohito’s.”

Aschaffenburg, Germany.

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Mark Schreiber’s ties to Stars and Stripes extend back to 1958, when he sold the European edition (at 5 cents each) to U.S. soldiers in Aschaffenburg, Germany.

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THE EMPEROR READS THE FUNNIES

AS 1945 DREW TO A close, officials of the Allied Occupation, including Gen. Douglas MacArthur himself, were busily engaged in preparations on contract with the then-Imperial Household Ministry, to take a series of photographs of Hirohito and his family.

An extensive collection of the photos – including some never before made public – were recently displayed at a month-long exhibit in Tokyo. The photographs on the show showed a seated emperor and standing crown prince reading the U.S. military newspaper, the Pacific Stars and Stripes, dated Thursday, Dec. 27, 1945.

Five pages of ‘Yamahata’s photos originally appeared in the Feb. 4, 1946 issue of Life magazine, under the headline “Sunday at Hirohito’s.”

Emperor poses for first informal pictures.” The caption suggested Hirohito and his heir apparent were more interested in mundane aspects of American culture – like the Blonde and Moon Mullins cartoons at the back, or the “Big 3 Works on Treaty Plan” in the front page story, “big 3 Works on Treaty Plan” in the front page story, “big 3 Works on Treaty Plan” – than in their official household granted permission to Life as a ‘special honor’ to use four Sundays in December photographing the members of the imperial family,” the story read. “Since the family is fearful of assassination, American photographers were assisted by Japanese photographers of the Sun News Agency used.”

Still, the makeover of the Emperor’s public persona – including this photo showing him reading newspapers published by his former enemy – no doubt played an significant role in keeping him on the chrysanthemum throne.

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-- Mark Schreiber
If you are reading this, you most likely understand the benefits or year-long fellowships at universities and research institutions such as the Bosch Foundation in Germany. While I will focus on U.S.-based programs, there are others in Europe, including with the Reuters Institute at Oxford University and the Robert Bosch Foundation in Germany.

The tougher to get but most rewarding are the semester- or year-long fellowships at universities and research institutions. Such programs include stipends, fees and class tuition, travel and research costs for stories, allow one to earn graduate degrees and help pay for expenses for families. Former FCCJ president Martyn Williams, who received a Knight Fellowship during 2011 and 2012, says there weren’t “many downsides” to having the opportunity to get paid to spend a year studying whatever he wanted at an institution like Canada’s Stanford University. “It’s difficult not to want to do,” says Williams, who currently is a senior correspondent for IDG News Service in San Francisco.

Tom Yulsman, who directs the Center for Environmental Journalism at the University of Colorado, Boulder, that oversees the Ted Scripps Fellowship in Environmental Journalism, says journalists should think of a fellowship as a kind of sabbatical. “It should also be an opportunity to recalibrate and maybe even re-launch,” he says. “There are some points during a person’s career when this makes more sense than others. Is this the right point in your years? Are you truly ready to make the most out of a fellowship? Not just taking a break but taking advantage of the opportunities that a fellowship can offer?”

The application process can be a bit grueling, requiring the same amount of effort as applying to a U.S. college or graduate school, except there are no standardized tests involved. (My vision was blurred by the end of February – most deadlines are March 1 or before, after starting at the computer screen for weeks on end.) Applicants should also carefully read and understand the fellowship contract, and it helps to become familiar with projects done by past fellows in the programs they wish to join. Yulsman has further advice for applicants: “Be prepared to articulate in a clear and concise way why you think you want to head and why – and how you think the specific fellowship you are applying to could help you. Not just a fellowship in general, but this particular fellowship, in this particular place.”

After completing one major application package, however, it should be much easier, as it becomes a matter of tailoring your personal and professional essays and study proposals to each fellowship and university. Remember that recommendations, up to three in some cases, from editors or others familiar with a person’s work, are required.

OF THE SEVERAL FELLOWSHIPS that I have applied for, I was accepted for the Scripps Fellowship and was a finalist for the University of Michigan’s Knight-Wallace Fellowship. The application package serves as the basis for the initial screening. If that passes muster, it is usually followed by a phone interview, especially for overseas applicants. Within the U.S., some institutions will cover the travel costs for face-to-face interviews.

There are literally dozens of fellowships, grants and awards available for up to 200 Japanese journalists, ranging from funding of a couple thousand dollars to year-long fellowships with stipends of up to $85,000. While I will focus on U.S.-based programs, there are others in Europe, including with the Reuters Institute at Oxford University and the Robert Bosch Foundation in Germany.

The toughest to get but most rewarding are the semester- or year-long fellowships at universities and research institutions. Such programs include stipends, fees and class tuition, usually to attend as an auditor. In some cases, they cover travel and research costs for stories, allow one to earn graduate degrees and help pay for expenses for families. Former FCCJ president Martyn Williams, who received a Knight Fellowship during 2011 and 2012, says there weren’t “many downsides” to having the opportunity to get paid to spend a year studying whatever he wanted at an institution like Canada’s Stanford University. “It’s difficult not to want to do,” says Williams, who currently is a senior correspondent for IDG News Service in San Francisco.

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... on Wed., Feb. 24 at 7pm for the mysterious, mesmerizing While the Women Are Sleeping, by acclaimed director Wayne Wang (Chan Is Missing, The Joy Luck Club, Smoke). Marking his first made-in-Japan production with an adaptation of a short story by Spanish writer Javier Marías, Wang has attracted a top-notch cast, including “Beat” Takeshi Kitano, essaying his first lead role in 12 years in a film by another director. Hot actor Hidetoshi Nishijima plays a blocked writer, vacationing at a plush Izu resort with his wife, who notices a beefy older man (Takeshi) and a comely young lass, obviously intimate, but not father and daughter, lounging by the pool. Kenji’s interest rapidly grows into obsession and finally, something possibly worse. Wang’s frequent producer Yukie Kito and star Shiori Kutsuna will be on hand for the Q&A, just days after returning from the film’s world premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival.

(Japan, 2016; 103 minutes; Japanese with English subtitles.)

The FCCJ’s annual Hacks & Flacks party was attended by hundreds on Friday, Jan. 29. This opportunity for PR, government and business representatives to meet and mix with journalist Members opened with a speech from 1st Vice President Peter Langan (top). The traditional celebratory smashing of the saké barrel (provided by Born Saké) was handled by PAC committee representative Justin McCurry, Langan, Club President Suvendrini Kakuchi and Secretary Mary Corbett (above). The saké helped supplement the food and drink (above left) and smoothed the interactions in this informal atmosphere. It was so successful that one participant suggested to President Kakuchi that the event should be held more often.

LAST JULY I SAILED North to three Inuit lands: Nunavik and Nunavut in Canada and Greenland. Where many people imagine an icy wasteland, my lens found a world teeming with life at the short summer’s height: birds, seals, whales, polar bears and humans all sharing the bounty of a rich marine ecosystem. With climate change now threatening this fragile environment, its Inuit peoples are asserting the right to determine their future and to conserve the unique world they have adapted to over millennia. I hope these images will generate both awe for the Arctic’s beauty and concern for its future.

As a sea-going photojournalist, for over 25 years Yoichi Yabe has covered trans-ocean yacht races, expedition cruises and almost anything that floats. Having recently joined the FCCJ as a Journalist member, Yabe-san comes into the Club from his home near the Shonan beaches.
YUSUKE KUBO is senior producer of BS-TBS, producing “Through Foreign Journalists’ Eyes,” a news program featuring foreign correspondents discussing current affairs, domestic and international. He has worked in the news section of Tokyo Broadcasting System (TBS) from 1993, covering news as a cameraman, correspondent and producer. He was the resident correspondent in Bangkok, and has covered the turmoil following the Asia Financial crisis, the India-Pakistan Kashmir conflict and the Afghanistan War from 1998 to 2001. Kubo was born in Fukushima City.

TOM REDMOND is Japan Stocks editor for Bloomberg in Tokyo and deputy head of the team covering Asian equities. He is also an occasional reporter, writing mostly on Japan-related topics including shareholder activism and corporate governance. A native of Dublin, Ireland, he has been living in Tokyo since 1997 and is fluent in Japanese.

The Foreign Correspondents’ Club of Japan (FCCJ) is pleased to offer members a substantial discount on subscriptions to LexisNexis’ news database service, Nexis.com. The Members-only deal allows for flat-rate access at ¥7,900 per month (offering big savings on a service that normally costs ¥126,000 per month).

LexisNexis provides access to news and information from more than 34,000 sources, including Kyodo News, Jiji, Yonhap, Xinhua, AP, Reuters, AFP, all major world newspapers and specialist news sources. Also included is a database of U.S. and international company information, biographical databases, country profiles and a U.S. legal database.

For those already in on the secret, the application form is available on the FCCJ website or from the 19F Club office.

Eighy years ago this month, on February 6, Kyosshi Ichimura founded Riken Kankoshi, as a spin-off from the Riken Institute of Physical and Chemical Research, to make sensitized paper used in reproducing blueprints. But that was just the first focus of Ichimura’s ambition and imagination. Within two years, the renamed Riken Optical Co. began producing optical devices, including cameras.

Once peace was restored, Riken Optical began producing cameras under the Ricoh/Ricoh brand from 1950. Then in 1955 came a breakthrough innovation: the Riken 101 slide copier, the world’s first copier suitable for office use—which quickly became ubiquitous in offices across Japan.

As the company’s products gained worldwide popularity, by 1963 it was time to harmonize the brand and corporate identities under a new name: Ricoh Company, Ltd.

Although the name changed and it grew to become a global enterprise, Ricoh’s vision and principles were continually guided by Kyosshi Ichimura, who led the company for 32 years until his death in 1968. Even today, as Ricoh seeks to extend the frontiers of optical technology, Ichimura’s indelible imprint still shapes our thinking: imagine. change.