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My Mornings with Maureen: What Is the New York Times Thinking?

I used to wake with her every morning, it was a beautiful relationship. Her intellectually stimulating and always culturally apposite insights into contemporary happenings would often be the highlight of my day. But [Maureen Dowd](#), along with [Thomas](#) and [Paul](#) and even [David](#), has been taken away from me, cloistered behind the New York Times' firewall.

Back in September of 2005 I wrote about the new Times Select service from the New York Times. Basically, the Times [took their best writers](#) and told them to say goodbye to probably over 75% of their readership. But this is a good thing, mind you, because the Times, I'm sure, thought they'd be making more money. And perhaps they are, though I find it difficult to believe that they were not making a lot of money with all of the page ads and popup ads they used to place in their online Op/Ed pages. But regardless, they took their best people and held them hostage, expecting you and I and everyone else to pony up \$8 a month just to get our morning fix back.

So now it's late February, and I've still refused to pay for my mornings with Maureen – though I will admit to sneaking a peek at her every once in a while, thanks to my library's convenient relationship with ProQuest. But having to surreptitiously tiptoe through a database just to meet Maureen isn't working. In fact, our relationship is almost over. I've gotten used to not having her around (oh, what an awful thought that would have been six months ago).

And what about everyone else? What about [Thomas](#) and [Paul](#) and [David](#) and [Frank](#) and [Nicholas](#) and [John](#) and [Bob](#)? (Not to mention Carol & Ted & Alice.) Does anyone remember the fabulous insights into Middle Eastern politics that Thomas Friedman used to provide? And what more important time than the present to be able to read his well-crafted pieces. And how about Nicholas Kristof's excellent coverage of the genocide in Darfur and the atrocities of child slavery and sex trafficking? And David Brooks, who I would often find myself disagreeing with, but whose intelligence and insight would make me think more about subjects I sometimes avoided. What about David?

All of these great writers are now locked away behind that Times firewall. Sure, I could pay the \$8 a month, but what about everyone else? I wonder how these great writers feel about their sudden drop in status – no longer able to sway the national debates, no longer able to look at the ["Most Emailed"](#) list on their website and see their columns listed anywhere near the top. What are Maureen and the gang thinking now? Because, in the end, it's about more than money to them. It's about power and prestige and the ability to shape the greater debate – the power to push and pull and sway public opinion.

So I hope that the New York Times will change their mind about taking their most gifted talent away from us. I would love to go back to spending my mornings with Maureen, but make it happen soon, because I'm a fickle person and I'm bound to soon find someone younger and, well, cheaper.

Posted by Michael on February 26, 2006 11:34 AM | [Permalink](#)

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Couldn't agree more. Lacking your moral courage, however, I coughed up the \$8/mo. in order to be able to indulge in and share Mo's NYT columns with others (as well as Kristof, Krugman, and others). You're welcome to read free of charge at:
<http://www.theunknowncandidate.blogspot.com>

Cheers.

Posted by: [The Unknown Candidate](#) | [February 26, 2006 04:24 PM](#)

Citing "fair use" (it's their legal bill, not mine) the website Truth Out (<http://www.truthout.org/>) reprints most of the NYT op/eds.

Posted by: [Michael Casey](#) | [February 27, 2006 10:19 PM](#)

I think the Times should make the whole site a paid site. I think they would make good money, and it's probably cheaper to produce than the print version. It will hopefully not cost as much for us either!

Hey, it worked for the WSL.

Posted by: [Dan](#) | [February 28, 2006 10:21 AM](#)

I stumbled across your blog today via Technorati and I'm glad I did. It's rare to see a blog that not only throws out valuable information but also ties it in with colorful commentary.

Best of luck with the new Dacula branch. That's a vibrant community who I predict will come out in droves for GCPL's storytimes. That Miss Elaine's incredible! She deserves a six-figure raise if you ask me.

Posted by: [kevin](#) | [February 28, 2006 03:46 PM](#)

Am I reading correctly? Does a commenter above suggest making the entire Times site paid?? Will we next begin charging admission to our libraries?

Posted by: [Craig](#) | [March 2, 2006 12:20 AM](#)

Use your library card to pierce that firewall and read Dowd, Friedman et al as in them old days as most public libraries offer access to the NY Times on their subscription databases.

Posted by: [ed](#) | [March 8, 2006 11:15 PM](#)

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