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NORTH ADAMS TRANSCRIPT/BERKSHIRE EAGLE ARTICLES

PUBLISHED ABOUT

GHANASHYN OJHA, NAT/BE STAFF WRITER

AND DANIEL PEARL FELLOW

AT ALFRED FRIENDLY PRESS FELLOWSHIPS

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## **Pearl Fellow coming to Berkshires**

By Jenn Smith, The Berkshire Eagle  
Friday, January 27

For the first time, the Alfred Friendly Press Fellowship, in partnership with the Daniel Pearl Foundation, has selected a fellow for assignment in the Berkshires.

In April, Ghanashyam Ojha of Nepal, a senior-level reporter at The Kathmandu Post, will be joining the newsrooms of The Berkshire Eagle and the North Adams Transcript, where Pearl began his career, and The Advocate.

Pearl, 38, the Wall Street Journal's South Asia bureau chief, was researching a story on Islamic extremists in Pakistan when he was kidnapped and killed in 2002 by men with ties to al-Qaida.

This year, eight journalists — including two Daniel Pearl Fellows — were chosen from an applicant pool of 80. Journalists for the fellowships are considered from regions where Pearl worked — South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa.

The five-month fellowship is designed for journalists to gain a working knowledge of the free press in the United States, provide them with a professional experience they can share with colleagues at home, and create continuing ties between free press institutions and journalists in the United States, as well as their counterparts in other countries.

"Interacting and dialogue is a way to make change," said Jackie Gelfand, executive director of the Daniel Pearl Foundation. "It means, if I know you, understand you, I won't want to hurt you."

"For our editors and fellow reporters, it adds a new dimension to something we try to do already," said Martin Langeveld, publisher of the Transcript. "We'd like to make (Ojha's time here) something of interest to our readers, to see through his eyes and his perspective."

For Ojha, 34, this will be his first visit to America.

He was born and raised in Jhapa, Nepal, a country in crisis since the brutal slaying of King Birendra and 12 other royal family members on June 1, 2001.

In the meantime, Nepal has been caught in a bloody battle between a suspect monarchy and a Maoist insurgency that wishes to replace it with a communist republic.

Just last week at The Post, Ojha found himself covering a mass political protest and a Maoist attack, which resulted in the deaths of 14 policemen in Thankot and Dadhikot, near Kathmandu.

On Friday, Jan. 20, the government declared a national curfew and swept the area, arresting a number of political leaders, human rights activists and journalists.

That day, Ojha sent an e-mail to his friends and colleagues that said, in part: "My office is by the side of the main road. The road is empty except sometimes army convoys with armies pointing guns at empty street. It's really strange in Nepal."

Ojha, who had been arrested once while in the field, said that while he didn't hide out, he was careful to avoid walking the streets and security personnel while carrying out his work.

He said he often thinks of Pearl during these times of turmoil.

"I always respected Danny for his fight for justice and universal harmony," he said. "I am sure everybody can't be like Danny, but we can get a lot if we try to read him and his message."

In recent e-mail correspondence with The Eagle this week, he said he is looking forward to the change of pace.

"Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world, and it is great opportunity to study journalism in America," he said. "Being a journalist, I believe in the power of people."

'I think I'm lucky'

He said he would be most interested in working on human interest stories in the Berkshires. As a part-time English literature and language teacher in the Himalayan WhiteHouse International College in Kathmandu, he also has a strong interest in education.

"I love hiking and traveling to new places," he said. "I think I am lucky to stay in the Berkshires."

**Pearl Fellow Residency at Mass College**

by iBerkshires.com

April 12th, 2006

North Adams - Ghanashyam Ojha, a Senior Reporter for the Kathmandu Post, Nepal's largest-selling English daily newspaper, will join the MCLA community as a Hardman Lecture Series Journalist-in-Residence.

Serving as a Daniel Pearl Fellow, Ojha will report for the North Adams Transcript and The Berkshire Eagle during his stay from April-August 2006. He will also visit MCLA journalism classes and participate in discussion forums with local journalists. His residency is sponsored in part through the generosity of the Hardman Fund.

In Nepal, Ojha reports on politics, human rights, and the Maoist insurgency. He also has taught English literature and language in the Himalayan White House International College in Kathmandu.

The Daniel Pearl Fellowship, sponsored by the Daniel Pearl Foundation in partnership with the Alfred Friendly Press, honors the life and work of journalist Daniel Pearl, the Wall Street Journal's South Asia bureau chief, who was killed in Pakistan in 2002. Pearl began his career locally as a reporter with the North Adams Transcript and The Berkshire Eagle.

The previous three Daniel Pearl Fellows have worked at the Wall Street Journal and the Los Angeles Times. All fellows must be "young journalists" from the areas of the world where Pearl worked (South Asia, Middle East, and North Africa).

Robert Bishoff, Chair of the English/Communications Department, applauded the program in Pearl's honor stating, "The Daniel Pearl Foundation and the Hardman Family Endowment have provided a very significant benefit for our campus and our students.

Not only will the College have an opportunity to meet and learn from an outstanding young international journalist, but a new generation of students will become aware of Daniel Pearl's contributions as a journalist, a citizen, and a former member of the Berkshire County community."

## **Nepal reporter joins Berkshire beat**

By Karen Gardner

North Adams Transcript

April 5, 2006

**NORTH ADAMS** — For the next five months, Ghanashyam Ojha of Nepal will cover a Berkshire County beat as he writes for the North Adams Transcript and The Berkshire Eagle as a Daniel Pearl Fellow.

Ojha, 34, is a participant in this year's Alfred Friendly Press Fellowships program. A senior reporter for The Kathmandu Post, he reports on politics, human rights and the Maoist insurgency in Nepal. In Berkshire County, he plans to write human-interest stories, similar to those written by Pearl, in the hope of realizing that reporter's dream of bringing people together through understanding.

Pearl, a reporter for both the Transcript and The Eagle, went on to write for The Wall Street Journal. While working for the Journal, he was kidnapped and murdered in Pakistan by Islamic extremists four months after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Since his death, people around the world have remembered him as a writer who endeavored to connect cultures.

"Being a Daniel Pearl Fellow, I will try to bring the dreams of Danny true when working on these newspapers," Ojha said. "We should work on universal harmony, which I feel can be achieved through (the) media, which really works. The fellowship that Alfred Friendly has provided to aid journalists around the world will really work a lot because they are from different countries and they have different impressions about the USA, about the Americans."

Upon his arrival last week in Washington, D.C., Ojha met the other seven Friendly fellows. They come from countries including Cameroon, Nigeria, Pakistan, Kenya and India. Each will work at newspapers in different states throughout the country. In June, all of the fellows will meet at a one-week seminar in the state of Florida, where they will exchange experiences.

"I will learn (and) I will leave my impressions to people here ... about my country, about my cultures," Ojha said. "This way, I think, I'll be extending cultures. I will take — and at the same time — I will give. It's an exchange of cultures which I really think will work to bring a kind of brotherhood between my country and the U.S."

This is Ojha's first visit to America. Having been brought up in a remote village in Nepal and schooled in a rural part of that country, there were a few surprises upon his arrival.

"The American people are not as is viewed by the entire world, because they are viewed through the prism of the White House and Pentagon," Ojha said. "They think Americans are warmongers. That kind of impression is there. When the Fellows were there in Washington, D.C., almost all of the Fellows had the same impression."

However, Ojha said he found Americans to be very different from his previous impressions.

"They're really very different — very cooperative, very friendly," he said. "They are much critical of Bush and the Bush policies."

Ojha also was amazed by this country's highway system.

"It's crazy because there are many, many cars and traffic is really a kind of weird thing for me here," he said. "In our country, there are narrow lanes."

Despite the number of cars in this country, the air is much cleaner than that of Nepal, which has a pollution problem because of the types of fuels used and a lack of environmental restrictions.

"There's no pollution here and it's very interesting to me," Ojha said.

'Impressions'

In addition to writing human-interest features, Ojha will write a column, "Impressions," about his perspectives of the United States. In addition to appearing in the Transcript and Eagle, the column will run in the Advocate weekly newspaper.

Ojha is living in a East Main Street apartment owned by Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in North Adams. As a result of additional support provided by the Hardman Family Endowment, he also will be a resident journalist at the college, working with journalism students there.

After his fellowship ends in August, Ojha will return to his position at The Kathmandu Post. He expects his experience here will help him find the types stories that can bring greater understanding among his own people. Nepal has been in turmoil since the murder of its ruler several years ago and a long-running Maoist insurgency has undermined the nation's stability.

"Journalism is a type of weapon in society," he said. "It's a very powerful weapon to bring social harmony. Since my country is reeling through crisis, there is disharmony, there are social conflicts."

Ojha is one of two journalists to receive a Daniel Pearl Fellowship this year. As a member of the Federation of Nepalese Journalists, he once was arrested while taking

part in a rally for press freedom and democracy. He has studied English for 17 years, and earned his bachelor of arts degree in English and economics from Mechi Multiple Campus in Bhadrapur in 1994 and his master's degree in English and media studies at Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu in 2000.

The Alfred Friendly Press Fellowships program is dedicated to the international education of journalists. The late Alfred Friendly was a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter and former managing editor of The Washington Post. He conceived the program as a means to impart American journalistic traditions and to respond to worldwide interest in the dissemination of fair and accurate news.

Since 1984, the program has brought 240 journalists from 74 developing countries to this country.