



Knight-Ridder Newspapers, Inc.

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PERSONAL

Adm. Worth H. Bagley
Qtrs. BB-2300 E. Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20037

Dear Worth:

My father gave me your letter when I was in Washington last week and it was good to hear from you after such a long time.

I've followed with fascination your enviable climb through, over & around the Navy in recent years. But I confess I envy even more the prospect of retirement to La Jolla at such a tender age. Would that we had so civilized a scheme in the newspaper business.

Your idea of writing a column with Bud Zurnwalt is interesting and certainly worth pursuing, even though you could not have picked a tougher time to get started.

Caught between skyrocketing newsprint costs and falling ad lineage, most newspapers are dropping columns rather than adding new ones.

You're also up against a phenomenon which is more difficult to quantify but no less real---a generalized post-Vietnam weariness with all things military. During the next few months I think we will have a new spurt of reader interest in Southeast Asia, but that, I suspect, will be followed by an even more pervasive tuning-out of military reportage and/or analysis.

Knight-Ridder Newspapers is really not set up to handle the sort of thing you propose. As a matter of policy, we buy absolutely no editorial material on a group basis. Each paper buys for itself and we have only three big enough to consider the proposition you're talking about. Those would be the Philadelphia Inquirer, the Detroit Free Press and the Miami Herald. I have checked these papers and I get the same response from all three editors: Every nickel I can get my hands on I need for my own staff; I'm not buying anything for a long time to come.

I know that sounds discouraging, but it's the way things are with us right now. Nevertheless, I would suggest that you take your proposal directly to the major syndicates which market columns nationally.

Here are the names of the top men at the biggest syndicates: In each case, these are people I know well and you can certainly say I suggested that you write:

Robert Reed, President
Chicago Tribune-New York News Syndicate
220 E. 42nd Street
New York, New York 10017

John P. McMeel, President
Universal Press Syndicate
475 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10017

Thomas J. Dorsey, Director
Los Angeles Times Syndicate
Times Mirror Square
Los Angeles, California 90053

Robert G. Cowles, President
Field Enterprises Syndicate
401 N. Wabash Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60611

William B. Dickenson, Jr.
Editorial Director
Washington Post Writers Group
1150 Fifteenth St., N. W.
Washington, D. C.

R. R. Buckingham, Editor
New York Times News Service
Times Square
New York, New York 10036

These are the most important syndicates, and I'm sure you will get candid appraisals on the sales potential of your proposed column. With the depth of experience you and Zumwalt share, I'm sure you would produce a highly authoritative column and if the times were not so askew, I'm sure it would sell.

Meantime, I'll be happy to do anything I can to help or to open doors for you. Please keep me posted on your progress.

Warmest personal regards,