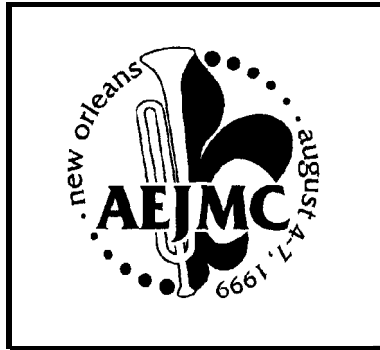


## CJIG Ready to Cash In Its New Orleans Chips

By Cheryl Gibbs  
CJIG co-chair

In just a few weeks, CJIG co-chair Jan Schaffer and vice chair Jack Morris will head to San Antonio to secure slots on the program for the annual AEJMC convention.

The scheduling session, called a chip auction, will take place this year at the St. Anthony Hotel Dec. 4-6. Jan and Jack already have compiled the program ideas submitted by CJIG members and are currently communicating with the officers of other AEJMC divisions



and interest groups, looking for co-sponsors.

Co-sponsored sessions always get put on the schedule first. Throughout the planning process,

proposals may be combined, changed and otherwise altered in the interest of making the best use of the 3 1/2 "chips" that CJIG may use to reserve convention slots (each co-sponsored session and research paper session "costs" CJIG one-half chip; sessions without co-sponsors cost one chip).

As of earlier this month, the following proposals were being considered:

\* "Reactive or Interactive Journalism? Designing Entry Points for Citizens. Where Are the Lines?" This panel session plans to build

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## Lively South Carolina Forum Provokes Critical Discussion

By Ernest Wiggins  
University of South Carolina

The public journalism movement was critically examined during the second annual conference for the Center for Mass Communications Research at the University of South Carolina College of Journalism and Mass Communications Oct. 11 - 13.

The conference, which featured presentations by scholars from around the world, was marked by lively intersession discussion about definitions, processes and measurements - echoing the themes of the eight sessions convened during the "critical forum."

Featured speakers for the conference were Hodding Carter, president and CEO of the Knight Foundation, which has taken special interest in and provided resources for the implementation of public journalism projects; Jay Rosen, former director of the Project for Public Life and the Press, which led much of the inquiry into public journalism; and John Merrill, professor emeritus at the University of Missouri, a leading public scholar and ethicist. (Excerpts from the Carter, Rosen and Merrill speeches can be found inside this month's CJIG News.)

Carter urged continued vigilance among media scholars and practitioners in championing democratic processes and public

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## Can you host the mid-year workshop?

The Pew Center for Civic Journalism wants to sponsor another mid-year workshop in cooperation with CJIG and is looking for a place to have it.

The ideal location would have a university or college with a journalism program to serve as host, and at least one faculty member to serve as liaison. It also would be close to a good-sized airport and in a different part of the country than the previous two workshops (in other words, someplace other than the Midwest).

Last year, the Pew Center sponsored a mid-year workshop for CJIG in Wichita, in cooperation with Wichita State University. The workshop brought together an evenly balanced group of journalists and educators to discuss the latest civic journalism efforts. It also included discussions of how civic journalism can be taught.

The idea for the Wichita workshop

Continued on Page 2

# Baltimore: Altogether, it was excellent!

By Cheryl Gibbs  
CJIG co-chair, Earlham College

It was a very good year.

Building on the success of the mid-year workshop held in Wichita (see related article), the Civic Journalism Interest Group offered a successful preconvention workshop and a series of well-attended, well-received panels at the annual AEJMC convention in Baltimore in August.

## Pre-convention workshop

Our pre-convention workshop, "Teaching Civic Journalism: Getting Beyond Show and Tell," was extremely well attended and evaluations were very positive. A total of 31 people registered for the workshop, and many more dropped in during the day.

During the workshop, we discussed the wide variety of ways people are teaching civic journalism. We identified several key issues we need to address with respect to teaching civic journalism. Among those are where it should be placed in the curriculum, i.e., can aspects of civic journalism be taught to beginning students or is it strictly an "advanced" subject, and the persistent problem of defining exactly what civic journalism is. Then, in small group discussions, we developed a model for a teaching module on civic journalism and a collaborative learning model outlining a variety of ways in which a journalism class can work with a local newspaper to experiment with reporting about a specific civic problem. We were delighted with the level of cooperation we received from our co-sponsors, Media Management and Economics and Mass Communications Bibliographers. MME's teaching

### AEJMC Civic Journalism Interest Group News

is published quarterly by the Civic Journalism Interest Group of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. CJIG membership includes a subscription, which is also available for non-members; send \$5 donation and newsletter request to AEJMC, University of South Carolina, 1621 College St., Columbia, SC 29208.

CJIG co-chairs are Cheryl Gibbs, Earlham, and Jan Schaffer, Pew Center for Civic Journalism; vice-chair is Jack Morris, Adams State; secretary/newsletter editor is Kathy Campbell, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Newsletter submissions are welcome; please contact Kathy Campbell, (608) 250-5191 or via email at kbcampbe@facstaff.wisc.edu

chair, Ken Blake, was an active participant in planning and facilitating the workshop, and Mary Murphy of Mass Comm Bibliographers brought us a thorough civic journalism bibliography to distribute.

## Convention sessions

We were extremely pleased with both the quality of the presentations and the level of interest in our convention sessions. We had a good mix of academics and working journalists, all of whom had excellent ideas and experiences to contribute. Feedback from session participants was very positive, and on several occasions we had trouble getting people to leave the room after the session was over--they wanted to keep on talking.

We experimented with keeping presentations short (5 to 10 minutes) so that the sessions would be primarily conversational, with ample time for questions. This approach was received extremely well. We also experimented with rearranging the rooms so people sat in a circle, to make discussion easier. This, however, proved to be pretty unworkable -- too cumbersome and time-consuming.

With two exceptions (one panel early in the morning and another during the dinner hour), the sessions were extremely well attended, ranging from 6 at the early panel to 62 at the panel titled "Journalists and Community Interaction: Where Are the Lines?"

At our business meeting, we also created a succession of leadership that should carry us through the next few years--assuming the Civic Journalism Interest Group is renewed at the next AEJMC convention (our previous three-year renewal is up for renewal then). New officers include Cheryl Gibbs, Earlham, and Jan Schaffer, Pew Center for Civic Journalism, co-chairs; Jack Morris, Adams State, vice chair; Kathy Campbell, Wisconsin-Madison, secretary/newsletter editor; Carol Reese Dykers, Salem College, 1998-1999 paper competition chair; Dave Kurpius, Louisiana State, 1999-2000 paper competition chair.

## Mid-year venue needed

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originated with Wichita State Associate Professor Sharon Iorio. The Pew Center paid all speaker fees and hotel costs. Participants merely had to provide their own transportation and pay a nominal registration fee.

The first mid-year workshop was held at the University of Missouri in Columbia in March 1996, with Professor Ed Lambeth as coordinator.

Contact Jan Schaffer at the Pew Center, (202) 331-3200, (202) 327-6440 (fax), or email jans@pccj.org

# The Adventure of Public Journalism

By Jay Rosen  
New York University

Here's a new flash for you: as regards public journalism, I'm for it. I think it's fighting the good fight. I want to see it succeed. Whether it will or not, whether it has or not, whether it's a confused, misguided, wrongheaded or even dangerous development-- these are all open questions for me.

Still, I'm for it. I'm for it primarily because it recovers for journalism that sense of being part of the American experiment, which is to the movement's everlasting credit. Still, we should recognize that experimenters in America have gone awry time and again. Reformers and radicals, preachers and teachers, have often made things worse, rather than better, done damage when they wanted to do some good. No movement for change can ever be sure whether it's doing good, or undoing some greater good. What you can be certain of is that in trying to change things, you are in the American grain.

... Curiously, I don't think arguments make the best case for public journalism, although arguments are basically what I do. The idea doesn't really live at that level. It lives in experience, experiment, the ordeal of change. And that's what I want to focus on here: the *adventure* of public journalism. For I do believe the adventure has led to something good-- meaning: interesting, worth pursuing, heading in the right direction. But I also have my doubts, moments of gloom, and even an occasional, "what have we wrought?" Which is part of the adventure, too.

What I mean by the word adventure is this:

One way to test the worth of an idea is to subject it to criticism, analysis and investigation at the level of ideas--history, philosophy, social theory. Another way to test an idea is to put it "into play," in more and more public settings, and see what happens. One way is not better than another, necessarily. But they are different tests.

Whatever else might be said about it, public journalism is out there, circulating around, shaking things up in the press and the public sphere. It has been put into play and that means being put to an experiential test. The value of the idea, the wisdom of developing it, and the best criticisms of it are found in the adventures people had as they set out to do "public journalism."

Public journalism is . . . an argument about what the press can and should be doing, given the problem it faces. What does the argument say? Maybe this is what people are asking for when they say that there's no clear definition of public journalism. I've been hearing this complaint for years, so I sat down and wrote a definition. Mind you, I do not take this as

seriously as others do. But people seem to want it, so here's mine: Public journalism is an approach to the daily business of the craft that calls on journalists to: 1) address people as citizens, potential participants in public affairs, rather than victims or spectators; 2) help the political community act upon, rather than just learn about, its problems; 3) improve the climate of public discussion, rather than simply watch it deteriorate; and 4) help make public life go well, so that it earns its claim on our attention. If journalists can find a way to do these things, they may in time restore public confidence in the press, re-connect with an audience that has been drifting away, rekindle the idealism that brought *many* of them into the craft and contribute, in a more substantial fashion, to the health of American democracy.

That's the heart of the argument. But it's not really a good definition of the thing being argued for-- because, as I have said, the thing is many things, going on simultaneously. It began for me as a question. It became an experiment, a movement, a debate, a style of commitment, an upset in the hierarchy of influence. It also became a confluence with the movement for civic renewal, a resumption of a longer dialogue about the public and its perils, an intersection among various institutions, a repurposing of "public opinion" research, a quest for a higher realism in the press, a shared hope among some, and, finally, an adventure.

... For who knew it would happen like this? The adventure is not over, just as the American experiment is not over. But if we're going to understand it--as critics or supporters, watchers or doers--then we should see public, civic or community-connected journalism as a many-sided thing, not easily defined because it is not easily confined to one place in our minds.

(Jay Rosen is an associate professor of journalism at New York University and, from 1993 to 1997, directed the Project on Public Life and the Press, funded by the Knight Foundation. The preceding is excerpted from his remarks Oct. 12, 1998, at the University of South Carolina's Public Journalism: A Critical Forum. His e-mail is jr3@is2.nyu.edu)

## South Carolina Forum

Continued from Page 1

participation. Rosen urged continued experimentation' among media properties, regardless of what the experiment is called. And Merrill shared a cautionary note as the movement forges ahead, asking if individual liberty should be sacrificed in the pursuit of majoritarian goals. In addition, forty other scholars, including several international researchers, presented their research during the conference.

# Merrill: A Yet-Unreconstructed Libertarian

By John C. Merrill  
University of Missouri

I am a good example of a person who has long been tied to the concept of 18th century Enlightenment libertarianism. As some of you know I have for many years defended it as vigorously as possible against growing attacks. Many people have accused me of being one of the last of the fossilized libertarians--especially in the university. This may largely be true, but even I am changing.

... I have come to realize that I have been a conservative in my 18th century liberalism. I have tried to retain a theory of the press that has, I think, made American journalism the best in the world. Editorial self-determination was a concept I had early accepted and I have proceeded to build my own free press theory from it, recognizing all along the inherent social problems of such a theory. My main concern has been with what Isaiah Berlin has called "negative freedom," and I have thought there was no need to do something positive with this freedom. Having freedom from outside coercion has been good enough for me.

... The last part of the decade of the 1980s was a turning point, however undramatic, in my thinking. . . . During this time I began questioning Mill's ideas and agreeing more and more with those who saw little or no social utility for press freedom in its negative sense. Yet. . . the concepts of the Enlightenment still had a hold on me and I was reluctant to throw them out. Two great forces were clashing in my mind: the force of freedom and the force of responsibility. . . . Increasingly, people I respect in the academic world . . . were weighing in on the side of this new "public" journalism. And here I was--still floundering about between freedom and control between press autonomy and people's participation in the press. I realized that here, at the time of failing press credibility, was a positive concept--one that was intended to bring people together, not factionalize them, one that was intended to stress positive news, wholesome news, community-oriented news--all based on public journalistic desires, not on the whims and desires of the media managers. It was a step toward a "people's journalism." And it was exemplified by books and articles by Rosen and Merritt and a host of others, in and out of the academy. Okay, okay, I said. I want good, wholesome news too. I want sound, moral journalism just as much as do the public journalism people.

But, I said, I want the press people to control journalism, not the public. I still trusted the journalists to do a better job than the public in determining the content of journalism.

Since the mid-1990s I have been thinking about a new paradigm in journalism. In so doing I am both borrowing from history and anticipating the future. I am afraid I must agree with the public journalists that the Enlightenment ideas about freedom and individualism have failed and, as some have said, must be abandoned. Social stability and harmony--in short order--is replacing freedom as the lodestar of the press. . . . I have friends who see the future of journalism as developing toward more freedom, not less. They may be right, but I doubt it. . . . I believe that, as populations grow and social structures get more and more complex, order and social harmony will win out over the 18th century concern for individual freedom and its accompanying contentiousness. Don't misunderstand me. This is a prediction--not a great hope of mine. Although I see the handwriting on the wall and understand society's loss of faith in press libertarianism, I am not comfortable with this retreat from freedom.

Let me say that a kind of neo-authoritarianism appears to be just around the corner, one that enthrones social harmony and a spirit of cooperation and groupism. This neo-authoritarianism is being, and will be, imposed by the media themselves. So I am left standing in a kind of twilight zone--between freedom and social order--uncommitted to either as the major paradigm but still feeling a personal attachment to press libertarianism.

... In conclusion, let me present a vision of journalism as we go into the next century--a vision that I predicted in my 1974 book, The Imperative of Freedom, that, whether for good or evil, we will find ourselves marching in orderly and harmonious fashion into some kind of neo-authoritarianism under the banners of social responsibility.

Are we ready to march? Maybe not quite yet, but the time is coming in the new century. I certainly have not joined the developing ranks at this time, but the image of this Brave New World is gaining popularity. You may call me indecisive. Or--then--you may even call me wildly unrealistic in my prognostications. But, then, as a yet-unreconstructed libertarian, I take pride in my freedom to be indecisive and even wildly unrealistic.

(John C. Merrill is Professor Emeritus at the University of Missouri School of Journalism and author of The Imperative of Freedom (1974) and The Dialectic in Journalism: Toward a Responsible Use of Press Freedom (1989). The preceding is excerpted from his remarks Oct. 13, 1998, at the University of South Carolina's Public Journalism: A Critical Forum. His e-mail is John-Merrill@jmail.jour.missouri.edu)

# Civic Lessons Taught-and Lessons Learned

By Frank E. Fee Jr.  
Ohio University

Academics for some time have valued public journalism as a way to expose students to a deeper, more holistic look at community and civic practices. Some have integrated public journalism concepts in news courses to give students better understandings of the process of journalism, how it can relate to civic involvement, and how mainstream journalism needs to change to support vigorous public life. Other faculty have awakened students' understanding of community stakeholders through empathic curricula that immerse students in groups and organizations.

At Ohio University in Spring Quarter 1998, a public journalism course used these perspectives as starting points and showed that such a course also offers broad opportunities to develop interdisciplinary partnerships across campus. These partnerships enrich the curricula of all the partners, provide ways to experiment and test the limits of public journalism -- and journalism in general, and offer research agendas and opportunities across many disciplines.

Our course brought together students from newspaper and broadcast journalism, Web design, public relations, political science, ethics and philosophy. Next time, we hope to enroll students from several other disciplines as well. Besides continuing our broadcast partnership, we also will try to team with a research methods course to help track our activities. One can easily envision links with public policy, public opinion and political science courses, ethics classes, organizational communication and sociology courses.

The course was experimental in every sense; students were told at the first class not to take it if they had a low tolerance for equivocality. Ten weeks later, despite a meltdown or two, six graduate students and two undergrads emerged with a better understanding of the theory and practice of public journalism, and enthusiasm for applying its precepts to their own work in journalism and public relations.

Our course combined theory with doing. The study of the theory and philosophy that underlie public journalism guided our journalism, and doing informed our understanding and critique of the theory and philosophy. (The syllabus may be seen at: <http://oak.cats.ohiou.edu/~feef/PubJourn.html>)

The course also experimented with cross-media techniques to find ways to increase interactivity among all stakeholders. I wanted to extend the available technologies in a unified model: Print and broadcast journalists -- and PR practitioners -- in one effort, using the interactivity of the Web, telephone, e-mail and

listservs, live broadcasts and face-to-face interaction to create public journalism.

The primary goals of the course were (1) an understanding of the roots and theory of public journalism and a critique of this movement; (2) a public journalism project involving print and broadcast domains; (3) an understanding of the 21st century work environment featuring media convergence, interactivity and workplace teams; (4) a significant journalism project in which the students

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would identify an important issue, find and develop appropriate sources, scope coverage for fair, complete news reports, present the news, and help audiences in seeking solutions. Our journalism would report on a single issue or topic for 10 weeks in such a way that we informed *our* audience, and engaged members in conversation with us, with officials and our news sources, and with one another.

A Web site seemed the quickest route to a print platform for our journalism. The course got a huge boost when I approached Dr. Robert K. Stewart, webmaster for the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio, about setting up the page. Stewart was advising an interactive student television project that produced two or three live public affairs shows during the quarter. He suggested a partnership between the public journalism course and his students' interACTV-7 television program, which is carried on the Athens cable television station. My class provided the content and essentially produced the show, while the broadcast students put the show on the air and provided an on-air host to conduct studio interviews.

In our 10-week quarter, a lot had to happen fast at the very beginning. Defining our "community" as the Athens campus and its students, faculty, staff and administration, we made it Job One to identify an issue of broad community concern, preferably one that had yet to hit the headlines so that there would be minimal polarization and maximum opportunity for measured discussion. Before the second class, the students interviewed more than 200 students, faculty, staff, and administrators. Quality housing in Athens was the most frequently mentioned core concern across all groups and housing became our topic for the course. We then integrated expanding coverage on our Web journalism site with a weekly series of eight half-hour talk shows on facets of the housing issue, at all times seeking to empower audiences and develop a community conversation on the issue.

## Points to Ponder Before Spring Quarter Rolls Around Again

By Frank E. Fee Jr.  
Ohio University

The public journalism course I taught last year gave us a lot to think about as we retool for Spring Quarter 1999, and anyone contemplating such an offering might want to consider some of these points. In fact, I'd welcome comment and discussion on the following:

1. Ten weeks is a real pressure-cooker for an ambitious project like this. More time or less-broad goals may be better. It was particularly tough to do the theoretical and practical side in one quarter, but getting students to enlist for a two-course sequence might be impossible.

2. Critical mass is an issue with such an ambitious agenda. The small class was ideal for lively discussion, but we needed more than eight students to really carry off our operational goals. This time around, the class operated as a whole, with those experienced or oriented to specific project needs (e.g., webmaster, public relations, television production, reporting) becoming ad hoc team leaders for the rest of us. This kept everybody involved and everybody exhausted. Next time we may try either (a) specific project subteams or (b) assigning a team to be responsible for each week, and giving the other teams a breather for that week.

3. Future projects should include measurement of effects. Did we move the needle on housing? We can't really say. There was more talk about housing in the other local media at the end of the project than when we began, and perhaps we had an agenda-setting effect. Or perhaps we just grabbed a wave at the right time. Partnering with a research class would help answer some of those questions and enhance both courses.

4. It seemed inconsistent with public journalism to just produce one big bang -- a show or a news product -- at the end of the quarter. To fit our conception of what public journalism should be, we had to get on the air and on the Web early and build from there. We did it but that front-loaded some demands that were hard to meet. We had to be doing and thinking public journalism just as some were encountering the concept for the first time.

5. Determine ahead of time what you consider community but be prepared to change that definition at any time. For instance, our ascertainment was begun with the campus community (students, faculty, staff and administration) in mind. The minute a preponderance of these people said "housing" was the abiding issue, we had to face that the community boundary had just expanded to all of Athens County.

6. Be prepared to mount a fairly extensive public relations campaign just to let people know what you are doing, and to mobilize town meetings, both real and virtual. We had two "town meetings," but they were small, dorm affairs. Next time there should be more, earlier in the project. This raises budget implications.

7. Consider finding an archivist or someone to document the class for your post-mortems. (A partnership with ethnographic studies for a case study?) We ended up taping the last class, which was a roundtable critique of the class.

I also built in an assignment for a paper that asked the students to critique the course and suggest ways to reconfigure or reconceptualize it. A tape will be produced that integrates that final class with some of the material taped during the television shows, but I wish we'd been able to put everything on tape, sort of a "Truman Show."

8. One student pointed out there may be an incompatibility, perhaps more apparent than real, between public journalism (in-depth, long) and Web journalism (short stories, browser-oriented, non-linear and sequential). That's something that needs examination and offers another research question, either for someone in the class or for another partner.

9. Be prepared to deal with operational and ethical issues as media styles bump against one another. We had to resolve collisions between newspaper and broadcast styles and traditional print and Web styles, not to mention public journalism vs. traditional newswork. Some of these were perceived differences, such as whether to use of "ringers" to stimulate phone calls to the television show. Others were real.

10. Be prepared to overcome resistance to cooperation. I had a superb colleague in Bob Stewart, who led the way in creating many of the partnerships, and our dean strongly encourages interdepartmental cooperation, which helped a lot. Still, some of the partners were less enthusiastic.

The so-called "liberalism of the academy" won't preclude resistance to public journalism, even among partners. We had partners whose particular goals made them part of the team but who were at times openly antagonistic toward public journalism.

We also found friction when students who had studied and internalized the public journalism ethic worked in harness with students who, while not antagonistic, were not schooled in the concepts. For instance, one of the broadcast students loudly criticized the public journalists for not breaking away from the plan to pursue what basically was a noisy sideshow.

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# Muddling through to a worthy middle

By Hodding Carter III  
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Civic journalism says that journalists need to rediscover the total community, listen to the total community, cover the total community and advocate for the total community.

It says that the people who live in a neighborhood know as much, and probably more, about what is wrong with it and what might be done to fix it than city officials and certified experts.

It says that good reporting only begins with data bases and phone calls -- it is made more accurate and relevant by person-to-person contact with those whose lives you impinge upon and alter with your coverage.

... It says that what any damn fool knows about events in and around his own life is equally true about public issues: that the armies of polar opposition do not encompass all the possible points of view or solutions to those issues. That indeed, since total victory in our form of government is as highly unlikely as it is undesirable, most outcomes will be outcomes of the middle. And that helping to find that compromised, compromising muddle of a middle is not a dishonorable task and indeed is a worthy one.

Forget the critics, who have never seemed to grasp even the most rudimentary of civic journalism's basics. This is not the same thing as mindlessly throwing away news judgment to give the people what they say they want. That form of patronizing contempt for the public and the public interest is unforgivable, and journalism, like politicians, already patronizes the public too frequently. Instead, civic journalism rests its case on the contention that our system of government and its underlying principles are too valuable to be allowed to atrophy -- for reasons of self-interest as well as for the common good.

... By itself, public journalism won't reverse a single fundamental negative trend afflicting American media today. Rupert Murdoch will still practice slasher tabloid journalism. Major media corporations will still emphasize their profit margins more than their news holes. ... Civic journalism does not -- and must not -- promise a quick fix or a sudden explosion in civic participation, circulation, love between our brothers and our sisters -- or ethical journalism. What it should emphatically insist is that it took daily journalism and American communities about a half century to get into their present fix, and nothing is going to extricate them overnight.

It should say to the nay-sayers in the business and in the academy that if instant analysis is your bag,

there's always room on television for one more talking head. But if you're interested in finding out whether civic journalism can produce results of value to both journalism and community, give it a decade or two before pronouncing final judgment.

For a man who loved and loves daily print journalism more than any other vocation and still thinks of his years in Mississippi as the most significant of his life, civic journalism's chief attraction is that it offers a chance for journalists to reclaim their central place in community -- and in the process to help the people refashion healthier communities for themselves.

That's not a half-bad mission for journalism, today and in the years to come. It sure as the devil beats the path we're on today.

(Hodding Carter III is president and CEO of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. The preceding remarks are excerpted from his keynote address on Oct. 11, 1998, at the University of South Carolina's conference, Public Journalism: A Critical Forum.)

## New Orleans

Continued from Page 1

on last year's lively session on where the lines should be drawn in interaction between journalists and the community.

- "Mapping the Swamp: How to Penetrate a Community's Uncharted Civic Layers," a session on "civic mapping."

- "The Trauma Trilogy: Tracking the Shockwaves that hit Victims, Reporters and the Community." How journalists are trying to find more sensitive ways to cover human violence and natural disasters.

- "Can You Do Good by Doing Well? Can Civic Journalism Overcome Market Forces and Journalistic Conventions?" How economic concerns and journalistic conventions can pose challenges to civic journalism.

- "What is Civic Journalism? The Emerging Definitions and Practices." How the philosophy of civic journalism gets translated into practice.

- "Television: Real Time or Real Values?" How television news directors are winning back viewers with programming that builds on citizen dialogues and involves citizens in problem solving.

- "Civic or Subversive? What is Responsible -- and Responsive -- Journalism for the Student Press?" Can the student press, especially at the high school level, practice good civic journalism without compromising journalistic integrity and independence?

## More Points to Ponder

Continued from Page 6

12. Recognize that even with high goals and lofty purpose, it is very easy to slip into comfortable journalistic routines and responses: traditional cockfight journalism in which contestants are goaded into confrontation by journalists who then report the confrontation they have helped fuel. One show illustrated this: It was the program I was most leery of because the topic was access to housing and the students had found three students--a lesbian, a foreign student, and a student who uses a wheelchair--who each promised to tell stories of access problems. A fourth guest was a black faculty member, who had said she had not felt discrimination in Athens housing but she could talk of experiences in the South. Our broadcast partners thought we were finally going to have a "SHOW!" I stressed that we had to make sure none of our guests dealt with hypothetical or third-person experiences, that we risked creating or exacerbating problems if we didn't stick to real, personal experiences. But when the lights and cameras came on, none of the guests related a problem. Ten minutes into the show, the producer came breathlessly to the booth where I was sitting and demanded, "We need you, none of the guests has a problem!" In print journalism, we could just go to another story--fill with wire--but live television, I was suddenly reminded, is another environment altogether. I pointed out that public journalism is about agreement and success as well as disagreement and problems. Here was our chance to show it. But we still sweated to come up with questions to feed to our host for the next 17 minutes. In the end, I think the show inadvertently affirmed our guests as members of the community, not as "others." So we may have achieved our purpose in spite of ourselves. However, we should have planned for agreement and consensus, and framed questions that

responded to good as well as evil.

13. There needs to be a constant self-evaluation, analysis, and reassessment. Is what we're doing consistent with the philosophy? We need to ask, "What would Merritt or Rosen or Habermas do now?" This can provide innumerable "teachable moments," as well as a framework for more formal critiques.

(Frank E. Fee Jr. is the Knight Professor of Editing, E. W. Scripps School of Journalism, Ohio University. The foregoing was adapted from his panel presentation on teaching at the University of South Carolina's forum on public journalism on Oct. 11, 1998. He can be reached via email at [feef@oak.cats.ohiou.edu](mailto:feef@oak.cats.ohiou.edu))

## New Pew materials available

The Pew Center for Civic Journalism is continuing its quest to track civic journalism efforts and to create materials for classroom and newsroom use.

A new case studies book focuses on civic journalism efforts throughout the country, including "The Good Community," a look at ways to improve the community to curb teen violence in Springfield, Mo.; a "Leadership Challenge" series in Peoria, Ill.; an effort to revitalize the lagging economy in Binghamton, N.Y.; an election project in Portland, Maine; and a series of projects in St. Paul, Minn.

The new, improved web site has a search feature and lists information about workshops ([www.pewcenter.org](http://www.pewcenter.org)). A new video, "Tune In Your Community, Turn On Your Viewers," focuses on local television news operations in Dallas, Madison, Wis.; San Francisco; Portland, Maine; and Tallahassee, Fla.

To order copies of Pew materials or for more information about the center's activities, contact The Pew Center for Civic Journalism, 1101 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Suite 420, Washington, DC 20036. (202) 331-3200. Fax: (202) 347-6440; [news@pccj.org](mailto:news@pccj.org)

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Hodding Carter in the middle

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