

Journalist looks at Russia, press

BY ALLISON LEVITSKY
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For former San Mateo Times managing editor Michelle Carter, writing a memoir was “like dancing naked on Broadway,” she told the Post yesterday.

“You’re kind of totally exposed,” Carter said. “This is so different

Former editor will sign copies of her new book tomorrow

from journalism, where you keep yourself out of the subject. Here, you are the subject.”

Carter’s second book, “From

Under the Russian Snow,” was published Sept. 1, recalling the year that, as a 50-year-old empty-nester, she left her job at the San Mateo Times in 1995 to serve as “journalist-in-residence” for the U.S. Information Agency in Moscow, working to usher in the

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CARTER

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Locally owned, independent

RUSSIA

free press after the fall of the Soviet Union.

Carter will read excerpts, discuss press issues in Russia and sign copies of the book at Books Inc. in Palo Alto at 7 p.m. tomorrow, kicking off a tour that will take her from the Peninsula to Chicago and, yes, back to Russia.

Carter, who became a Russophile since taking high school Russian, has taken more than 25 trips to Russia since 1998. After her 1995 stint, she spent 18 months taking other news professionals there to work with individual newspapers as a free press began to blossom.

In May, Carter will return to Russia for the first time in four years with her grandson to give book talks in Moscow and St. Petersburg. In the meantime, she said, she keeps her finger on the pulse of Russian politics by following her many friends there on Facebook.

Russia's role in last year's election

“Most of my friends (in Russia) have no doubt that the Russian government was involved in our elections,” Carter said. “They believe that this is the way that Putin operates. He was head of the KGB. He knows all of these systems, and this is something that he has done in other countries, interfering in their elections.”

Carter said there are still some “very well-developed” news sources in Russia, including Radio Free Europe.

Carter said she owes much of her crisp memory of her year in Russia to her late husband Laurie Carter, who, up until his sudden death before his wife’s return, meticulously printed and filed every email she sent him, sometimes two or three a day.

“Emails are so present. They’re so exactly at this moment,” Carter said. “Reading something triggers a whole new memory.”

After tomorrow’s signing at Books Inc., Carter will hold events at the public libraries in Burlingame on Oct. 4, Redwood City on Oct. 19, San Carlos on Oct. 21 and Belmont on Nov. 4.