Communities, Publics, and the News
How and Why Does News Matter?

- Noam Chomsky: News should report the truth on important public issues, but instead it distracts or lies, and people therefore vote for conservatives or don't vote at all.

- Schudson: this is too simple. News is a "subtle cultural influence on human affairs, not an overt force controlling society."
Two Poles of the Public

• The Public as Community, a place for consensus and solidarity

• The Public as the Public Sphere, a place for reasoned criticism and debate
The Idea of a Public Sphere

- Public Space
- People are free to talk in an unconstrained way
- People are on equal terms
- People follow rules or norms of discourse
- Historical examples: Greek philosophers (Socrates), Parisian salon, English Coffee Houses, Colonial Taverns
The Nation as an Imagined Community

- Benedict Anderson: The Nation "is an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign."
- "It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."
- "The nation is imagined as limited because even the largest of them encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind. The most messianic nationalists do not dream of a day when all the members of the human race will join their nation in the way that it was possible, in certain epochs, for, say, Christians to dream of a wholly Christian planet."
- "Finally, it is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings."
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- Imagined Communities
- News as community-building
- The Newspaper and the Nation-State
Colchester educator is Teacher of the Year

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By Matt Sutkoski
Free Press Staff Writer

COLCHESTER — Diane Bahrenburg, Vermont's newest Teacher of the Year, cried a little Tuesday afternoon on the Colchester High School Auditorium stage.

Vermont Education Commissioner Richard Cate had just announced to a house packed with raucous Colchester High School students that Bahrenburg had received the honor. They gave her a screaming, cheering, rock star reception. She playfully tried and failed to get the teenagers to settle down. "We love you!" a girl yelled. Finally, they were quiet enough for her to talk.

"I have the best job in the world because I get to work with you," she told the students. "But my job just got better today."

Bahrenburg, 51, of Colchester said her selection as Teacher of the Year was mostly the product of a successful school system built on the expertise
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America at War

From the Frenzied Buildup to the Joyous Homecoming
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The History of News

• Ways in which history matters: "conditions not of our own making"

• The printing press and the distribution of knowledge:
  • the increase in communication across time and space
  • "fixity" and the new role of writing in society
The modern newspaper is born on November 29, 1814, when *The London Times* became the first newspaper to be printed by steam, allowing for larger circulation at lower cost. On the first day of the machine's operation, troops were hired to prevent violence by soon-to-be-unemployed print shop workers.
• The "Penny Press": The New York Sun began publication September 3, 1833, as a morning newspaper (edited by Benjamin Day with the slogan "It Shines for All")
Concepts from Schudson

- Culture vs. direct effects: framing, moral amplification and reinforcement
- Professionalism: as much problem as solution
  - Historical rise of professionalism
  - "event-centered, negative, detached, technical, and official"