

Fred Weir
Elizabeth Cook

Fred Weir, a Canadian-born journalist attending Miami University's "Russian Journalism Under Fire" panel April 2-3, says the future of journalism requires finding a business plan for the profession.

"Internet blogging cannot replace the professional standards of gathering, organizing and reporting news," said Weir.

According to Weir, the extinction of professional journalism is inevitable without a conscious effort among all nations to preserve the training and practice of the work.

"There are many ways of getting an education, but I am often impressed with the quality of journalists that come out of journalism education," he said.

For Weir, travel formed his view of the world. He spent a significant amount of his youth traveling through Europe and backpacking through the Middle East. In 1986 he moved to Russia to write for a left-wing Canadian daily, the *Canadian Tribune*.

Weir first went to Russia with the intention of only staying one or two years. He was interested in writing about former leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev's "perestroika," or economic reforms.

Shortly after he moved to Russia, however, he met his wife, who at the time was a grad student working as an interpreter during the summer. She was working with a group of Canadian tourists when they met and within six months of meeting each other they were married. They now have two children, ages 18 and 6.

As a foreign journalist in Russia, Weir enjoys his position of the "outsider."

"In my own personal way, I enjoy learning, analyzing and explaining, from a removed stand point," he said.

Recognizing his place as a foreigner in a society that he has come to know as home, he "enjoys the freedom of the outsider," and the unique point of view he holds as a foreign journalist.

Throughout the sessions at the conference, Weir maintained his distance as the outsider and has enjoyed hearing the differing points of view of the panelists.

"The differing points of view are inevitable when you have people who work for government organizations and people who are working journalists."

The dangerous state for journalists in Russia, however, remains a non-disputable hazard for those involved in the profession. This does not phase Weir with his practice, and despite the reported murders, he feels relatively safe in his home located in a village 10 miles outside of Moscow.