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FEATURE | Prepared to go down with the ship (Part 3)

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(Editor's Note: This is the final part of a three-part series published in print and on DailyCollegian.com on subsequent days beginning Monday, April 27. Readers can view parts one and two on DailyCollegian.com.)

Contingency plans

For some Boston Globe staffers, The New York Times Co.'s losses come from mismanagement, and they feel that the cuts in New York have not been fair when compared with what employees in Boston have been forced to concede.

"I think The Times [Co.] has made it pretty clear that their concern is for The New York Times, not for The Boston Globe," said Globe reporter Brian C. Mooney, who has worked in the newspaper business for over 35 years and with The Globe for 21 of those years. "The Times will do what The Times has to do to save The New York Times."

Globe Photographer George Rizer said Eileen McNamara's "Times pimps, pillages Globe" column speaks for a lot of the newsroom staff, while Boston Newspaper Guild President Daniel Totten expressed similar frustrations as McNamara.

"The Times Co.'s investment in The Boston Globe has been nonexistent from the beginning – The Times gladly took profits for over 16 years now, while not investing in the future of The Globe in any measurable and consistent fashion," Totten said.

But, whoever or whatever is to blame for The Globe's current economic state will not change the paper's situation.

The seven current newsroom workers interviewed said they were optimistic in The Globe enduring beyond the Times Co.'s May 1 deadline, but in what form and for how long it will last remains uncertain. On whether The Times Co. would make good on its threat to close The Globe if demands are not met by May 1, Rizer said,

"You'd really have to have a real snit to say, 'Well, they didn't give in in 30 days so let's shut it down.' They would just look like total assholes."

Then again, "Anything is possible. No one is saying entirely that the paper shutting down is a bluff or a myth. Because, who really does

Matt Rocheleau/Collegian

At the "Save The Globe" rally at Faneuil Hall in Boston on April 24, this young girl lets her sign do the talking.

The New York Times Co. threatens to close The Boston Globe if demands aren't met by May 1st.

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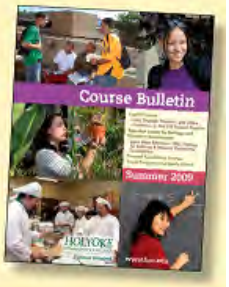

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know?" he said.

Globe sports columnist Dan Shaughnessy agreed.

"I have a hard time believing they would do that, but maybe I'm naive," he said. "I just think that there has got to be something. I don't see how we can be erased off the face of the earth in 30 days."

There have been rumors that The Times Co. is hoping the cuts will make The Globe more appealing for a potential buyer, something Globe chief imaging technician John Ioven said he thinks will happen eventually. In the meantime, he tries not to think about it too much since he has no control over what happens in negotiations. He will just continue working like he has for the past three decades.

If deputy bureau chief Joseph Williams, who works in the Globe's Washington D.C. bureau, were to wager on it, he'd bet the paper will still be around after the 30-day deadline passes, but what The Globe will look like after May 1 and beyond is anyone's guess, he said.

Conceiving of life after journalism is not something Williams finds easy; but having a contingency has crossed his mind, and he said it would be foolish if it hadn't.

"I've got a few ideas, most of which I haven't acted on yet because I'm still holding out hope that the newspaper industry will come back." he said. "I've been doing this for more than half of my life. I love this business. I love what I do and it's very difficult to give it up or see it go away."

Farah Stockman, a reporter who also works in the D.C. bureau, said she will always be a writer and will always want to writer, but she is unsure of whether or not she will be a journalist five years from now.

"I think one of the great things about journalism is it is full of people who can learn quickly and process information and go on to do lots of other really interesting things."

However versatile journalists may be, Mooney is not planning to leave the profession without a fight.
"No one's heading for the exits here; we're trying to save the paper."

Saving The Globe

For the first time since mid-September, the mercury read 80 degrees in Boston on April 24 as a "Save the Globe" rally put on by the BNG drew several hundred supporters to Faneuil Hall to listen to 14 speakers, including Mooney.

The crowd gathered for the noon-time affair was a mix of reporters, editors, their family members, readers young and old, city union workers, media covering the rally and local politicians. Signs, which read "The Globe belongs to Boston," "Preserve free speech," "Support Globe workers" and "Save the Boston Globe" were distributed to the audience, many of whom adorned stickers advertising the newly-created SaveTheBostonGlobe.com.

Globe reporter Bella English's speech talked about how event organizers had some trouble getting more newsroom people than were in attendance to come; not because they were worried about their jobs and not because they didn't care, but because they were working on deadlines.

English had two stories of her own to complete after the rally.

"Until the last bell is rung"

Two weeks earlier while stuck at a traffic light, Rizer said aloud, as if directed towards an imaginary person who could turn the light green and speed up traffic, "gotta go, gotta go, gotta go."

Rizer repeated the phrase several times throughout the day – while waiting in line at a MassPike toll booth on his way to a photo assignment at Harvard, and waiting at 7 a.m. for the Globe headquarters' slow-moving elevator to bring him to the third-floor cafeteria for an omelet and home fries.

His attitude was more curious than impatient.
If he does go into teaching after he leaves The Globe, Rizer is not sure if he'll be able to deal with the structure and monotony of working in a classroom five days a week. Rizer said he just likes to know what's going on in the world around him, to be informed and to stay busy. It's why he was on his sixth-straight day at The Globe. It's why he stood on the hood of his Buick to get a higher angle for a photo of students from Boston College High School as they processed to several different churches as part of a Good Friday ritual. It's why he has taken the time to learn about the new technology in journalism, including how to shoot and edit video. And, it's why he does not plan to shut off his police scanners even after he leaves The Globe.

For Ioven, it's why he "plan[s] on working here until the last bell is rung."

As Williams put it, "people don't get into journalism to make money, and they don't get into journalism to have nice careers or to be stars. You get into it for the work. You get into it because this is what you want to do. You get into it because you'd do it for free."

Mooney echoed that sentiment.

"This is all I've ever really wanted to do," he said. "I'm from this area, and working at The Globe was my idea of the best job I could have."

He added, "I'm sort of prepared to go down with the ship if it comes to it."

This story will also be published online at GazetteNET.com by The Daily Hampshire Gazette, where Matt Rocheleau is a contributing writer.

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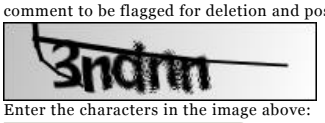

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