

# Lorna Tychostup Goes Global

## Local journalist inspires cutting-edge international coverage.

by Rochelle Riservato

Regional publications provide local news. Sometimes, however, those tiny drops of information may cause increased awareness that ripples out into the world.

That's just what local editor, writer, and photographer Lorna Tychostup and *Chronogram* magazine did prior to and during the war in the Middle East. They brought home the reality of what America was getting into when Tychostup's photos and stories from her trip to Iraq were published in a new section of the magazine that dealt with global issues.

Don't let a regional, small-town, or community paper fool you—one can learn much from them. Take *Chronogram*. What was born as a small format, flip-up calendar of events in October 1993 grew-up to an oversized favorite publication in 1999 through the inventive genius of three young editors and an ever-growing readership.

The magazine was a pioneer in presenting articles on alternative subjects such as local food and food production, local economy, yoga, and meditation at a time when no one addressed it.

"The Hudson Valley was a kind of Petri dish for these kinds of ideas," said *Chronogram* editor Brian Mahoney, "and was a safe place to come and make art and food and have a business—now called the 'creative class.'"

Mahoney, who calls the magazine "The Village Voice of the Hudson Valley," said, "I met Lorna as a single mom working as a waitress at a local restaurant. She didn't go to journalism school or charm school—she has a love for this, it's this gut instinct that takes her places with animal ferocity—she doesn't stop."

As a photojournalist Tychostup believed it was her responsibility to bring home the face of Iraq to the Hudson Valley, yet when her trip and photographs "rippled-out" into major news markets, it was said to be "left wing propaganda," such as on Fox's Hannity and Colmes show.

"I had this crazy idea I would photograph these people—people I had no idea of what they looked like or where their country was on the map—and bring them home to show my readers just who we would be killing. And that somehow, my effort would be added to that of millions of others and prevent the war from happening," she said.

Back in 1999, Tychostup was working as a freelance journalist covering local school and town board meetings, related news items, and community events for *New Paltz's Huguenot Herald* (now called the *New Paltz*

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*Times*) and the *Woodstock Times*, and was also a staff reporter for the *Blue Stone Press*. With her daughter in high school and son in college, she said her "single-parent world began to shift away from a hectic child-centered schedule, allowing for an expansion of my work life and interests." And, as she was always a newshound who grew up in a politically diverse family, she found she suddenly had time to reacquaint herself and address global issues and their affect on local communities on a deeper level.

She noted a "wake-up call" vacation in Mexico in 1995—where she "fell into" the Zapatista Revolution. Not having any idea about what transpired in that country, once home, she began to research its roots.

"I began to see that what was occurring locally, in terms of the people's desires and needs for good schools, services, roads, bridges, fair taxes and pay, housing, etcetera, was the same the world over...that democracy begins at the local level, where how to address all these issues is fought out regularly among members of the community at these meetings."

She states that she was "hungry to write and inform my readership about pressing national and global issues and how they were affecting the local communities. So I successfully pitched a News & Politics section to *Chronogram* that would connect local readership to world issues and vice versa. How do world events affect us here in the Hudson Valley? How does what we do in the Hudson Valley affect the larger world? The folks at *Chronogram* were incredibly brave. They gave me 8,000 words to do what I wanted, without any editorial control—that is something unheard of."

It was a timely decision to go with a new international section as Tychostup said they began writing articles on the national organic regulations, the WTO riots in Seattle, the 2000 elections, 9/11 and the related US peace movement, and build up to war. Mahoney explained, because there wasn't much Internet usage addressing alternative viewpoints, the only people who had access to these perspectives were those who subscribed to *The Progressive* or *Mother Jones*.

"Lorna was writing stories for us and presented her plans to go to Iraq and, although we didn't totally fund her, she had fundraisers that *Chronogram* sponsored because she was going under our auspices," Mahoney said.

He thinks that Tychostup's endeavors "certainly stand as testament to an independent journalist—not staying in journalist hotels; going out into the streets and talking to people; not locked in by the US Military."

Mahoney regarded Tychostup's path as one to learn about Iraq, the region, and try to bring back "some kind of a truth." He told her: "If you want to go it's going to be an amazing story."

The publication was able to present a realistic portrait of what was happening in Iraq—unlike many television programs and newspapers merely reporting the number of dead US soldiers and Iraqi civilians. Statistical facts often neglected a sense of what it really meant to the Iraqi people. According to Mahoney the presentation of real, first-hand truths in words and visuals in a local publication made it become more of a personal issue that locals could relate to.

People began to think of war in a different way by reading and seeing visuals of what Tychostup brought back from Iraq, Mahoney explained, adding: "It was far from the narrow view of foreign policy one typically gets from the mainstream media."

"Anyone that takes on that type of journalism has to take on the attitude that they want to make a difference; if they don't feel that way they better get out of the business. [Tychostup] did the only thing she could do—go take pictures, come back and say 'here's an Iraqi child;

do we want to bomb her?'"

Because this type of international information is now readily available on the Internet, Mahoney is of the opinion that *Chronogram* can do a great service to their readership by presenting interesting stories you won't see on Fox News or the Huffington Post.

"We can speak to the Hudson Valley on topics such as land development; land crossing generational barriers; and how to do development in a proper way."

"The type of journalism that Lorna was doing with *Chronogram* is now being broadcast on so many different types of media," Mahoney continued, so the magazine now focuses on reaching across the Hudson Valley with topics that are pertinent to local residents.



Photo by Lorna Tychostup.



Q&A session at a preview screening of the soon-to-be-completed *Bordering on Treason* at the Rosendale Theatre. L to R: *Blue Stone Press* publisher Lori Childers; director/producer Trish Dalton; photojournalist Lorna Tychostup, and *Chronogram* editor Brian Mahoney.

It's apparent that Tychostup and *Chronogram* were way ahead of their time.

And now the documentary-in-progress, *Bordering on Treason*, by Director/Producer Trish Dalton, shows how a single mother and small-town photojournalist risks her life, imprisonment, and a million dollar fine to cover the war in Iraq.

To learn more about *Bordering on Treason* or to donate funds to complete the movie go to [borderingontreason.com](http://borderingontreason.com). For more on Tychostup go to [LornaTychostup.com](http://LornaTychostup.com).

# Summer Festivals

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Feltsman. Iconic not only for his musicianship, which elicits a steady stream of laudatory reviews, but for his courage. Feltsman was a rising star pianist in the Soviet Union, and that's saying a lot: Russian conservatories are notoriously demanding and competitive—sort of the Navy Seal training of classical music.

When Feltsman announced his desire to emigrate, the

Soviet regime responded by banning him from the stage. After paying these heavy dues, Feltsman was finally able to emigrate to the US and resume his career. His affiliation with SUNY New Paltz was a happy catch for the university.

One result is PianoSummer, a combination master class school for young professional pianists, and a

stiff competition among them for the festival's top prize, including the opportunity to perform at the final concert.

From July 14 through August 3 there's a rolling series of master classes that are open to the public. They provide an invaluable way to understand what makes music work, or not, and how playing a given score is subject to very different judgments by performers as to how a score should be performed.

Then there are the concerts by Feltsman and the six other top-level teachers and performers from both the US and abroad who give these master classes. If piano is your thing, or you want to explore whether it might become your thing, hang around SUNY New Paltz during the three weeks of PianoSummer.

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[www.fishercenter.bard.edu/summerscape/2012](http://www.fishercenter.bard.edu/summerscape/2012)  
Box office: 845-758-7900

**Maverick Concerts**  
[www.maverickconcerts.org](http://www.maverickconcerts.org)  
Tickets: 800-595-4TEX (4849)

**Powerhouse**  
[www.powerhouse.vassar.edu/index.html](http://www.powerhouse.vassar.edu/index.html)  
Box office: 845-437-5599

**PianoSummer at SUNY New Paltz**  
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