



Susan Goldberg

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This month, we continue our ongoing series in which we sit down with influential leaders on key issues. Now, we talk with the first female editor of National Geographic Magazine, Susan Goldberg, to talk about their unique style of journalism, their focus on Detroit and on cities around the globe, and the shifting media landscape. This is what she had to say:

The story on Detroit in the May

issue is a personal one for you. You were a reporter and editor at the Detroit Free Press and were raised in nearby Ann Arbor, Michigan. Your parents grew up in Detroit; your grandparents immigrated to Detroit from Eastern Europe in the 1920s. You've obviously seen the city go through many different phases. Talk about why you focused on the people of Detroit for this issue.

"In the past few years, I've read a great deal of coverage about Detroit that I've found simplistic, either too optimistic or too pessimistic. It lacked an understanding of the historical forces that brought the city to the brink, or it failed to reflect the spirit of the people who live there. Once I got to National Geographic, I was confident our brand of storytelling could produce a more accurate, more narrative exploration of what has happened to one of America's most important cities.

We hired longtime Free Press columnist Susan Ager, who truly understands the community, to write the text. And we asked Wayne Lawrence, known for his evocative portraiture in urban communities, to take the photos. The result is a story that, no matter how much you've read about Detroit, is a deeper and richer exploration of the city and its people than anyone else has done. The gist of it is captured by the title, 'Taking Back Detroit'. I also decided to write about Detroit in my Editor's Note, because this story means so much to me personally.



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I went back to the neighborhoods my parents grew up in, to see for myself what had changed. In some ways, it was a tough visit. There's a great deal of change and loss. But in the end, I left optimistic. Why? Because of the people I met in those neighborhoods who believe in the future of Detroit. Their spirit and determination are infectious. I hope I was able to capture that".

When people think of National Geographic, most probably associate it with stories about science, animals or outdoor ad-

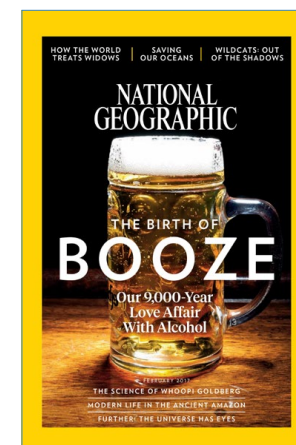
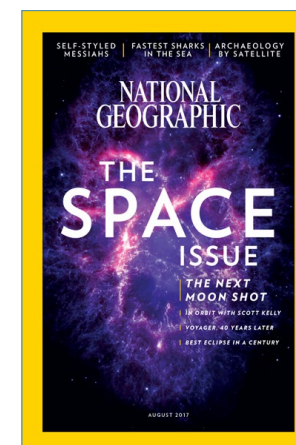
ventures. Why are you exploring cities, both in America and globally?

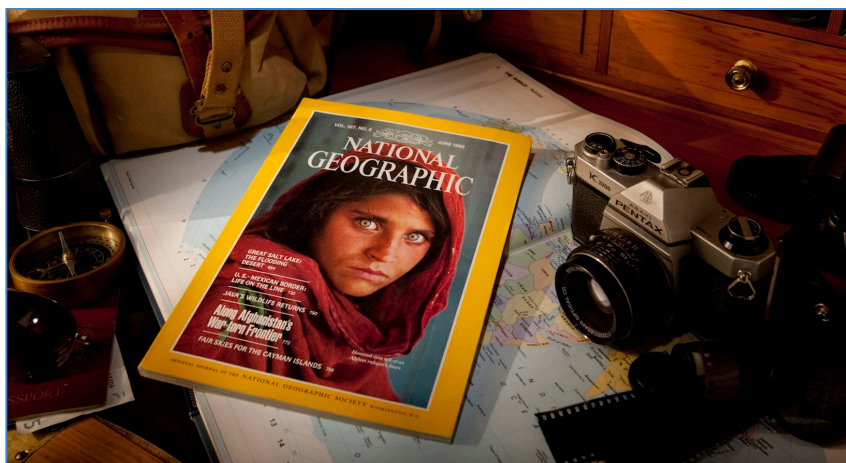
"In 1950, less than a third of people around the world lived in cities; today, about half do; and by 2050, two-thirds of humankind is expected to reside in urban areas. Documenting this fast-moving trend, exploring the challenges it presents for cultures, the environment, health, education and sustainable food production, among other areas-is right in National Geographic's wheelhouse. We're just adding locations! In 2015, for example,

in addition to our story on Detroit, we're publishing major magazine stories on Lagos, Nigeria, revealing the pressures and promise of a city that's the financial heartbeat of Africa; Miami, where we look at the economic impact of rising seas on America's most climate-endangered city; and New York, whose building boom is changing the city's

skyline and accessibility more dramatically now than at any other time in at least a generation. Plus, we've reported urban stories extensively online, including the recent outbreak of Ebola, which was exacerbated by being centered in three West African cities. No matter what the platform, we'll cover those stories our groundbreaking photography and videography, explanatory mapping and illustrations and deep reporting to help our readers understand the implications of urbanization now and into the future".







How will the shifting way your readers consume content – online, in print, or via video – change the way the magazine approaches storytelling?

"We have so many more tools now, both for how we tell stories and for how we can deliver those stories to our readers. In short, we can create content that will appeal to readers from cradle to cane, and give them information in moments, not just months. I'm excited that 60 million readers around the world come to our magazine each month, and, at the same time, that we're able to reach vast numbers of new consumers of our content on other platforms. In addition to our website, iPad magazine and digital photographic features such as Proof and YourShot, we've just created a new app, NatGeo View. And I'll bet most people have no idea that we have an enormous footprint on social media, with an astonishing 35 million friends on Facebook alone, over 8.6 million followers on Twitter, and 15 million followers on Instagram. Recently, we've even teamed up with Snapchat to present our storytelling in new ways. We're increasingly able to connect our stories across platforms. For example, when an ancient, lost city is discovered deep in the jungle of Honduras, we can break that story online, in real time. We did just that in March, and 800,000 people read it that day. In a few months from now, in National Geographic magazine, we'll have a deeper story on how that city and other ancient sites across Central America are being uncovered and explored through mapping technology. The magazine story will have the photography, illustrations and explanatory writing that are our hallmarks. So we're giving people the best of both worlds: Breaking news when events our readers care about happen, followed by rich, contextual coverage in the magazine about what it all means. Finally, no matter what the platform, our journalism needs to live up to our value statement: We believe in the power of science, exploration and storytelling to change the world".

You have been a trailblazer throughout your career in journalism: You were the first female editor of the San Jose Mercury News, the first female editor of



the (Cleveland) Plain Dealer and now the first female editor in chief of National Geographic. What do you think about that?

"I'm very proud to be the editor in chief of National Geographic and News; it truly is an honor. And given the changes in our industry over the span of my career – from the typewriter and glue pot to the age of instant, digital information – it is a thrilling time to provide exceptional content to traditional and new audiences. But my belief is that our society will be a better and more equitable place when having a female editor is not such a notable event. I'm concerned because 64 percent of graduates from journalism and communication schools are women and just 23 percent of newsroom leaders are women. There's something wrong with our workplaces or expectations when we go from a significant majority of young women entering the profession and a significant minority of middle-aged women leading it a generation later. Diverse newsrooms that reflect their communities produce more accurate, more attuned journalism. The lack of progress to achieve that is an issue our industry needs to address now".

As you approach your one-year anniversary as editor in chief of National Geographic, what is the highlight of your first year at the helm?

"Most broadly: Helping our staff embrace the idea that our work across new storytelling platforms is as important as our work on our traditional storytelling platform. That's a big cultural change and most people are approaching it with gusto. More specifically: Just as we love all our children, I love all our stories. That said, I'm really proud of our most timely and edgy coverage, such as March's "The War on Science" cover, which became our best selling issue in a year and is a great example of the relevancy and urgency I'd like to bring to all our stories, in every medium. And I'm excited about our November 2015 special issue on climate change, pegged to the UN's climate talks in Paris. All about coping and solutions, the issue is a big departure from the throw-up-your-hands stories you tend to read about climate. I hope people will view it as a public service".

Peter Scher



Susan Goldberg

**Editorial Director, National Geographic Partners
and Editor in Chief, National Geographic Magazine**

Susan Goldberg is Editorial Director of National Geographic Partners and Editor In Chief of National Geographic Magazine. As Editorial Director, she is in charge of all publishing ventures, including digital journalism, magazines, books, maps, children and family, and travel and adventure. She was named Editorial Director in October 2015 and Editor in Chief of the magazine in April 2014. She is the 10th editor of the magazine since it was first published in October 1888. Under her leadership in 2017, National Geographic was a finalist for a Pulitzer Prize for Explanatory Reporting for its issue about gender and the magazine received numerous other awards for photography, storytelling and graphics. In 2016, National Geographic magazine won a National Magazine Award for best website; in 2015, it won two National Magazine Awards and the George Polk Award for Magazine Reporting. In March 2015, she

received the Exceptional Woman in Publishing Award from Exceptional Women in Publishing. Before her employment at National Geographic, Goldberg was executive editor for federal, state and local government coverage for Bloomberg News in Washington. She started at Bloomberg in 2010. In 2013, she was voted one of Washington's 11 most influential women in the media by Washingtonian magazine. From 2007 to 2010, she was editor of The Plain Dealer, the daily newspaper of Cleveland and the largest newspaper in Ohio. Prior to that, from 2003-2007, she was the executive editor of the San Jose Mercury News, and served as the paper's managing editor from 1999-2003. From 1989 to 1999, Goldberg worked at USA Today, including stints as a deputy managing editor of the News, Life and Enterprise sections. Previously, she worked as a reporter and editor at the Detroit Free Press. She began her career as

a reporter at the Seattle Post-Intelligencer. A Michigan native, Goldberg has a bachelor's degree in journalism from Michigan State University, where she now funds the Susan Goldberg Scholarship at the university's College of Communication Arts and Sciences' School of Journalism. She is active in professional journalism organizations, and in 2012-13 was president of the American Society of News Editors. She is on the boards of The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press and the College of Communication Arts and Sciences at MSU and previously was co-chair of the Medill School of Journalism's Board of Visitors at Northwestern University. She also is on the board of the National Museum for Women in the Arts in Washington and is a member of the International Women's Forum. Goldberg lives in Washington, DC with her husband, Geoffrey Etnire, a real estate lawyer.