

# Los Angeles Times

On The Internet: WWW.LATIMES.COM

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2004

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Dave catches up on his reading while relaxing outside the Orange County edition. He's well positioned to extend his trademark warm welcome to all.

## WORDS

"I'll always remember his triumphant laugh, after getting a headline to fit or discovering double coupons at Ralphs."

— Nelly Min

"We immediately hit it off. Of course, I guess everyone who ever met him would say the same."

— Ron Logsdon

"Like everyone else, I couldn't help but be charmed by his humanity and impressed by his skills."

— Miriam Pawel

"I have Dave to thank for many things. He ushered me into copy editing. So this is a very sad goodbye from 'the hip kitten' (his name for me)."

— Darcy Infante

"At a really tough time, Dave made me laugh, and made me feel welcome and looked after. I'll always be grateful for that."

— Nicole Johnson

"There was a gruffness in Dave that used to scare me a bit — until I learned it was his way of revving up his kindness."

— Arnold Paradise

"We got to work with a great person and great comedian, an off-the-cuff, first-rate satirist."

— Paul Loop

"One of a kind."

— Mark Yemma

"He never sought credit or a pat on the back. He loved the opportunity to contribute."

— Laura Nott

"I've worked at The Times for many years and don't remember this much sadness being expressed over the loss of a co-worker before."

— Laura Dominick

"Dave was at the core of what's good about the Los Angeles Times — older journalists helping younger ones. . . . He was a treasure to this paper, to his colleagues and to the profession."

— Melissa McCoy

"He was a special editor and a dear man, a joy to work with under deadline pressure and a reassuring hand at all times."

— Jim Newton

"We lost a great guy and a great desk guy. I enjoyed every one of my dealings with Dave, going back almost 30 years."

— David Willman

"He was a fine person and very, very good at his art."

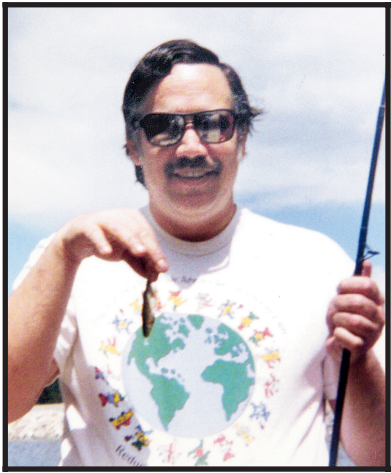
— Rick Meyer

## Stuff Dave Liked

Dave stopped a buddy outside the Editor's office in April and observed: "We just won 5 Pulitzer Prizes. We won for breaking news reporting, national reporting, editorial writing, photography and criticism. Do you know what that means? It means we're the finest paper in all the land. I want to congratulate the Chief on that."

And he did.

"Alien stars from another galaxy are raining down on us right now."



Dave often landed the Big Ones, but he took great pleasure in all measures of success.



Dave and family: Daughter Stevi holds Raven, while her brother, David, embraces the family pet, Moptop. Jamie and Cathy enjoy the moment.

## A Final Note of Gratitude: We Were Friends to the End

When the Herald Examiner folded, it was Dave who got the last word. His headline, above, set just the right tone for the paper's farewell to its readers.

Dave often presented his editors with difficult choices. Where a story called for a single headline, Dave often would provide three or four. The task then was not to improve any of them, but to select one and reluctantly discard the others.

His colleagues at The Times marvelled at Dave's work and offered up a selection of their favorites:

### Edwards Looking Out for No. 2?

The runner-up in the primaries has retained the enthusiasm and goodwill of the party. He's making the rounds, speaking in key states.

### A Sharp Left Turn on the Dial

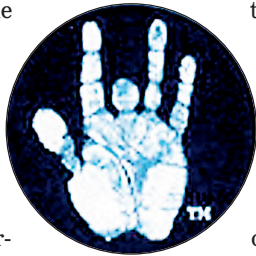
Bombastic AM host 'Big Eddie' Schultz blasts away at Bush as the leading voice in liberals' nascent national radio counteroffensive.

This runover headline on a Column One story about changes in curriculum at Caltech earned Dave an award:

**Cry at Caltech: Oh, the Humanities!**

### Paradise Losing in Hawaii

Alien species have altered the archipelago's very nature. Islanders are struggling to save what native plants and animals they still can.



### Pop Gets Crackle, Snap Back

In the high-tech world of pure digital sound, some recording artists evoke the scratchy past by adding in noises from the vinyl era.

When the LAPD held its annual weightlifting contest: **Police Force: Strong Arms of the Law**

### There Was Something About Mary

Eulogy: Bakersfield mourns a homeless woman who touched people's hearts.



PAMELA WILSON Los Angeles Times

## Dave's Desk

A well-worn Times cap, photos of his family (and the late Chick Hearn), supermarket coupons and a coconut he was proud to say actually traveled through the U.S. mail: Just add jazz and you have Dave Barton.

1951 — 2004

## Dave Barton, 53; a Gifted Editor and Family Man

From a Times Staff Writer

Dave Barton, an award-winning and legendary copy editor at the Los Angeles Times, died of heart failure on Nov. 4. He was 53.

Barton was a master headline writer, a word-smith who could sum up a complex story in five words under the most demanding of deadlines, but his command of the language and his muse shined most with feature stories. His headlines could invariably make the reader both laugh and think.

"Watching Dave twist words around in his head, and then bounce ideas off colleagues was like watching a lapidary work on a stone," said Jon Markman, a former editor at The Times. "He had a magical way of finding just the right combination of letters and ideas to make you both smile and understand the main point of the article. I think that if there were a Pulitzer Prize for copy editors like there is for editorial cartoonists, he would have won many times over."

Some of his headlines remain classics in the newsroom.

### It's Not Rocket Science

Caltech aims to turn out well-rounded engineers and geneticists with a humanities regimen. Some students say it doesn't compute.

### Forced Bussing

(over a photo of a little girl reluctantly kissing a classmate)

### Magnum PO'd

(for a story about a lawsuit filed by actor Tom Selleck)

But Barton was far more than a genius with the one-liner. Reporters and fellow editors often marveled at how he could quickly trim a story by several inches on deadline, and have the story read much better than the original.

"Not that he ever would, but Dave could trim a line from the Pledge of Allegiance and you'd never miss it," said longtime friend and colleague Joe Eckdahl.

His most significant contributions in the newsroom, however, did not appear in print. Rather, they were the friendships he forged and the many kindnesses he showed to all of his colleagues.

"The quality I most admired in Dave was the way he treated everyone with dignity and respect, from the editor in chief to the newest copy editor, to the editorial assistants to the workers in the cafeteria," said Tim Lynch, a longtime friend and fellow editor. "Dave loved life, he loved people, and it showed every day."

Paul Loop, an editor at The Times Orange County edition, recalled how Barton went out of his way to welcome newcomers.

"Dave made sure that anyone new had at least one new friend and, if you measured up, a friend for life," Loop said. "I know I've lost one."

Barton's road to journalism was a circuitous one, and the license plate frame on his vintage 1981 Volvo summed up his attitude: "At least I'm enjoying the ride."

He was born in Tipp City, Ohio, on April 16, 1951, and moved with his father and three younger brothers to Azusa, Calif., in 1962. (He enjoyed recounting how the family's departure made the front page of the local newspaper — and he laughed at the speculation why.)

Barton graduated from Azusa High School in 1969 and worked a series of odd jobs — busboy, janitor, dock worker — before entering Citrus Community College in 1974, where he began writing for the newspaper, the Clarion. He became editor the next year and was an outspoken critic of what he saw as injustices on campus and off.

His entry to professional journalism in 1978 was serendipitous. A job opening at the Los Angeles Herald Examiner for janitor was filled before he could apply, but a "copy boy" job was available, and he leaped at the chance.

Despite admonitions that copy boys never should aspire to higher rank, Barton gained the attention of a high-ranking journalist, who put him to work reading proofs for the editorial page. From there, he advanced to the news copy desk and quickly earned a reputation — one that lasted a lifetime — as a raconteur and headline genius.

When the Herald Examiner foundered financially and its demise appeared imminent, editors at The Times sought Herald Examiner editors to bring aboard. Barton's name topped the list.

During his 15 years at The Times, Barton received numerous accolades for his work — Top of The Times awards, 2002 Headline Writer of the Year, and recognition from the American Copy Editors Society for his achievements in 2003.

As much as Barton loved his job and his colleagues, his family mattered most.

"Over the many years of working together, I marveled at his wit, kindness and headline-writing ability," said Kym Dryer, an editor at the Orange County edition. "But what stays with me most are his nightly phone conversations with his then-young children — his way of staying in touch with them despite his grueling schedule. His tone of voice would soften as he discussed the day's events with them, and he'd always end the exchange with a completely unashamed 'I love you' — though he had to know the whole desk could hear every word. What a great dad. What a great guy. What a great loss."

Dave Barton is survived by his wife, Cathy; daughters Stevi and Jamie; a son, David; and a granddaughter, Raven.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Dave came across many unusual names while reading out copy. Over the years colleagues would message him with odd monikers and Dave would add them to his list. A sampling:

**Fillmore P. Crank** (state lottery official), the **Rev. Robin Hood** (pastor of the Old Country Church), **Rudd Lubbers** (United Nations refugee chief), **Beep Colclough** (treasurer of the Holy Jim Cabin Owners Improvement Assn.), **Willie Thrower** (broke pro football's color barrier as the NFL's first black quarterback), **Scott Silliman** (Duke University law professor), **Robert Kneebone** (Fry's computer tech — what's he connected to?).

**Carol Covert** (FBI agent), **Mike Wurm** (contestant in Bass Masters world fishing tournament), **Kay Lackey** (assistant regional director of the SEC's New York office — of course she's only an assistant), **Tallon Knight** (raptor expert), **Ugas Abdi Ugas Hussein Ugas Khalif** (tribal elder in Somalia).

**Dick Trickle** (NASCAR driver), **Fred C. Bassett** (dog show judge), **John Argue** (attorney), **Sascha Foo** (CNN reporter), **Dr. Hertz and Dr. Smiley** and **Dr. Flesh** (Oral surgeons), **Ding Ling** (Chinese author), **McFlem Furniture Co.** (least appealing business name), **Tony Neuron** (Ojai librarian), **Simon Rattle** (conductor).

**Packy MacFarland** (infomercial producer and local cable cheese), **LaDon Swann** (aquaculture extension specialist at Purdue University), **Earnest Pleasant** (WalMart greeter), **Dick Hyman** (a pianist! perfect).

**David Shakey** (rescued fisherman suffering from hypothermia), **Cardinal Jaime Sin** (Manila potentate), **Barb Supple** (a waitress in Chicago — Whatta gall!), **Dorsey Wingo** ("Twilight Zone" helicopter pilot), **Johnnie Vice** (patrolman), **Dick Curd** (spokesman for Carnation milk).

**Ron Sellers** sold his house to the **Beiers**. Then he leased a house from the **Lessers**.

