

■ INSIGHTS DRAWN FROM RESEARCH, EXPERIENCE

# Journalists join educators on panels

By Terri Brooks  
 CJIG chair

Many pioneers of the civic journalism movement will share their experiences and advice in seven Civic Journalism Interest Group panels and research sessions at the AEJMC annual convention. Each session promises to provide a wide, rich range of perspectives as the movement of civic journalism begins to mature. To encourage research, we're not only offering a refereed paper session, but a round table on graduate student research-in-progress so we can share and discuss; it's our first session — at 3 p.m. Wednesday, July 30.

In the research paper session at 1 p.m. Thursday, July 31, presenters will explore the language of public journalism, practical perspectives, 'and how civic journalism played out during the 1996 elections, among other engaging topics.

The panel organizers focused this year on bringing strong professional voices into our sessions to talk with journalism educators and researchers. The 1996 elections provided fertile fields for exploration, and one panel — at 2:45 p.m. Friday, Aug. 1 -will focus on successes and weaknesses. And, as part of ASNE's Project Reconnect and Civic Journalism, editors from several participating newspapers will share their approaches to local issues. While broadcast news has

## CONVENTION PROGRAM

Wednesday, July 30:

- 3-490 p.m. Graduate Student Research on Public/Civic Journalism.
- "News Values: How Public Journalists Do Newswork" — Katie Daily, Wisconsin-Madison
  - "Issues of Confidentiality in Civic Journalism 'Listening' Endeavors" — Susan Willey, Missouri
  - "Building Rural American Communities Through Journalism" -Diane Nicodemus, Penn State
  - "Corporate Culture and the Adoption of Journalist innovation" — Andrea Verykousis, North Carolina, Chapel Hill
- Commenters: Jay Rosen, New York University; Davis "Buzz" Merritt, Wichita Eagle; and Philip Meyer, North Carolina, Chapel Hill  
 Moderator: Lew Friedland, Wisconsin-Madison

Thursday, July 31:

- 8:15-9-45 a.m. Combined business & executive committee meetings.
- 1-2:30 p.m. Research papers:
- "The Treatment of Public Journalism in Three Media Review Journals" — Renita Coleman, Missouri
  - "The Language of Public Journalism: An Analysis of the Movement's Appropriation of the Terms Public, Civic, Deliberative Dialogue, and Consensus" -James Engelhardt, Oregon
  - 'Civic Journalism: The Practitioner's Perspective" -Feter Gade, Scott Abel, Michael Antecol, Hsiao-Yin Hsueh, Janice Hume, Jack Morris, Ashley Packard, Susan Willey, Nancy Fraser Wilson and Keith Sanders,

Continued on Page 4

been slower to adopt the practices of civic journalism, the success of a few TV-newspaper partnerships will be discussed at 4:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 1. Even the issue of teaching civic journalism will have a professional twist, as editors who've been teaching it in the newsroom share their experiences at 8:45 a.m. Friday.

Special thanks for this strong

program goes to the organizers — Cheryl Gibbs, Lewis Friedland, David Rubin, Lynne Flocke, and Jock Lauterer.

I also want to mention one thing that is troubling: the absence of minorities, particularly African Americans, on our panels, including mine. This is the second year this is true. Why? LeVs put this on the table for discussion in Chicago.

## Pew Center releases research reports, toolbox

Two studies about civic journalism projects — one positive, one not so — and a “toolbox” of ideas for journalists now are available from the Pew Center for Civic Journalism and the Pew Charitable Trusts.

“Civic Lessons: A Report on Four Civic Journalism Projects Funded by the Pew Center for Civic Journalism” concludes that civic journalism initiatives in four cities were widely and positively recognized by citizens and prompted increased civic activity. Newsroom buy-in, however, tended to be either top-heavy or lukewarm.

Evaluators compared such older, developed civic journalism sites as Charlotte, N.C., and Madison, Wisc., with new ones, such as Binghamton, N.Y., and projects that are primarily oriented toward public deliberation, such as Madison and San Francisco, Calif., with those that seek to engage citizens in a community problem, such as

Charlotte and Binghamton.

Among the key findings:

\* Citizens said the initiatives made them think more about politics, gave them a better idea about community problems, made them want to be more involved in the community, and made them feel more strongly they should vote.

\* Projects that focused on a specific community issue over time more effectively mobilized both public deliberation and civic engagement than projects that episodically addressed a range of general issues.

Copies of the report are available from Pew Charitable Trusts, 2005 Market St., Suite 1700, Philadelphia, PA 19103-7017, phone (215) 575-9050, fax (215) 575-4939.

Less optimistic are the results reported in “Does Public Journalism Work? The ‘Campaign Central Experience,” by David Blomquist of The Record in Hackensack, N.J.,

and Cliff Zukin of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University, released by the Pew Center in May.

In a study of the Hackensack newspaper’s “Campaign Central” election project, researchers found that, although the newspaper’s voter’s guide was well received, other issues-oriented coverage failed to reach past a heated, television-saturated campaign.

And finally, the Pew Center recently published “With the People: A Toolbox for Getting Readers and Viewers Involved.” It describes the basic elements of several prize-winning civic journalism projects and shows how stories appeared on newspaper pages.

The “Campaign Central” report and toolbox are available from the Pew Center for Civic Journalism, 1101 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 420, Washington, DC. 20036, or call (202) 331-3200.

---

### AEJMC CIVIC JOURNALISM INTEREST GROUP NEWS

is published by the Civic Journalism Interest Group of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

Membership in the interest group includes a subscription to this newsletter. Subscriptions are available for non-members by sending a \$5 donation to the Civic Journalism Interest Group along with a request to receive CJIG News to AEJMC, University of South Carolina, 1621 College St., Columbia, SC 29208-0251. The newsletter is published two to four times each year.

The chair of CJIG is Terri Brooks of Penn State. The editor of CJIG News is Cheryl Gibbs at Earlham College, Drawer 157, National Road West, Richmond, IN 47374. She may be reached by phone at (765) 983-1506, fax at (765) 983-1234, or e-mail at chergibbs@aol.com.

---

### Kettering prints speeches, essays

The Kettering Foundation recently released two publications about civic journalism: a compilation of speeches from seminars held by the Project on Public Life and the Press, and a trio of essays reflecting on what practitioners have learned so far.

“Speaking of Public Journalism” includes speeches given from 1993 through 1997. Speakers include academics Jim Carey of Columbia University, James Fishkin of the University of Texas-Austin, and Jay Rosen of New York University; news professionals Davis “Buzz” Merritt, Cole Campbell and Ellen Hume; Kettering Foundation president David Mathews; Chris Gates of the National Civic League; and researcher/consultant Richard Harwood.

“Public Journalism Theory and Practice: Lessons from Experience,” includes essays by Rosen, Merritt and Lisa Austin, research director of the Project on Public Life and the Press.

Both publications are available by calling Kettering at (800) 221-3657, or writing to the foundation at 200 Commons Road, Dayton, OH 45459-2799.

## Go slow when teaching students to 'listen'

By **Jacqueline Farnan**  
**St. John Fisher College**

Students in my advanced journalism course were confused. Their journalism text said reporters should have a clear focus in mind when working on stories. Just a semester earlier, they had read Shirley Biagi's "Interviews That Work" and had taken to heart her advice that reporters set a goal for each interview. It had taken many of them months to learn that random interviews often left them with random stories. Suddenly I was offering what sounded like a new message about interviewing: Don't set any agendas or name topics; don't pick an angle, just listen.

When each student was asked to conduct five interviews to help us discover issues of importance to the 1,400 students on our campus, the students were clearly at a loss: Wasn't it their responsibility to name a topic for interviews? What would be the focus?

Clearly I had gone too fast. Like many professors at small, strapped colleges, I was trying to shoehorn civic journalism into an existing advanced journalism course. I had gotten that students who had barely mastered the basics in a traditional journalism program could be overwhelmed by a whole new form of journalism. I discovered that a slow, deliberate approach works best . . . and I learned a few more lessons.

My course introduction to civic journalism had included a checklist of ways in which civic journalism differs from traditional journalism. Students had seen the excellent introductory video, "Civic Journalism: A Practical Guide," produced and provided free by the Pew Center for Civic Journalism. They had read case studies and articles

---

### Suddenly I was offering a new message about interviewing: Just *listen*.

---

also provided by the Pew Center. What students needed to practice civic journalism was more time to appreciate the distinctions made in those materials.

I provided library access to the Pew video for individual viewing. We took additional class time to review the fundamental differences between traditional and civic journalism — an essential step. We analyzed Pew case studies, identifying techniques reporters used. Students read the first sections of Arthur Charity's book, "Doing Public Journalism," and we discussed techniques suggested in his chapter, "Public Listening." Students seemed to grasp, intellectually at least, the notion of listening.

We began our campus-based civic journalism project again. The full listening component of our project included individual student interviews, an e-mail solicitation and a well-attended forum. The variety of listening formats proved to be essential. In their evaluations of the course, some students later recounted that they had continued to feel disoriented while conducting individual interviews. However, students also said they found class debriefing sessions and the public forum to be most helpful because they were able to see patterns of issues emerge.

During the debriefing sessions, students reported on the content of their interviews. We deliberately identified issues raised. Students coached each other on conducting

non-directed interviews. Interviews improved,

Blair Claflin of Gannett Rochester Newspapers' Democrat and Chronicle visited class and described a community civic journalism project that focused on the quality of education in city schools. His candor in discussing misgivings and difficulties experienced by local reporters helped students better understand their own concerns and gave them confidence.

The e-mail component yielded few responses. The system was new on our campus. This year I expect it will be a major source of information.

The forum, which included representatives from all interest groups on campus, was difficult and time-consuming to arrange . . . but worth the effort. Several students later reported that light bulbs "went off for them during the forum. They linked forum comments to issues raised during individual interviews. One student said, "I thought, 'We're really finding out what's important to these people.'" In a debriefing session following the forum, journalism students identified patterns of concern. They were surprised to discover that issues raised by student government leaders touched on only part of the cluster of concerns important to students. They noted the way students described their concerns.

The journalism students went on to frame two packages of stories on student-raised issues. The semester ended. They were not able to give ongoing coverage to the issues they unearthed or to bring about change. But they had mastered the delicate skills that comprise listening and they had developed a fundamental understanding of the practice of civic journalism.

---

**CONVENTION PROGRAM**


---

**Continued from Page 1**

Missouri-Columbia

- "Newspapers and Citizen-Based Journalism in the 1996 Elections: A Cross-Market Comparison" -Philip Meyer, North Carolina-Chapel Hill, and Deborah Potter, The Poynter Institute for Media Studies
- "Issues and Agendas: The Case of Wichita, Kansas, Revisited" -Christina Newby, Wichita State
- "The 1996 Presidential Campaign, Civic Journalism and Local TV News: Does 'Doing Civic Journalism' Make Any Difference?" -Amy Reynolds, Texas-Austin  
Discussants: Richard E. Shafer, North Dakota, and **Lynne Flocke**, Syracuse

2:45-4:15 p.m. Project Reconnect and Civic Journalism. A report on ASNE's two-year project with six newspapers, six journalism programs. Presenters:

- **Team 1:** Judy Belch, Raleigh News and Observer,

**'Mixed News' now available**

"Mixed News: The Public/ Civic/Communitarian Journalism Debate," edited by Jay Black, is now available from Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

It includes an introduction by Black, 13 essays by various authors and an annotated bibliography. Erlbaum says, "This book offers strong voices on several sides of this complex debate."

The hardback edition costs \$59.95, paperback \$24.95. To order, call toll-free at (800) 926-6579. For more information, call Erlbaum at (201) 236-9500, or write to Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 10 Industrial Ave., Mahwah, NJ 074302262.

Frank Fee, North Carolina-Chapel Hill

- **Team 2:** Gil Theisen, The (Columbia, SC.) State; Judy Van Slyke Turk, Ernie Wiggins and Becky Payne, South Carolina-Columbia
- **Team 3:** Steve Smith, Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph; Pat Raybon, professor, Colorado-Boulder  
Co-sponsor: Council of Affiliates.

Friday, **Aug. 1:**

**8:45-10-15 a.m.** Teaching Civic Journalism in Classrooms and Newsrooms.

Frank Denton, Wisconsin State Journal

Buzz Merritt, Wichita Eagle

Cheryl Gibbs, Earlham College

Co-sponsor: Science Communication Interest Group.

2:45-4:15 **p.m.** Civic Journalism and the Election Process. Panelists:

- Rick Thames, Wichita Eagle
- Tom Warhover, Norfolk Virginian-Pilot
- Philip Meyer, North Carolina-Chapel Hill
- Lewis Friedland, Wisconsin-Madison
- Jay Rosen, New York University  
Co-Sponsors: Council of Affiliates, Professional Freedom and Responsibility Committee.

4:30-6 **p.m.** Television, Radio and Civic Journalism.

Panelists:

• Ed Fouhy, The Pew Center for Civic Journalism

• Dave Iverson, Wisconsin Public Television/WHA-TV, Madison, Wisc.

• Frank Denton, Wisconsin State Journal

Co-sponsor: Radio-Television Journalism Division, Professional Freedom and Responsibility Committee.

**Share your ideas for teaching CJ**

If you're teaching civic journalism into your classes, share your ideas in the civic journalism teaching session at the AEJMC convention Friday, Aug. 1.

Send a description of your efforts to Cheryl Gibbs by July 25. Feel free to include related materials and an assessment of what has worked, what hasn't. Time also will be allowed during the session for people to share ideas from the floor.

Send information via **e-mail** to chergibbs@aol.com or mail it to 631 Pearl St., Richmond, IN 473744085, or phone (317) 962-0395.

---

**AEJMC Civic Journalism Interest Group**

c/o Cheryl Gibbs

Earlham College

National Road West

Richmond, IN 47374-4095