

CJIG prepares to contribute to AEJMC issues discussion

Posting convention papers, rethinking panel selection process top list

By Kathy Campbell
CJIG head

Welcome to the 2000-2001 Civic Journalism Interest Group!

I'm going to confess immediately that I love the sound of "2000-2001." Somehow, it makes me feel as though I've arrived somewhere important. And it's one of the many reasons I'm so delighted to be chairing our group this year. We are well-positioned to be an even more significant presence and a major contributor to an outstanding 2001 AEJMC convention in Washington, D.C., next August. I can hardly wait to begin our planning for panels and paper competitions-and to see you all again.

In fact, schmoozing with, listening to and learning from CJIG members as well as our academic and professional colleagues was clearly the highlight of the Phoenix experience. We had some wonderful and lively panel discussions, and I hope you returned home with as many new ideas for research and teaching as I did.

Another or our excellent

accomplishments in Phoenix was recruiting and electing a slate of officers to help me keep us organized and informed throughout the coming year. Here they are:

Vice heads: Sharon Iorio, Wichita State University; Wally Dean, Pew Center for Civic Journalism

Research chairs: Frank Fee, University of North Carolina; Renita Coleman, University of Missouri-Columbia

Newsletter/Web editors: Charlyne Berens, University of Nebraska-Lincoln; Brian Massey, University of Connecticut

On special assignment: Pre-conference programming, Tanni Haas, CUNY-Brooklyn; Denise Richter, Palo Alto College

One of our first assignments is to put together panel proposals to take to Atlanta for the mid-winter conference. That's the meeting when all the divisions and interest groups sit down together and figure out the program for the next convention. Elsewhere in this edition is a story about how you can participate in the panel proposal

and review process. Please share your great ideas—or ideas that you think could be great if sev-

eral folks put their minds to it. Keep in mind that the 2001 Plenary Theme is "Bringing in the Outs: Toward Inclusivity and Democracy." Also keep in mind that the 2001 convention is scheduled a little differently: It runs Sunday through Wednesday, Aug. 5-8.

During the coming year, we'll be discussing some important issues and soliciting your ideas and opinions. Here's a preview:

■ AEJMC is discussing whether to consider Web postings of academic papers (including personal Web pages and the AEJMC archives) as publications, thus disqualifying them from consideration for publication in AEJMC journals. A year-long discussion is anticipated,

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Kathy Campbell

How about your very own panel in Washington, D.C.?

By Sharon Iorio
and Walter Dean

Co-vice chairs

Hello, fellow CJIG members! We know. We know. You've just barely recovered from our "August in Arizona."

Yet, it is indeed time to start planning our panels and programs for the next AEJMC convention. The 2001 meeting will be held in Washington D.C. at the Hyatt Regency. The convention is Sunday through Wednesday, Aug. 5-8. Note the days of the week are reversed from the usual schedule!

We're writing to invite you to submit a proposal (or several) for sessions at the Washington convention. The topic can be anything that has to do with civic, or public, journalism.

Proposals don't need to be fancy. Just think of a title, write a paragraph describing your idea for a panel or invited paper session, include a list of possible participants, suggest other AEJMC divisions or interest groups that would be likely co-sponsors (if you know of any), then add your name, address, phone number, e-mail address and other vital information.

Proposals should be mailed,

e-mailed or faxed so they are received by the end of the day Oct. 2.

Send them to: Sharon Hartin Iorio, Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Wichita State University, 1845 Fairmount, Wichita, Kan. 67260-0005; 316-978-6659; fax 316-978-3234, e-mail Sharon_Iorio@elliott.es.twsu.edu

Copies of your proposal(s) will be faxed or emailed the following morning to CJIG executive committee members as well as to everyone who submitted proposals, requesting feedback and any other ideas generated by our long-distance consultations. Joint panel proposals will be due in the AEJMC office around Nov. 1. Then we'll try to negotiate top spots and co-sponsors for our panels when we attend the Dec. 1 "chips" mid-winter meeting in Atlanta.

Questions? Please feel free to e-mail or call Iorio or vice chair Walter Dean at the Pew Center for Civic Journalism, 1101 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Suite 420, Washington, DC 20036 or CJIG Chair Kathy Campbell, Department of Communication, Southern Oregon University.

CJIG wants to hear about AEJMC issues

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including posting of the specific proposal and its rationale on a listserv. I will keep you updated on this, and as more information becomes available, I'll be most interested in your reaction.

■ The membership of the Council of Divisions (made up of the chairs of the divisions and interest groups) is also trying to rethink how the panels and other sessions are scheduled. The discussion in Phoenix encompassed such concerns as attracting larger audiences, especially to panels featuring professionals; ensuring good attendance at research sessions; and worrying how annual reviews of division/interest group performance would be affected. Again, I would be delighted to hear your ideas on this.

■ CJIG has well over 100 members. Do we want to seek division status? Inquiring minds want to know. Tanni Haas of CUNY-Brooklyn is gathering the needed background information, and we hope to use our new Web site (coming soon to a URL near you) to open a discussion on this provocative idea.

Below, you'll find e-mail and snail mail addresses and phone numbers for all the officers. Please do keep in touch!

Here's how to get ahold of CJIG officers

Kathy Campbell, president: campbeka@sou.edu; (803) 7773316; Southern Oregon University, 1250 Siskiyou Blvd, Ashland, Ore. 97520-50 10

Sharon Iorio, co-vice chair: Sharon_iorio@elliott.es.twsu.edu; (316) 798-3100; Wichita State University, 14530 Sharon Lane, Wichita, Kan. 67230

Frank E Fee, co-vice chair: ffee@email.unc.edu; 9 19 962 407 1; University of North Carolina, 211 Carroll Hall, Chapel Hill, NC. 27599

Charlyne Berens, newsletter editor: cberens@unlserve.unl.edu; (402) 472-8241; University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 110 Avery Hall, Lincoln, Neb.

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Brian Massey, Web editor: tblmassey@yahoo.com; 850 Bolton Road, U-85, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT 06269-1085

Tanni Haas, pre-conference programming: thaas@brooklyn.cuny.edu; (718) 951 5225; Department of Speech Communication Arts & Sciences, Brooklyn College, 2900 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11210,

Denise Barkis Richter, pre-conference programming: dbarkisr@accd.edu; (2 10) 92 1-5442; Palo Alto College, 1400 W. Villaret Ave., San Antonio, Texas 78224

Pew Center offers journalists tools for better interviewing, reporting

Journalists seeking to add to their reporting tools will find help available from the Pew Center for Civic Journalism. "A Journalist's Toolbox," a set of four short videos, is designed to help journalists and journalism students discover new stories and report them better.

The videos demonstrate techniques reporters can use to conduct more effective interviews, decide what a story is really about, find the voices that belong in a story and use civic mapping to uncover important community issues.

The Toolbox draws on the techniques and experiences of working journalists at The Charlotte Observer, The Orange County Register, the Tampa Tribune, The Virginian-Pilot and Tampa's WFLA-TV. It builds on the work of Richard Hatwood, president of the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, who has served as a consultant for many news organizations and has conducted Civic Mapping Seminars for the Pew Center for Civic Journalism.

For editors and educators, the Toolbox includes a discussion and activity guide to help prompt more conversation and practice the skills.

■ **Interviewing: New Questions, Better Stories**, 14:17 minutes

How a reporter asks questions can influ-

ence the answers. See how one type of question can "shut down" an interview and another "open up" a conversation,

■ **Framing a Story: What's It Really About?** 13:21 minutes

News is more than just conflict or controversy. Discover why stories that identify tensions or patterns may be more accurate, more interesting and more engaging to readers and viewers.

■ **Finding Third Places: Other Voices, Different Stories** 13:20 minutes

Reporters who can find new sources often find new stories. Learn how third places can be used as entry points to acquire important community information and sources.

■ **Tapping Your Community: What Don't You Know?** 13:52 minutes

Journalists need to find out what they don't know to report better stories. See how news organizations are improving coverage by systematically tapping ordinary people who are knowledgeable about issues in their community.

To order a copy of "A Journalist's Toolbox," send \$10 (checks only, please) to the Pew Center for Civic Journalism, 1101 Connecticut Ave, NW, Suite 420, Washington, DC, 20036-4303. Ask for a receipt if you need one.

Civic bits

Professor Jay Rosen of New York University and author of "What Are Journalists For?" (Yale University Press, 1999) was the featured guest author in September for an on-line forum hosted by Blue Ear Books. (The forum's archives should be available by late September at the Blue Ear site, <http://www.blueear.com/books/books.html>.)

Following is a brief excerpt from Rosen's final post on Sept. 6, 2000.

"My final thought is a brief gloss on a pair of sentences written by Paul Taylor, former political reporter for the Washington Post, who covered many a presidential campaign and then reflected about his experience. 'Political stories

don't just "happen" the way hailstorms do,' Taylor writes. 'They are artifacts of a political universe journalism itself has helped to construct.' (From Paul Taylor, "See How They Run," Knopf, 1990, p. 266.)

"I regard this statement as a) demonstrably true, and b) uncontrollable within the normal

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Civic journalism and the right side of the brain

How photographers and graphic designers visually communicate the principles of civic journalism

By Renita, Coleman

Following is a synopsis of the paper Coleman presented at the AEJMC convention in August 2000.

Because civic journalism may be the most hotly debated subject of the decade within the field of journalism, an enormous amount has been written about the subject. Yet nearly all the debate centers around the “verbal” with the “visual” – represented by the work of graphic designers and photographers – excluded from the conversation.

This study aims to address this void by starting a conversation among visual journalists about their philosophy of civic journalism and techniques for design and photography that fulfill the goals of civic journalism.

If the content of civic journalism is different, and if design and photography are driven by content, then should design and photography for civic journalism be different than design and photography for traditional journalism? How does this new approach to news affect the jobs of designers and photographers? How does it affect the products they create? Do they have concerns unique to their roles that have not been addressed so far?

Method

This study used in-depth interviews with 18 visual journalists at newspapers across the country that have experimented with civic journalism or practice it on a daily basis. The journalists interviewed were from the

census of 29 newspapers that had received grants from the Pew Center for Civic Journalism in 1998 and 1999. It included papers from all circulation sizes and regions of the country. Analysis followed the principles of grounded theory that included theoretical sampling, using the evidence of real life to constantly compare across cases to uncover generalizable processes, and coding that arises from the data.

Findings

Practical

The discussion about civic journalism in general can be logically divided into two aspects: the philosophical and the practical.

The accounts from these visual journalists on questions of practice are detailed, on point, and well developed, in contrast with their responses to philosophical questions such as whether design and photography for civic journalism should be different from traditional journalism.

Some of the journalists interviewed were confident and articulate about their philosophies, yet just as many were unsure, appeared not to have thought about the matter or seemed to avoid the question altogether. Sometimes, rather than answering the question directly, journalists launched into a discussion of their newsroom’s latest civic journalism project and began describing the different elements they used. Other journalists acknowledged civic journalism goals, such as reader response, connection and involvement, then linked those goals to visual elements.

I interpret this as ambivalence on the part of the journalists, whether they were unsure

about the need for a different type of design, or simply because they hadn’t really thought about it much.

Alternatively, such descriptive responses could also represent a kind of “working through to a solution,” to put it in Yankelovich’s terms, to the question of whether design and photography need to be different for civic journalism, a kind of thinking out loud. Their musings, which seem like ambivalence, might really indicate initial attempts to work through the question in their own minds.

These accounts may also be interpreted as breaking the larger philosophical question down into individual components. For example, one journalist listed public journalism’s goal of showing readers what something means to them and then described how that was achieved visually. It seems journalists may be breaking the philosophical discussion down into more manageable elements.

There were clear and strong “yes” answers as well as “no” answers to the question of whether civic journalism needed to be designed and photographed differently from traditional journalism.

Some of the journalists who were emphatic that, no, civic journalism should not be designed and photographed differently from traditional journalism explained that civic journalism at their newspapers was never a separate entity from traditional journalism. Some said the rancorous debate over civic journalism was behind that fact. The integration of civic journalism into daily practice has been described by many experts as the signal that civic journalism

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Pack your bags and prepare to head to the great Northwest

The Pacific Northwest will be the site of CJIG's midyear conference, which will focus on a civic journalism workshop for journalism educators.

Tentatively scheduled for mid-February, the workshop sessions will be sponsored by

the Pew Center for Civic Journalism and hosted by the School of Journalism and Communication at the University of Oregon in Eugene.

Dates will be set, and other details will be arranged in the next few months.

Stay tuned!

Civic journalism and visual journalism

More comfort with techniques than philosophy

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has accomplished its mission, but this type of integration has a different flavor; it seems to be bound up with denial that civic journalism principles and philosophies are behind some of the ways things are now done in newsrooms and driven more by a desire to avoid controversy in the newsroom.

Practical issues

Two main problems that seemed to plague the visual display of civic journalism emerged as a pattern in these interviews.

- Designers said civic journalism generated more "pieces" than traditional journalism, and it was a challenge to incorporate them all in a unified and aesthetically pleasing fashion.

Photographers said the tendency for civic journalism stories to be abstract and conceptual made photographing them

more difficult. In fact, nearly all the visual journalists interviewed said the tendency for civic journalism stories to be rather abstract created a problem for photography.

Of course, conceptual, issue-oriented stories are not unique to civic journalism, but it did seem to be more of a pattern with civic journalism, they said. And nearly every journalist interviewed talked at length about that factor as the main problem with photographing civic journalism stories.

One problem that was mentioned in detail by only one journalist but seemed to underlie many of the comments was the idea that photography for civic journalism was "not photojournalism." This was particularly a problem with photographing the town hall meetings, public forums and community conversations that are one of the unique features of civic journalism. For example, one journalist

said: "You're not going to win any photojournalism awards at this kind of thing."

For designers, one design element repeatedly emerged as a solution to presenting in-depth and conceptual issues, as well as a lot of information, in a visually pleasing, easy to understand fashion: the grid. The full-page election grid by the Charlotte Observer is but one example. Grids have also been used to portray the issue of water supply and report cards for schools.

Conclusions

Some of the architects of civic journalism have called for more emphasis on the philosophy and not so much on the practice. From these interviews with visual journalists, it would seem to be true that journalists have a good grasp of techniques for fulfilling civic journalism's goals, but are less comfortable with philosophy.

What's coming? Will we be ready for it?

Equipping journalists for the new communications era

By Anders Gyllenhaal

Executive editor
The News & Observer
Raleigh, N.C.

Excerpts of keynote remarks at the Pew Center for Civic Journalism luncheon, Aug. 9, at the AEJMC convention

Today I thought I'd try to tell a couple of stories but mostly ask questions. Not about every one of the many future issues we can see coming at us (from convergence to credibility to new media issues). But about this single piece of the puzzle that is how the news part of the newspaper struggles with technology.

Let me start off with the good news. An interesting thing has been happening this past year: Despite all the doomsday predictions about our trade, the newspaper business is suddenly being recognized as one of the strongest pieces of the media. Have you noticed all the stories in the past month or so? "Newspapers are back in vogue," read the headline of a Toronto The Globe and Mail story last week

All of a sudden, forces that were working against us seem to be in our favor. Our competition in the dot.com world has stumbled. As the media have splintered, newspapers are holding onto (or at least not losing as much of) our markets as our competitors. We're also beginning to show some progress with our online sites and the whole concept of convergence, finding ways of competing with Yahoo and America Online.

I also wonder if we aren't finally getting some credit for the strong foundations that newspapers have built over this past century, the depth of our reporting, the commitment to communities, the principles we try to work under. People are talking about how news-

papers might end up as the strongest piece of the mass media.

So here's question number one: What are we going to do with this opportunity?

There's no single answer because there's much work to do. But I thought I'd talk about some of the places where journalism schools and newspapers -with particular emphasis on newsrooms - should be doing a lot more experimentation to prepare for what's coming.

Databases: It's hard to overstate the vital role that databases are playing in the information business. There are tremendous applications for the local newspaper, which could be building useful, searchable databases out of the reams of information we collect every day on everything from calendar items to school test scores to taxes and money issues. You can find a few papers that are working on this.

But question number two: Why aren't we rushing to figure out this concept? Is the paper you read, or work for or send your best students to really on top of this tool?

Public records: A lot of energy on the Web is going into the collection, analysis and tracking of public records, which used to be the sole domain of newspapers as we followed such things as crime reports, home sales, marriages, divorces, births, deaths. Many papers, mine included, spend hours feeding these records into print publishing listings and then letting them evaporate from the system.

News research: Nowhere has the change been more dramatic in the past 10 years than in the potential for news research. News research ought to be the pumping, electronic heart of newsrooms. You can find newspapers where this is

the case, but many are still using traditional approaches.

Digital archiving: One advance that flows out of news research is digital archives, a vital reader service, a possible revenue source and way to build online readership. When The News & Observer finally put in a good system on our online site, the impact on traffic turned dramatic: 1.5 million page views, 250,000 searches and 159,000 articles downloaded since the first of the year.

Push technology: E-mail offers a powerful new way to communicate with readers and to deliver news. Increasing numbers of places will send you e-mail news updates, new developments on beats and or topics you may be following. But how many newspapers are taking advantage of a technology to put out updates to our readers and potential readers?

Mapping: New mapping software is a tremendous tool that allows us to create a whole new explanatory element to our reporting. From weather reports to development to, now, the census information, modern mapping provides a whole new way of using this information.

Public discussion: The once clunky, hard-to-use news groups have now evolved into a whole assortment of chats, forums and live interviews. We all watched from the sidelines a few years ago when radio discovered the power of raw conversation and turned it into the medium of talk radio. But online forums, in the next generation of this can let us put a smart, off-the-news, newspaper stamp on public discussions that can also be imported in an edited form onto our news pages.

Finally, the biggest technology

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Equipping journalists for the new communications era

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challenge of all: How are we going to make the most of our online sites?

I list that last for two reasons. One is that there is already so much talk about our Web strategies, and, two, because so much of the rest of these fit into making our online sites the useful, interactive and innovative sites they need to be to compete. This is one piece of our technological challenge that our industry is taking seriously. The publishers of two of the nation's best papers, The New York Times and The Washington Post, are devoting themselves to Internet issues. You can find some impressive, imaginative sites that are competing. But those are almost all at the bigger papers, while so many of our newspaper sites have a kind of cookie-cutter sameness that we'd never accept in our newspapers.

Why is it so hard for newsrooms to use technology well? We write and talk about it all the time. What's at the top of the list of strategies of the Newspaper Association of America? Invest in technology. Why don't we do more to follow our own advice?

First off, it's hard to manage. Not enough newsrooms have their own staffs devoted to programming and database work, so we rely on the same computer departments that are keeping our company systems going. Finally, all of this takes training, and while newspapers have started to put more emphasis on training, it's still mostly an afterthought. These are all good excuses, but how different are they than what every other industry in the information business is facing?

The second part of this question is how well are journalism schools doing in training students for the mix of traditional and technology skills that are needed? I don't know

enough about journalism curricula to answer this thoroughly. I can tell you that, judging from the applicants we see, journalism schools are not where you want to be. Since you're always training the next generation of journalists, technology has to be at the center of journalism education without taking away from such fundamentals as how to write well. I don't believe we can expect newspapers to pull off the kind of technical revamping that we need if newsrooms and journalism programs aren't working together on this.

Another question I started to wonder about is whether the role technology plays in newspapers doesn't give journalism schools a new opportunity that hasn't existed before. In the same way that medical schools, science departments and business schools lead their industries with applied research, there's more need than ever before for true research and development in journalism. How do we take these concepts and make them work in the newsroom? How do we turn some of these commercial technologies into journalistic tools?

What newsrooms are thirsting for right now are solutions for how to deal with this whole e-mail question, or a better approach to public records, or how about an online weather package that will help newspapers compete with TV? With so much need for training, why aren't more journalism schools providing continuing education in technology for newspaper staff?

That's probably enough questions for one lunch.

Let me end with one other story from my paper. It's about a reporter who has been on our staff for 29 years. His name is Pat Stith and he's given to sayings like, "That's no hill for a climber," meaning it can be done, or, "He's a real

horse," meaning that person's capable. He's worn his hair in the same crewcut for decades and dresses pretty much the same way as he did when he started in 1971. In *other* words, if you watched him across the newsroom, you'd be unlikely to peg him as the answer to an awful lot of these questions we've been throwing around

But if you were to walk up and sit down at Pat's desk, the future of our profession is on display. Pat taught himself how to use databases almost two decades ago. While he claims he has absolutely no knack for technology — again sort of like our business itself — Pat has figured out more about the computer languages of our government offices than their own systems folks, which is how he collects so much of their information and strikes such a mixture of fear and respect when he calls. So, to me, Pat has come to symbolize exactly how we prepare for the future.

The funny thing is that Pat's story isn't all that complicated. The instant he saw the power of the computer in reporting, he decided to do whatever it took to master this technology — and he eventually became a leader in the field and won a Pulitzer prize for his project on the hog industry in North Carolina. He hasn't thrown out the old ways for the new; instead he combines the two. Pat's reasoning on technology has always been pretty simple: "If I don't do it, somebody else will — and that's going to hurt me." Which is exactly how newspapers and journalism schools need to look at it.

This is what's coming. We can either struggle endlessly to catch up, which isn't working, or do what it takes to lead the way.

More civic bits

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categories and received wisdom of the press we have in the United States. The mind of the American journalist contains almost no instructions for how the political universe is to be 'constructed' by news accounts that are also meant to narrate and describe it. Almost nothing that is learned in journalism schools helps, either. The debates that typically go on about press performance cannot sustain a debate about how well this universe works for us. Rather, the talk usually centers around 'bias,' accuracy, fairness and, yes, objectivity, all of which deny Taylor's insight: that constructing the world for us, by telling us about it, is what journalists inevitably and normally do.

... The Pulitzer Prizes have enormous influence on the journalism that is done and honored in American newspapers. (If you don't believe me, ask any experienced editor.) But there is no Pulitzer for self-critique or self-improvement. There is no Pulitzer for prob-

lem-solving journalism. There is no Pulitzer for reporting on race, although there is one for something called 'feature writing.' If we try to understand why this is, no bottom line explanation will help us. Nor will appeals to truth, accuracy, fairness and objectivity. . . . Like news stories, prizes don't just 'happen' the way hailstorms do. They are artifacts of a world created by journalism, where images of excellence and heroism are crafted by the craft itself."

Associations feature civic journalism panels

The American Journalism Historians Association will feature a panel on civic journalism at its 19th annual convention in Pittsburgh on Oct. 4-7. The panel, "The Prehistory of Public Journalism," will be moderated by John P Ferré, Louisville, and includes David Copeland, Emory & Henry College; Stephen Ponder, University of Oregon; Patrick Washburn, Ohio University; and Pat Dooley, Wichita State.

The annual conference of the

Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, "Opening the Way to a Civil Society: Creating a Culture of Community and Dialogue," also featured a civic journalism component. Workshop leaders were Kathy Campbell, Southern Oregon University; Marcia Caton Campbell, University of Wisconsin-Madison and Richard Reuben, University of Missouri-Columbia. The conference was Sept. 14-16 in Albuquerque.

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