



## The Price of Cheap Energy



BRUTALLY EFFICIENT MOUNTAINTOP-REMOVAL MINES, SUCH AS THIS ONE IN WEST VIRGINIA, ARE TRANSFORMING HUNDREDS OF SQUARE MILES OF FOREST INTO MOONSCAPE. Will Americans ever awaken to the price they pay for cheap energy? Why does the United States put relatively little effort into developing alternative energy sources? Does the press exacerbate the problem? If so, how? If you were an editor what might be some stories you would assign to reporters covering energy issues?

### AWARDS, PP. 8-10:

Why are the Pulitzer Prizes important to newspapers and their reporters? Do you think readers care whether or not their paper wins a Pulitzer? Should they? Look at the list of National Magazine Award nominees. Are you surprised by any of the magazines on the list? Why or why not? **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:** Who was Joseph Pulitzer? Find out what made his *New York World* the preeminent newspaper of its day. Make a list of what you think are the most important qualities of a Pulitzer Prize-winning story. Go to [www.pulitzer.org](http://www.pulitzer.org) and read through the list of Pulitzers awarded to newspapers and reporters. Select a winner and click on the “works” link to read the relevant articles. What makes them so good? Why were they important? Did they deserve the award? Why or why not? Look through all the Pulitzers for newspaper reporting. Can you find common threads in the stories? If so, what are they? Select two finalists in any one category for the National Magazine Awards. Find one issue of each magazine and read it. What stands out about the magazine? Why do you think it was nominated? Of the two, which is the more deserving of the award? Why? After May 9, find out which magazine captured the award in the category you chose. If it was not one of the you magazines you chose, find a copy of the winner and read it. Why do you think it was picked over the others?

## Talking Points

IN THIS ISSUE we publish the winners of some of journalism’s most coveted awards. But excellent journalism isn’t only defined by prizes: there is the courage under fire of cameramen like Doug Vogt; the crusading environmental work of *Grist*; the tenacious investigation by the authors of “Do You Sincerely Want To Be Rich?”

Excellent journalism is also about helping readers and viewers understand what is true and what is false in a given situation. This issue is at the heart of “Mind Games,” which explores the Bush Administration’s effort to shape reality in Iraq through propaganda.

How would you define excellent journalism? Find an example and discuss it.

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**THE CAMERAMEN, PP. 32-37:**

Look at the photo of Doug Vogt on page 32. What does it tell you about his work? Could you do it? Would you want to be a cameraman or camerawoman in a war zone? Why or why not? What are the journalistic tools that a skilled cameraman or woman brings to a story? What is the difference between a good cameraman and a great one? In a TV news story, are the pictures as important, less important or more important than the words? How can camera work make or break a story? Can pictures exaggerate a story's importance? If so, how? **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:** Watch several nights of television news. Compare and contrast the camera work on the different stories you view. On which stories did the camera work stand out? Why? Find newspaper coverage of one of the stories you saw on TV. How effectively did the camera work convey the essence of the story in comparison to the newspaper writing? Research how wars were covered in the early days of TV. How has technology changed war coverage, both for the cameraman and the viewer?

**MIND GAMES, PP. 38-49:**

Why does the Bush Administration believe that controlling information is crucial to winning the war in Iraq? Do you agree or disagree? Explain. Has the Administration been successful in controlling the way its war on terror has been reported? What are the reasons for any success it has had in doing so? Explain the concept of the "excluded middle" as it relates to how the Administration explains its goals in Iraq. What are the dangers of this strategy? How is the Bush Administration "screwing with democracy," according to Sam Gardiner? What was the purpose of the Office of Strategic Influence? Why was the Pentagon's public affairs office concerned about it? Should it have been? What role do the Information Operations Task Force and the Office of Global Communications play in helping the Bush Administration tell its side of the story? What is the Information Operations Roadmap? How does it fundamentally change the way information is distributed by the military?

**Between the Lines**

- 1) Summarize the arguments for and against newspapers charging for obits. If you were a newspaper publisher, what would be your policy? Why?
- 2) Read the last line of Bob Kochersberger's story about his son (p. 14). Do you agree that reporters should show kindness to their subjects in crime stories? Why or why not?
- 3) Find out how *The New York Times* defended its decision to run an advertorial extolling life in Sudan (p. 18). Do you agree with the decision? Why or why not?
- 4) Does "My Murder Map" (p. 19) make you want to be a crime reporter? Why or why not?
- 5) What did you learn from Bruce Porter's experience at Woodburne prison (p. 26)?

**Quick Takes**

- 1) Check out the evidence offered by those who claim that the HIV virus does not cause AIDS (p. 4). Is it convincing? Why or why not?
- 2) Read the laurel to Laurel Leff on page 16. Research and write about a story about an aspect of the American press's role in the Holocaust.
- 3) After reading about *Grist* (p. 17), report and write a story about how poor communities in your area are affected by the environment.
- 4) Note the second to the last entry in "Hard Numbers" (p. 8). Research the history of the Freedom of Information Act. What is it? What inspired it? What is its importance? How is used by journalists? Why is the Bush Administration clamping down on its use?

How can bypassing the public affairs office backfire on the Pentagon? Ideally, how should reporters be able to cover a war? Does the government have the right to control war reporting? Why or why not? **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:** Imagine you operate a public relations firm that has been hired by the Bush Administration to sell its war on terror at home and abroad. Write a memo explaining how you would do it. Imagine you are the managing editor of a TV news operation or a major newspaper. Write a memo explaining how your editors and reporters can avoid being manipulated by either side's propaganda effort. Research the Lincoln Group. How was it able to obtain its contract from the Pentagon to do public relations in Baghdad? **BUY A TV, BREATHE DEEPLY, PP. 67-68:**

What are the dangers of coal as an energy source, according to Goodell? How has the coal industry been able to get its way in Washington, despite the deleterious effects on the environment of mining and burning coal? **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:** Locate the coal-fired power plants nearest to where you live. Research and write a story examining their impact on the environment. Write a story about what ordinary citizens can do to reduce their dependency on coal. Compare and contrast the benefits and

drawbacks of any five energy sources. Which do you think is best? Why?