

PRINT MATTERS

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Long live the long article!

Try Googling the phrase “reader attention span.” You’ll see that, according to the search results, few of us have much of one these days.

Thanks to the Internet and today’s fast-paced, multi-tasking world, we’re finding it increasingly difficult to stay focused. This tendency has grown so bad that most of us now fall somewhere behind goldfish in the attention department. This comparison comes from a recent study by Microsoft Corp., which found that most people’s concentration begins to falter after only eight seconds.

Welcome to the first issue of *Print Matters* in our new design template. Our last redesign was in March of 2010, and we were ready for a bit of a refresh. Thanks for being loyal readers and we hope you like the new look.



OPPOSITE: A silk-screen print of Zapf calligraphy published by Edition ZET. TOP: Hermann Zapf in his house in Frankfurt am Main, before he moved to Darmstadt, probably taken in the mid-1960s. MIDDLE: Zapfino uses an early digital typeface that is specifically inspired by graceful, handwritten forms. BOTTOM: Three more Zapf typefaces.



MICHELANGELO
SISTINA
AMS Euler

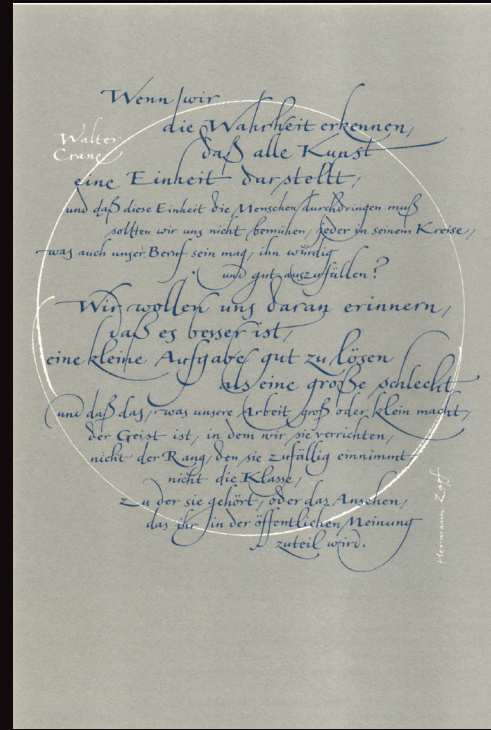
variant forms and add swash characters to mimic the characteristics of handwriting or calligraphy. Zapf was game and worked on a design while Siegel worked on the computer program. The talented designer Gino Lee was assigned the task of digitizing Zapf's beautiful drawings. Thousands of characters were drawn for this purpose. I have heard various accounts from Zapf and Siegel, and secondhand from Bruno Steiner at Linotype, as to why the original conception of a new typesetting program did not succeed, but even though the lack of success on the program front caused the project to lay dormant for some time, that was not the end of this type design. After a while, the normally reticent Zapf took the design to Steiner at Linotype, and it was decided to release a portion of the thousands of glyphs as four fonts with a supplemental ornament font. The type was named Zapfino for "Zapf + Gino [Lee]." Today this type, released fifty years after Palatino, is one of the most popular fonts in use. Steve Jobs liked it so much that he made it part of the Macintosh operating system.

In the new millennium, Zapf worked on updated versions of two of his most important typefaces, Optima and Palatino, adapting them for new digital OpenType technology and supplementing them with additional variants and characters. This work was done in close collaboration with Linotype and their type director, Akira Kobayashi. Both were produced as large type families, with new weights, titling versions, and condensed varieties for Optima; and redrawn light titling (originally called Michelangelo, now named Palatino Titling) and heavy titling (originally Sistina, now Imperial), and other variations for Palatino. For the first time, Optima was partnered with a cursive italic design, not a sloped roman as in the origin metal fonts.

In addition, Zapf involved himself with several very unusual type design projects. He designed Sequoia (University of Wisconsin, 1977) and Pan-Nigerian (Nigerian Federal Ministry of Education, 1983) typefaces, and an extended mathematical type family with almost 900 glyphs, including Greek, Fraktur, and numerous mathematical symbols. This last font, Euler, was made for the American Mathematical Society in cooperation with Dr. Donald Knuth. (David Siegel, mentioned above, first met Zapf when they worked together on AMS Euler.) Zapf also embarked on the design of a new metal typeface in the style of Civilité, a sixteenth-century Gothic Cursive typeface by Robert Granjon. Matrices for Zapf Civilité were pantographically cut by Paul Hayden Duensing in Michigan, who also cast the first fonts of the type.

30

Letter Arts Review 29:3



This silk screen print of Hermann Zapf calligraphy is published by Edition ZET.

Letter Arts Review | Reviewers' comments

This is a visually beautiful and harmonious layout. The body copy is set in one wide column, and the balance of the page uses an excellent blend of white space and graphics to accentuate the story. The classic serif font is used in an easy-to-read point size with slightly larger leading. This proper balance of type and art gives the reader's eye/brain a chance to rest, and therefore it is much easier to read and assimilate the text.

But the news isn't all bad. When it comes to absorbing high quality content, content we want or need, we just might be able to hold on a little longer than expected.

In a recent blog, "Long Copy Isn't Dead," marketing website Zuza encourages writers not to shy away from length. Both long and short pieces have their advantages. "The keys are knowing when to use which, and then executing well — that is, writing good copy — copy that is well organized, grammatically correct, stylistically compelling, easy to read, avoids jargon for jargon's sake (same goes for acronyms), and ultimately, gives your readers what they want and need," Zuza writes.

Also promising is the fact that if you're presenting long articles in print, your readers are even more likely to read and retain them than they would in a digital format. In his article for *Wired*, "Why the Smart Reading Device of the Future May Be ... Paper," Kamil Porembinski addresses the many studies that find that people retain longer material best from paper. "Maybe it's time to start thinking of paper and screens ... as different complementary interfaces," he writes. "Maybe paper is a technol-

ogy uniquely suited for imbibing novels and essays and complex narratives, just as screens are for browsing and scanning."

Looking Good

So what does all of this mean if you're publishing magazines? It means that in most cases, readers really will read your longer articles. But it's up to you to make the articles palatable.

Houston-based graphic designer Ellen Custer, owner of 2d — a design collaborative, agrees that in most cases, people are drawn to long pieces when they believe the longer articles offer something that's pertinent to them. The key is showing readers that you do, indeed, have something worthwhile to offer. In that regard, Custer says articles are like restaurant dishes: Presentation is everything. "You could have the best information, and it could be written really well, but if you don't grab them in the first few seconds, you've lost them," she said.

Custer recommends a multi-pronged approach to presentation. It should include a succinct, well-written headline that clearly conveys the thrust of your article. "You should also lead with a

The locus of sympathy

The audience — not presidents — are the real targets of *Assassins'* outsiders

Timothy Clatter begins a provocative essay (in *TSR*, Winter 2000) on Stephen Sondheim's empathetic treatment of outsiders with the following remarkable hypothesis: "If Sondheim had written *Oleanna!*, the main character would have been Jud Fry." Clatter makes a strong case for Sondheim's affinity for the many incarnations of Jud in his shows, finding in this affinity an emblem of Sondheim's "accepting and humane heart." In *Assassins* we find someone — indeed, a host of someones — fully resonating with Jud. As Clatter puts it, "No close analysis is needed to see that here is a show populated almost entirely by Jud Frys."

Assassins projects its community of Jud-like figures, not within an "anti-musical about anti-heroes," as one reviewer termed the show, but rather as individuals desperately seeking to belong — characters who, like Jud, feel entitled to their fair share. Moreover, as in any mainstream musical, Sondheim's characters actually do form a community, according to the conventions and standard tropes of the genre, even if the community they form is only figurative, since it is projected across more than a century of American history.

Sondheim plots the formation of this alternative community, not as something foreign and strange, but as familiar and consequently all the more disturbing. The perspective of *Assassins* runs closely parallel to more conventional historical narratives of the American dream as the United States grew to world prominence in the century following the Civil War, but it focuses on the shadow of that more hopeful narrative — projecting a dark and sinister spirit hovering disturbingly close to the main road. In detailing its alternative to the standard mythology, *Assassins* focuses on a disturbing presence that has always been there — the solitary outsider — and considers how the history of American assassination has united a cohort of these outsiders into the semblance of a community.

Sondheim and his collaborator John Weidman ground their story in history, and well-marked musical styles locate each assassin within a recognizable musical landscape, at the same time as that landscape is made to seem eerily distressed. The resulting musical fabric is familiar, but *Assassins* invites us to notice that the seams of that fabric are tearing apart. In bringing these characters face to face, the show's fabric may be understood to consist only of strained seams, creating a grotesque parody of its source material.

This distortion is evident from the beginning of the show, whose "Opening" is set in the shooting gallery of a carnival midway, bringing together the carnival and American gun

culture, two institutions that blend a specifically American promise of rights and entitlement with something roguish and unsavory. Indeed, the merry-go-round tune that opens the show carries both ingredients of this blend, as its oddly familiar, mechanized waltz idiom seems somehow a cheapening of something much more venerable than what we would normally find in such a setting. We will be reminded soon enough of what the waltz is based on, when the "Opening" seizes into "Hail to the Chief," the official march tune used to honor the President of the United States — and of which, if we care to notice, the carnival tune is a cheery variation. Thus, the carnival is to serve as a nightmarish metaphor for the United States, and the shooting gallery as its promise of opportunity.

As the huckstering proprietor of the shooting gallery goads his customers to "C'mere and kill a President," we meet each of the main characters: Leon Czolgosz, John Hinckley, Charles Guiteau, Giuseppe Zangara, Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme, Sara Jane Moore and John Wilkes Booth. It is noteworthy that Lee Harvey Oswald is not included at this point; he will be recruited later, in the show's culminating dramatic event. Of those assembled at the opening, Booth becomes the leader almost by default, providing a semi-respectable figurehead for the "movement."

As the proprietor hands out his guns, he also introduces a suave soft-show number as part of his sales pitch, based on a reductive version of the inalienable rights identified in the Declaration of Independence, set as a fox-trot: "Everybody's Got the right 'To be happy.'" Booth is the first among the assassins to take up the tune, but by the end they are all singing it, having formed a standard Broadway community: the chorus line. The number unfolds continuously, stitching together the carnivalesque variation of "Hail to the Chief," the abrasive pitch of the shooting-gallery proprietor and the concluding chorus line of assassins. In a single number, we thus witness the recruitment of the show's community of outsiders and are shown what they have in common: a discontent regarding their own share of the American promise of individual fulfillment and the belief that a gun aimed at the top of the country's hierarchy will solve their problems.

The choice of a carnival midway for this scene is deft, as large-scale fairs were important tokens of the United States' emergence after the Civil War as a world power. Among the milestones of this tradition were the World's Columbian Exposition (the setting for part of *Shoesh Boat*), the St. Louis World's Fair (the backdrop for *Meet Me in St. Louis*) — and in

1901, the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo where President McKinley was assassinated by Leon Czolgosz at point-blank range, after making his way "To the head of the line." Thus, the opening strategy in *Assassins*, as with so much in the show, is to highlight the centrality of its catastrophic events to ordinary American life, taking as emblematic both the carnival setting of the third presidential assassination and the patient waiting in line that is both the reality of carnivals and part of the mythology of the American dream, which promises every American his or her "turn."

The Balladeer then "honors" Booth with a quasi-narrative ballad detailing his exploits, cast in an appropriate musical style and including significant interaction with the assassin himself. In "The Ballad of Booth," the 19th century is evoked through the use of banjo and harmonica; Steve Swayne suggests that the principal model here is a Stephen Foster "camp song." Booth's motivation is also conveyed musically, by his own singing:

Now the southland will mend,
Now this bloody war can end.

—
Damn my soul if you must,
Let my body turn to dust,
Let it mingle with the ashes of the country.

But the insinuating intrusions of the Balladeer tell a different story, periodically drifting downwards into harmonic uncertainty before throwing an accusation of personal grievance at Booth with a sudden harmonic recovery and a taunting "nyah-nyah" melodic gesture at the ends of his lines: "Some say it was your voice had gone/Some say it was booze/They say you killed a country, John/Because of bad reviews."

"The Ballad of Booth" sets up a sense of the actors onstage as actors in history, with the posing and artificiality that goes along with that, one eye always looking out for audience response. Again Sondheim and Weidman use the actual setting of the assassination as a touchstone of mainstream American culture, in this case pointing to its *media* culture. But the song



Adam Monley portraying John Wilkes Booth in *Assassins* at Milwaukee Repertory Theater in 2012.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL BROGHILO

also exemplifies a central musical strategy of *Assassins*: sketching a familiar musical landscape, in which something is noticeably wrong, conveyed here through the extreme irregularity of the meter within a folk-song context.

Other assassinations and attempted assassinations are also given appropriate music, although not always strictly of the period. Zangara's attempt on Roosevelt takes a Sousa march as its starting point ("El Capitan"), while Charles Guiteau sings a hymn based on his own death-house poem, written while he awaited execution, and exits with a cakewalk/ragtime shuffle, only slightly ahead of its time for 1881. But by far the most telling numbers in this regard include "Gun Song," and "Unworthy of Your Love."

The "Gun Song" builds gradually from a brooding opening monologue by Czolgosz, accumulating characters and their divergent perspectives on the guns they hold in their hands. When Booth enters, he moves smoothly into a suave waltz tune redolent of the late 19th century, rendered nostalgic and faintly disturbing by a chromatically descending bass, but buoyed by the occasional lifting lift on the second beat.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 18

The Sondheim Review | Reviewers' comments

The headline and the lead are very well written, and the byline is handled very creatively. The layout is very clean; it has two columns of copy and one column of white space on each page. The white space gives the eye a chance to rest. The serif typeface is easy to read, and there is ample leading. In addition, large photos help to break up the copy.

punchy paragraph, not too long, highlighted by type," Custer said. In other words, the opening paragraph should attract readers with its wording and its visual appeal. You could put it in larger type than the rest of the article and/or add color.

Another important detail is to consider the article's overall appearance on the page. Does it resemble a college textbook? If there's too much gray copy on the page, your readers will find themselves eyeing the page with apprehension, rather than anticipation, and they'll move on.

Be sure to incorporate white space into your page design and complement the text with imagery, including strong photography, illustrations, and short infographics. "Infographics can be a help, particularly if your article has a lot of statistics," Custer said. "People learn in different ways. If you're dealing with a lot of data, infographics can really bring that data to life."

Another way to serve up a long article: break up the content with subheads so that you have more manageable chunks of information, Custer said. A long article with subheads feels

more like a package of smaller ones. "It's not as overwhelming."

What readers want

Tim Urban and Andrew Finn are true believers in the power of quality, long-form content. Their popular blog site, *Wait But Why*, specializes in long-form blog posts. "We took a bet that long, but really thorough, really high quality articles would not only be acceptable to certain people, but would be a really fresh, standout thing in a current world of really short list articles," Urban told Michael Grothaus in an article for *Fast Company* titled "The Secrets Of Writing Smart, Long-form Articles That Go Absolutely Viral."

The public proved them right. Less than two years after their blog site was launched, it has had more than 31 million unique visitors and 87 million page views.

The takeaway for publishers is that readers still crave well-written long articles. Provide good content, relevant to your audience, and package it well — and your long articles will be read, saved and discussed.



BY KELLY WINGARD



Finders Market grew from around 50 dealers at the Mt. Zion venue to about 100 at the May 2015 show.



Rusty. Crusty. Funky. Junky. Antsy. Smartys.
Four times a year, Finders Market provides a physical storefront for vendors who purvey the projects and provisions you last for on Etsy and Pinterest.

Originating in 2014 on Mt. Zion's Pony Express grounds, Finders Flea Market dropped the "Flea" and fled to Progress City this year. Market promoter Jay Snow decided to rename the show to eliminate any preconceived notions that shoppers would be sifting through \$1 tube socks and cut-rate sunglasses.
The Progress City move proved beneficial for both vendors and shoppers. Climate-controlled flush restrooms have replaced the dreaded porta-potties, and indoor vendor spaces provide shelter from sun and rain.
A plethora of parking provides easy access for unloading inventory and loading treasures. The 80-acre site offers overnight camping space for vendors and unlimited potential for the show's growth.
The Mt. Zion market ran monthly May through October. Prior commitments at the Progress City site reduced Finders Market to four shows in 2015: May, June, September, and October.
Overnight security at the Progress City site allows the market to stretch over two days. This gives vendors more time to set up and provides an "opt to shop" prospect for customers who want first crack at merchandise.

continued on next page

decaturn MAGAZINE | Reviewers' comments

Even though this would not qualify as a long article, it used elements that would be beneficial for a long article, so we are including it here as an example. The article displays a fantastic use of art images to create its headline. The lead paragraph is very creatively written. There is plenty of white space; the layout is well-organized and uncluttered. Finally, the sans serif typeface is very easy to read.

FORESIGHT POETRY

FABLES, SPIRITS

AND HOW NOT TO LOSE YOUR HEAD TO POETRY

A grasshopper walks into a bar and orders an instruction manual for reading poetry. The bartender, an ornery blue jay, eyes the crunchy-on-the-outside grasshopper hungrily, but decides to play nice. *We're sold out, he says, but I can write down everything you need to know on a bar napkin. Whaddy having to drink?*

Absinthe and a shot of wheat grass, says the grasshopper. The bartender serves the drinks and scribbles a few lines. I have to warn you, he whispers ominously as he slides the napkin across the bar, once you read this, your life as you know it will cease to exist. I recommend you drink up first.

The grasshopper knocks back his absinthe and studies the instructions. *Ahhh, yes, now I see.*

And with that, the bartender leans over and bites off the grasshopper's chewy-on-the-inside head, wiping his mouth clean with the napkin.

BY MATT SUTHERLAND

- 1 Read the entire poem without stopping
— Remember, you're reading a poem, not just reading poetry.
- 2 Read it again, out loud.
— A good poem has a commanding audible presence, musically, propulsive energy, coherent thought, and the sure hand of a confident poet.
- 3 Concentrate, but don't obsess over words, line breaks, or syntax.
— Keep your mind nimble and simply absorb the poet's creative intentions.

WAR OF THE FOXES
Richard Siken, Copper Canyon Press
Softcover \$17 (96pg, 978-1-55669-471-9)

A poet for whom face value represents life at its most treacherous, Richard Siken's 2004 first collection, *Cross*, was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award and won the Thomas Gunn Award and a Lambda Literary Award.

Raphael, Saint George and the Dragon, 1504-6
It's hard to talk about what you believe while you are believing it. Fervor reduces thought to shorthand and all we get is an icon. Give a man a weapon and you have a warrior. Put him on a horse and you have a hero. The weapon is a tool. The horse is a metaphor. Raphael painted this twice—white horse facing east against the greens, white horse facing west against the yellows. The maiden flees or prays, depending. A basic dragon, the kind you'd expect from the Renaissance. Evidence of evil but not proof. There's a companion piece as well: Saint Michael, Paint angels, it's easier: you don't need the horse. Michael stands on Satan's throat, vanquishing, while everything brown burns red. All these things happened. Allegedly. When you paint an evil thing, do you invoke it or take away its power? This has nothing to do with faith but is still a good question: Raphael was trying to say something about spirituality. This could be the definition of painting. The best part of spirituality is reverence. There are other parts. Some people like to hear the sound of their own voice. If you don't believe in the world it would be stupid to paint it. If you don't believe in God, then who are you talking to?

Ismenian Dragon
Is a constellation bigger than the house, than the state? My son leans into my answer like a hard turn. I describe the lion's size, measure the bear's back, and he is excited that there's a dragon, too: it curls around the sky, wailing, where he will piece together its scales. He draws lines and dots, alive in his mind pacing the sky, sure as I'm sitting by his side. There is the brother in search of his sister, taken by the gods, and the fragments of the dragon that he killed, the teeth he planted so that armies rose to help him build Thebes: I tell my son of home, the tanning slave, the Mississippi with white ash and clay. The dragon was killed guarding the water from a spring. His body of venom, the spots on his back glitter around us even now, like men born armed, upset from the ground.

UNDERWATER PANTHER
Rogee Moch, Good and Beautiful Press
Softcover \$14 (85pg, 978-0-9962996-1-3)

Winner of the 2014 Cowles Poetry Book Prize, the fetching named *Underwater Panther* is Rogee Moch's debut collection of poems rooted in Mississippi River landscapes and lore.

Foreword Reviews | Reviewers' comments

Though long, this feature is broken up into easy-to-digest sections with ample white space on each page. The headline uses a unique font, and the lead really draws readers in. Homogeneity is created throughout the feature with background art and creative threads of color, type and images.