

Static

The Newsletter of the Radio-Television Journalism Division of AEJMC October 1997

Chicago Convention A Success For Division

by BILL DAVIE
1996-97 RTVJ Head

Chicago 1997 was a big convention for our RTVJ division, and the numbers reflected that fact. There were more than 400 people attending the panel sessions, pre-convention workshop and off-site Business Meeting and Distinguished Broadcast Journalism Educator Award ceremony.

That off-site session was a personal highlight due to the hard work of new RTVJ Head Don Heider (Texas) who set up the event at the Museum of Broadcast Communication, and Rob Wicks (Arkansas), Distinguished Broadcast Journalism Educator Selection Committee Chair. Wicks along with Bill Small (Fordham) presented the teaching award to a most deserving recipient, Travis Linn (Nevada-Reno).

Linn's acceptance speech resonated in the room as he voiced concerns about the trivialization of news. . .the use of human lives for entertainment. . .the use of raw material as a 'production exercise.'" It was small wonder we applauded his criticisms of the TV news formulas that "disrespect viewers and have nothing to do with us as people," such as "Team Coverage."

Barbara Cochran, the new RTNDA president said the gap between the public and journalists is due, in part, to a failure to explain why journalists do what they do. But how can we explain why stories of sexual misconduct and violence lead the newscasts and de-

serve a higher priority than public policy debate? If the work of journalism educators is necessary in order for the journalism profession to maintain its high standards, then we must share in the dialogue with the professionals.

The RTNDA Board of Directors approved six new positions on the Foundation's Board of Trustees. We should see that at least one, if not more educators take their seat among the trustees of the Radio-Television News Directors' Foundation. RTVJ also should fulfill its obligation to participate in the bi-annual meetings of the RTNDA Board of Directors. It is through such efforts that we realize our division's goal of building a better bridge to the profession we serve.

Credit Where Credit Is Due

Now a new academic year is underway, but we cannot fail to thank the people who have made 1997 a success. First, I commend Research Chair Joe Russomanno (Arizona State), who made 1997 an outstanding year for our research efforts. He expanded the judges' pool to 25 jurors increasing their geographic and academic diversity, and orchestrated the success of our research sessions where 19 papers were presented at the AEJMC annual convention.

I also wish to thank Teaching Standards Chair Jeanne Norton Rollberg (Arkansas-Little Rock) for her contribution to our program sessions on teaching, and RTVJ's new Vice Head and Programming Chair Jim Upshaw

(Oregon) who handled the division's Professional Freedom and Responsibility activities with a remarkable sense of leadership and follow through on program topics.

Of course, much of the credit for RTVJ's success in Chicago belongs to Don Heider (Texas-Austin) whose sense of programming earned RTVJ the most funding for guest speakers of all 16 AEJMC divisions, and helped increase our attendance. Under his leadership as division head, RTVJ will continue to build better bridges to the professional community.

Finally, if it were not for the hard work of Secretary/Editor Charlie Tuggle, his Associate Secretary/Editor and Webmaster Larry Burkum, former RTVJ Head Bill Knowles as well as the other division officers, we would not be congratulating ourselves as we are today and looking forward to working together to raise the bar a notch for the coming year and conventions in Dallas and Baltimore.



RTNDA Board Pushes Legislative Agenda

by BILL DAVIE

Southwestern Louisiana

Record-breaking attendance and a new emphasis on policy-making in Washington D.C. highlighted the RTNDA Board of Directors meeting in New Orleans. The annual convention broke the 3,000 mark in attendance, and next year's event appears to be another record breaker with more floor space reserved for exhibits in San Antonio than ever before in RTNDA history.

RTNDA President Barbara Cochran is still enjoying a honeymoon of sorts with the Board, which allocated news funds for her to continue lobbying lawmakers for the repeal of the personal attack rule, the protection of the ENG spectrum, and other issues of importance to radio-television journalists.

The RTNDA Board meeting was not without fireworks, however, when the issue of increasing diversity among

the RTNDF's Board of Trustees was raised. Will Wright, News Director, WWOR-TV of Secaucus, New Jersey objected after the Board nominated NBC's Jane Pauley to become the next trustee of the Foundation, and recommended former RTNDA Chair Bill Yeager to fill an unexpired term. Wright said that the Board should make good on its pledge to increase diversity and was joined by Gary Wordlaw, Vice President-News for WJLA-TV.

At the post-convention meeting, RTNDA directors approved expanding the number of trustees guiding the foundation from 17-to-23, with Wright reminding the nominating committee not to ignore people of color and voices from educational institutions.

Incoming RTNDA Chairwoman, Lucy Himstedt Riley of WSFA-TV, Montgomery, Alabama, took the gavel from Mike Cavender who was applauded by the Board and honored with

a glass statue of a golfer. Cavender recently moved from Tampa, Florida, to become the Vice President of News for WUSA-TV, Washington, D.C.

Riley reaffirmed her commitment to review the RTNDA Code of Ethics and appointed Cavender as chair of the committee to oversee that review. At the June meeting, Cochran called attention to issues not addressed in the RTNDA code, such as "parachute reporting," where stand-ups are performed without the benefit of covering the news behind the backdrop.

The theme of this year's convention might well have been "crisis in credibility" with the attention given to the decline in public confidence in journalism. Cochran cited three studies seeking to get at the source of the problem and recommend possible solutions, including one by the Pew Center and another by the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

Panel Examines What's Right, Wrong With Broadcast Journalism

by BILL DAVIE

Southwestern Louisiana

News directors and professors in broadcast journalism at the annual RTNDA Educator's breakfast in New Orleans discussed ways to enhance their mutual investment in the quality of graduates entering the radio-television industry.

A panel of eight speakers, chaired by David Guerra of the University of Arkansas, Little Rock, gave individual "takes" on what is going right and wrong with college broadcast journalism programs. Gary Hanson, News Director of WKBN-TV, Youngstown, Ohio, said he knows of no other profession where the academy finds itself in a position of following rather than leading the industry.

Professor Sonya Duhe of the University of South Carolina cited her school's new senior year program, which gives five-hour credits for a

daily newsroom experience, as having the potential of being a leader for both the industry and academic programs. Professor Luett Hanson of Kent State University agreed that a daily newsroom experience provides a solid foundation for learning writing and reporting skills, but many students have part-time or full-time jobs that make it difficult to spend five days a week to the university newsroom.

Professor Bob Papper of Ball State University cited the RTVJ panel on the Jane Pauley report concerning broadcast journalism education, and said that his school was working in conjunction with the Indiana University to establish a model curriculum to address some of the criticisms contained in the Pauley report.

WDSU-TV News Director Kurt Davis emphasized the importance of the internship experience, recommending that professors establish goals and

guidelines to ensure internships are to be a profitable learning experience. Davis was joined by Tom Newberry of NBC-TV Nightside in that recommendation.

In addition to strong writing courses, Hanson recommended that broadcast journalism faculty should not overlook the value of current events quizzes as a means of teaching students not only how to cover news, but knowing something about the stories they cover.

During audience interaction at the breakfast, Bob Priddy of the Missouri Network said "steam was rising from his collar" due to the lack of emphasis given to radio news by panel speakers. South Carolina's Duhe answered by saying she had mentioned radio was part of their senior year program, and other faculty members said radio played an important part in their curriculum.

Head Notes

by DON HEIDER
RTVJ Head

I didn't expect good things. That was my attitude as I sent off for New Orleans and my first RTNDA convention in 5 (or 6?) years. My last convention had been utterly depressing. News directors were depressed, big J journalism was on a leave of absence, educators were mercilessly criticized by the pros.

One of the good things about approaching anything with low expectations is there's room for surprise. This year, I was surprised. The convention program was more extensive than I remembered, and although some panels were still, as one friend put it: "vacuous," others sparked thoughtful discussion. As I spoke with news directors from around the country, I was encouraged. Many were thoughtful and well-meaning, interested in where broadcast journalism is headed, and not only about how to get more female viewers. If you didn't attend AEJ in Chicago, we are now in a new era of stronger relations with RTNDA and its new President, Barbara Cochran.

As I look to what I'd like our division to work toward in the next year and beyond, I have several goals. First is to work toward some national program of continuing education for broadcast journalists. Other professions, such as law, medicine and accounting, require their constituency to go through periodic training to insure continued competency. As a profession we've traditionally offered little in the way of continuing education. Poynter and other institutions have provided some excellent frameworks, but on a fairly small scale. Each of our institutions could be instrumental in organizing and hosting regional continuing education for reporters, photographers, producers and news managers. This already takes place on several cam-

puses. I have appointed Bill Silcock from Missouri to head up a task force to look into this issue. He'd welcome any feedback you have on the issue. Andy Cassells, long time Washington Bureau Chief for Cox, has also volunteered to help in the effort.

The second major area I'd like to address is the issue of why broadcast news organizations almost uniformly will not pay interns. Almost every newspaper across the country, from large to very small, pays its interns. Budget arguments alone simply do not hold water. By not paying interns our industry is participating in a form of economic discrimination, i.e. only students who can afford to take time off of work can afford to do internships. In fact, most students end up paying us high tuition fees for the privilege of working for multi-million dollar conglomerates for free. I've asked Ava Greenwell from Northwestern to help with a task force looking into this issue, and also why entry level wages in broadcast news seem to remain artificially low. If you would like to work on this task force, please drop me an e-mail at DonHeider@mail.utexas.edu.

Any and all input is welcome. Mark your calendars now for Dallas for February 21st, and for Baltimore, August 5-8th, 1998.

Position Announcement

The University of North Texas Department of Journalism is seeking applications for a tenure-track position of assistant professor in broadcast news for spring 1998. The applicant should possess a terminal degree (ABD or doctoral candidate with professional experience considered). Professional experience required, and college-level teaching or equivalent preferred. Competitive salary and benefits.

UNT, the fourth-largest university in Texas with more than 25,000 students, is in Denton, part of the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area—ranked eighth in broadcast market size. The journalism department, offering seven sequences and master's studies, is nationally accredited.

Send a current vita, three letters of recommendation and transcripts to:

Dr. Mitchell Land, chair
Search Committee
Department of Journalism
University of North Texas
P.O. Box 305280
Denton, TX 76203-5280

DEADLINE: October 20, 1997
UNT is an ED/AA/ADA Employer

ARE YOU SITTING ON A GOOD IDEA?

Well, are you hiding one anywhere? The creative thinking of RTVJ members can help in creating panels or other programs for next summer's AEJMC convention in Baltimore. Sessions may address any topic of interest to our members. Each proposal should include a suggested title, your name, e-mail address, phone number, and a brief description of the session including proposed panelists and possible co-sponsoring groups within AEJMC. Please send your suggestions by December 1 to:

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The “News of Your Choice” Experiment in the Twin Cities: What Kind of Choice Did Viewers Get?

by

KATHLEEN A. HANSEN
University of Minnesota

JOAN CONNER
Regis University

On a late summer evening in 1994, television news viewers were given a startling choice. Eight minutes into the 10:00 p.m. newscast on CBS-owned WCCO-TV/Channel 4 in Minneapolis-St. Paul, the co-anchors announced that if viewers wanted the full story on the weather, they should stay tuned to Channel 4. But if they wanted a ten-second weather report followed by more news, viewers were encouraged to switch to KLGT-TV/Channel 23, a UHF outlet. Thus began an experiment dubbed “News of Your Choice” in the 14th largest television market in the United States.

This paper examined the “News of Your Choice” experiment and attempted to answer the following research questions:

—what, if anything, did the Channel 23 newscast add to the market for local television news?

—how did this large-market station design its newscasts to take advantage of the innovation of “choice” and “interactivity”?

The study examined newscast content, story treatment, sources, and overall newscast characteristics using a content analysis of the news broadcasts and an interview with WCCO’s then-general manager, John Culliton. This study has implications for the unfolding digital broadcast era that is just now beginning to take shape. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 and subsequent decisions by the Federal Communications Commission will govern the allocation of as many as six additional channels to each broadcast license holder. What will broadcasters do with these additional channels? How will this additional spectrum space be used? The *News of Your Choice* experiment may provide insight into how local broadcasters will address these questions in the near future.

During the life of this experiment, WCCO bought a 35-minute block of time on KLGT for cash and one minute of commercial time that KLGT could sell during its portion of the newscast. *News of Your Choice* was a low-tech experiment with designing an *interactive* newscast. After positive viewer response to the test broadcasts, WCCO managers launched *News of Your Choice* as a permanent feature of the 10:00 newscast starting in January 1995. After some tinkering with the format, the KLGT newscast provided an almost entirely unique news program, with just the final

closing story simulcast on both stations. News managers decided to use the Channel 23 time to do a totally different news program to experiment to see what would hold the audience. Anchors on the two stations provided extensive indexing of what was coming up next on each program. The experiment ended in December of 1995 after a precipitous slide in WCCO’s overall ratings in the 10:00 time slot, due mostly to the poor lead-ins from CBS network programming. Based on a review of the relevant literature regarding local television news content, resource allocation, and audience uses of TV news, we hypothesized that:

H1: Channel 23 would have a larger proportion of human interest stories, a larger proportion of non-local stories, and a lower story treatment index score than Channel 4 or Channel 5 (KSTP-TV, the ABC affiliate used as the “control” for this study);

H2: All three channels would rely most heavily on people and documents from official sources.

H3: A larger proportion of news stories on all three stations would be devoted to human interest or sensationalism topics than to public affairs topics.

We studied the 10:00 p.m. newscasts of the three local stations (WCCO, KLGT and “control” KSTP) during the fall of 1995. All newscasts were 35 minutes in length. Newscasts from seven non-consecutive weekdays were taped in their entirety. Each newscast was analyzed to determine the amount of time devoted to news, sports, weather, banter, cross- and self-indexing, ads, and miscellaneous material. Each news segment was further analyzed story-by-story using a variety of content coding categories. A total of 421 news stories was included in the study.

All the hypotheses were supported. The study found that Channel 23 actually provided the largest total number of minutes of news in their newscast (1,020), with the largest average number of news items per newscast (24). They also had the largest number of minutes devoted to advertising. Channel 23 provided the shortest weather and sports segments. The extra time provided by the Channel 23 newscast was primarily filled with material from network SNG sources and human interest stories from outside the local geographic area. Local stories were essentially absent on Channel 23, and they provided the least public affairs content.

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“News of Your Choice” research paper

continued from page 4

The material that did run on Channel 23 was not widely duplicated on the other channels. Their unique stories tended to be on human interest topics, and from network SNG feeds. Channel 23 allocated statistically significantly fewer resources to their newscast than did Channels 4 or 5. Culliton admitted that Channel 23 producers were able to do a second newscast on the cheap, but it didn't seem that way to the uncritical viewer because the newscast still had all the typical elements of a television broadcast. The difference was that none of those elements was locally produced. Channel 23 used the extra time in their newscast taken from sports and weather to add advertising, news and self-indexing. Channel 4 provided longer weather and sports segments, perhaps because they consciously or unconsciously acknowledged that there was a larger overall newshole counting the stories on Channel 23. It appears the producers of Channel 4 and 23 broadcasts actually did redesign the nature of the individual station newscasts because of the combination of the two.

As suggested by the previous literature, when the producers in this experiment were faced with an expanded newshole, they did not increase their staff to fill the additional time with an equivalent amount of local news. Instead, they opted for a rip and read model, pulling material from network feeds and providing lots of soft human inter-

est content. Culliton said that from an execution standpoint, the experiment was a success, but the interactive part of the experiment was intimidating for people. News managers thought the audience wanted interactivity, and this is why they so heavily promoted the "choice" idea and provided a great deal of cross-indexing to the content on each station. Channel 4 managers knew their 10:00 newscast had a poor showing with younger viewers, and part of their intention in designing this interactive experiment was to attract those viewers. However, Channel 4 managers launched another interactive venture around this same time, an early precursor to their now-successful Channel 4000 computer Web site. This was to eventually become the true interactive medium the television news viewers were looking for.

Previous research has indicated that television is an essentially passive medium, and that media use is casual, habitual and semi-attentive. The News of Your Choice experiment may have been working at cross-purposes with the audience's preferred use of television (especially the older viewers who were the core of WCCO's viewership). The News of Your Choice experiment added national and international human interest stories, but did not expand the coverage of local or regional issues.



Editor's Note: This is a summary of the RTVJ Division Top Faculty Paper from the 1997 AEJMC Convention.

Convention Panelists Say Broadcast News Interns Should Be Paid, But Likely Won't Be

by ROBERT PAPPER
Ball State University

Most of the panelists participating in "Making Internships Pay" agreed that students should receive money for their internships. But how to pay them, how much to pay them, and the likelihood of payment happening on a widespread basis remain unclear.

Tom Bier, former RTNDA Chairman and news director at WISC-TV in Madison, Wisconsin always pays his interns, but he only has two per year. He said he selects from a group nominated by the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Bier said he thinks all interns should get paid because it's only fair.

On the other side, Meg Sauer, news director at WSBT-TV in South Bend, Indiana, pays no interns and doesn't plan to change. In her view, stations provide a valuable learning experience for students and the students don't make the kind of contribution to the station that warrants payment.

Darlene Hill, reporter and anchor at WFLD-TV in Chicago, served an unpaid internship in Columbus, Ohio, and her Fox-affiliated station does not pay interns. But Hill said

she thinks stations should pay interns, especially as they learn more and can help the news operation.

Ava Thompson Greenwell, assistant professor at Northwestern's Medill School of Journalism, said she feels strongly that interns should be paid and says that all their students are required to spend a quarter off campus at an internship—for which the students are paid around \$500. Greenwell noted, however, that the students must register—and pay for a quarter's tuition in order to take the internship.

Mike Hoeflerlin, director of the Journalism Career Center at the University of Missouri School of Journalism, also said interns should be paid, but said he agreed with others that the present situation is unlikely to change given supply and demand.

The author, who moderated the panel, noted in a study he's completing that internships are regulated by state law and that those state laws vary widely. For example, the practice of giving an intern a small stipend is legal in some states but illegal in others, and even who's eligible for internships varies from state to state.

High-Tech News Reporting Produces Lively Discussion

by JIM UPSHAW
Oregon

If a hidden camera had taped one session at the Chicago AEJMC convention, it would have found police, journalists and scholars engaged in a vigorous discussion of—hidden cameras! Helicopters, too!

“Crimes, Choppers and Electronic Surveillance” focused on TV’s use of technologies that help—or at least hype—the news process, and that can lead to questionable role-mixing between journalists and police. Sponsored by the RTVJ and Communication Technology & Policy divisions, the session featured half a dozen practitioners and scholars of high-tech news.

The panelists were veteran Denver helicopter pilot Mike Silva; WISH-TV special projects manager Clayton Taylor; broadcast journalist Bob Lissit of Syracuse; news researcher Bill Davie of Southwestern Louisiana; Paul Jenkins, news affairs chief of the Chicago police department, and Thom Johnson, helicopter reporter for WMAQ-TV in the Windy City.

“Technology is ethics-neutral,” noted Lissit of Syracuse, an ex-network-producer and authority on hidden cameras. But he warned that how journalists use technology may vary widely, often testing ethical limits. Perhaps the best-known recent example was the Food Lion case, in which Lissit, a paid consultant to the supermarket chain helped secure a verdict and judgment against ABC for its employees’ undercover tactics.

There were other provocative examples. One was a much-praised expose of abuses of the mentally retarded; the hidden-camera story by WISH-TV, Indianapolis, moved the state government to quick action. WISH’s Taylor said he hews to a two-step standard of appropriateness for hidden cameras: (1) Is this story important? (2) Is there any other way of getting it? He said that in his station’s retarded-home story, most facts already were clear but the hidden lens provided viewers with dramatic proof of verbal and physical violence inflicted on patients.

As for civic duty, USL’s Bill Davie described a study indicating that—as

in the Rodney King case—hidden-camera footage can go against authorities. NBC “Dateline” reported on an inquiry into Louisiana’s drug forfeiture law. The TV magazine’s hidden camera showed 17 people who were arrested and had property seized while driving through the state. After the story aired, Davie and two other researchers found that only 37 percent of Louisianans (143 randomly selected residents) supported the forfeiture law; more than half credited “Dateline” with reporting the seizure problem fairly.

In a different vein, a Las Vegas TV helicopter was deployed last spring as a noisemaker to help police mask their movements in a standoff. A station even furnished cops with TV gear so they could pose as journalists seeking to interview a barricaded gunman (who quickly saw through the scam). Videotaped excerpts of the incident—embedded in an ethical critique by one Vegas station’s commentator—drew groans at the session. Some complained of a blurring of lines between journalistic and police functions.

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Taking Heat Over Principle:

Journalists Fear Speaking Freely on Issues of Principle

by HUBERT BROWN
Syracuse

Carol Marin says, “The viewers get it.” In other words, they understood why she had to leave WMAQ Television in Chicago after the station hired talk-show host Jerry Springer to do on-air commentaries.

Marin spoke as part of a panel discussion titled, “Taking Heat Over Principle” during the AEJMC Convention in Chicago. Journalism educators nearly filled the room.

Joining Marin in the panel discussion were Deborah Potter of the Poynter Institute, Dow Smith Syracuse University, and Joe Russomanno of Arizona State University. The author moderated the discussion.

Marin resigned from WMAQ in May after saying she would not sit at the same news desk with Springer, whose show Marin considered an example of the worst that television has to offer. During and after the well-publicized

row, Marin received more than 1,000 letters of support from viewers. She also said ratings for WMAQ newscasts dropped after her resignation and that of her co-anchor Ron Magers, and those ratings haven’t recovered. She said her experience gave her hope that viewers would support journalists who stood on principle, and against the erosion of professional integrity.

Russomanno presented the results of his study on freedom of expression in the newsroom, which revealed that a substantial number of television reporters were afraid to speak freely to superiors in the newsroom on issues of principle.

Potter said the number of potential conflicts seems to be increasing, saying there’s real dissatisfaction with the direction of television news. Short of resigning from a station, Potter encouraged broadcast journalists to seek out

‘Principles’ cont. on page 9

News of the Future:

Preparing Students for Media Convergency

by CHRIS ALLEN

Nebraska-Omaha

Convergence of the media is a concept debated among teachers and practitioners today, but one panelist at an RTVJ pre-conference workshop said he sees it as media divergence.

Steve Kovsky, radio news director for PC Week magazine, said he sees the media diverging. He pointed out that PC Week is no longer just a magazine, but also publishes a web site, and included in that web site are audio and video stories. In effect, he said, PC Week has diverged into three other areas.

The pre-conference workshop was held at Chicagoland TV, the cable television operation owned by the Tribune Company. About 20 attendees were given a tour of the facility, located in Oak Brook in suburban DuPage county west of Chicago. CLTV operates on all cable systems in the Greater Chicago area. News Director Jim Disch told the conference he has about 70 editorial employees.

CLTV airs live half-hour newscasts at least seven times a day, repeating each one until the next live cast. If a story needs updating during that time, the taped segment is covered with a live segment presenting the new information.

In addition, the cable news operation produces a nightly hour-long sports program, a weekly cooking and restaurant review program, a weekly business report focusing on Chicago area industries and businesses, and a jobs program. Businesses advertising in the Chicago Tribune want ads can, for a surcharge, run a bottom-third help wanted ad on the jobs program as well. Disch said that within three weeks of the debut of that program, all 70 availabilities had been sold, in addition to regular advertisements.

CLTV draws on Tribune reporters for their expertise on some stories. A camera on the fourth floor of Tribune Tower, in the paper's newsroom, lets anchors question reporters about stories, adding depth to the TV coverage. Disch said Tribune reporters have been good about cooperating with CLTV, but they are not forced to go on camera if they choose not to.

Several Tribune editors and reporters are also regulars on the sports program, cooking show, business report and jobs program. In those cases, they come to the CLTV studios in Oak Brook.

Disch said CLTV has had an impact on the Tribune.

"In several advertisements for reporters and editors," he said, "the Tribune has run a line that says 'Television experience a plus.'"

University of Missouri Broadcast Journalism chair Roger

Gafke said he has begun teaching the school's broadcast reporting course as a web reporting course. After the first semester of reporting for the web instead of solely for radio, Gafke said students came out just as prepared for broadcast reporting as if they had worked at the radio station.

"Their skills were basically the same as those coming out of the class that reported for radio," he said. "In fact, the web students showed a slightly better ability at getting multiple sources for their stories."

Gafke said he plans to continue modifying the course to prepare students for broadcast and web reporting.

Disch acknowledged that web experience would be good. He said CLTV is producing a web page, and he's requiring about 20 of his editorial personnel to learn web production.

That's the type of diversion Kovsky talked about. Kovsky said PC Week's web site gets about 100,000 hits a week just on the audio portion. Kovsky was named to his position earlier this year. He had been a writer and editor, and had some prior radio experience.

The University of Nevada-Reno has also been an innovator in preparing students to report for a variety of media. Travis Linn teaches course that bring together students from computer science and pairs them with journalism students to produce informational web pages. The intent was to have the journalism students provide the content and the computer science the technical expertise, but he said the relationships became more symbiotic than that.

Lynn presented a list of things he learned from teaching the class, including:

- Focus on content before coding.
- Look at the utility of the information and how to make it accessible.
- Overtly teach teamwork and roles.
- Schedule regular program demonstrations by students so they have occasional deadlines.
- Have a system of peer evaluations at scheduled intervals.
- Have clearly stated protocols and demand they be followed.
- Emphasize and demand detailed record-keeping.
- And finally, "This is a hell of a lot of fun."

As the session wrapped up, Disch made one last plea to the audience for producers.

"I want producers," he said. "I can bring in reporters with five, six, seven years of experience. But only two of my producers have more than a year. If I can find one with more than two years of experience it's pretty good."

Panelists Provides Tips for Teaching Ethics

by JEANNE ROLLBERG
Arkansas-Little Rock

An AEJMC convention panel on "Teaching Broadcast Journalism Ethics in Tabloid Times" yielded thoughtful information about various aspects of the news business.

The director of the Poynter Institute of Media Studies ethics programs, Bob Steele, emphasized the teaching of broadcast journalism ethics is best handled by showing positive role models and minimizing news situations in which poor decisions were made. He showed examples of well-handled television news stories from local markets.

Professor Mitchell Land of the University of North Texas provided a useful philosophical framework about teaching issues related to the Food Lion case. Land uses media ethics in a graduate seminar and presented his

syllabus exercises. Using the Potter Box technique, students are asked to identify the philosophies demonstrated by the main actors involved.

Dr. Meg Moritz of the University of Colorado in Boulder suggested that so-called tabloid topics that garner significant news coverage often speak to unresolved issues in the society, and that they can be useful tools in that way. Examples given included the O.J. Simpson case (issues: racism, spousal abuse, mixed marriages, etc.), the JonBenet Ramsey case (issues: sexualization of children, family dysfunction), and the "coming out" of actress Ellen DeGeneres (issues: alternative lifestyles).

CNNi correspondent Jim Bittermann, calling himself "a dinosaur," lamented the shrinking coverage of foreign affairs issues by American

networks, and cited increased competition and shrinking dollars at the networks as primary causes. It is ironic, Bittermann said, that reduced coverage is happening at a time when the world is becoming more interconnected.

Bittermann's wife, Pat Thompson, a longtime senior producer for NBC, ABC, and CNN who also teaches about American broadcasting in Paris, spoke of truncated story length as a factor in limiting context in news stories. She encouraged professors to encourage their students to specialize in foreign business reporting as well.

The panel was moderated by the author, who provided handouts of class exercises related to motion pictures that incorporate broadcast journalism issues.

Panelists Expect Clash over Press Freedom in Hong Kong

by JIM UPSHAW
Oregon

A PF&R panel at the Chicago convention put Hong Kong journalism under scrutiny as the British colony passed into a suspenseful era under Chinese control. The session's title—"Will Press Freedom Flicker Out in Hong Kong?"—reflected concern that Beijing, which took over Hong Kong July 1, would crack down on one of Asia's most open news communities.

Featuring Tsan-Kuo Chang of Minnesota and Bruce Cumings, director of Northwestern's Center for International and Comparative Studies, the panel was moderated by Zhou He of San Jose State.

Zhou noted that while news media on the Chinese mainland ostensibly have had more freedom than Hong Kong's media, in practice the latter have had much more autonomy. The British could have exerted strong colonial control over the years but instead

allowed that autonomy to blossom, said Zhou, almost guaranteeing a series of clashes in the near future between the Hong Kong press and Beijing.

On the other hand, said Cumings, China in recent decades has not kept such a tight totalitarian rein on its own media as during the stormy 1960s. In a way, he said, this has brought the two media cultures closer together. The mainland Chinese long have been exporting their coverage to Hong Kong consumers, and some interplay between the Chinese and Hong Kong media developed over time, he said, which could help make this year's transition a little less jolting.

Chang said he believes the international concern over Hong Kong's prospects could be allayed—or worsened—by the status of foreign journalists in the colony. They could play a critical monitoring role as a new government-press dynamic evolves—but what

Chang has seen so far worries him. He said many international writers who've been independent and critical have been leaving Hong Kong, and if the trend continues, giving Beijing a clear shot at repression, "then there goes the press freedom of Hong Kong."



Make A Note!

**RTVJ Co-Sponsored
Mid-Year Conference
February 21, 1998
Dallas, Texas**

**AEJMC Annual
Convention
August 5-8, 1998
Baltimore, Maryland**

History Panel Dovetails Jesse Jackson's Address

by DON HEIDER
Texas-Austin

In his keynote at the Chicago convention, Rev. Jesse Jackson encouraged us as journalism educators to teach students to provide context for stories about people of color. The next night, a panel discussion dealt with that very matter. Panelists Carl Burrowes, Karen Lincoln-Michel, Jim Mueller and Ira Berkow all discussed whether journalists were putting stories in historical perspective, and if not, what could be done to help contextualize issues.

Lincoln-Michel, a board member of the Native American Journalists' Association and free-lance reporter, talked about why Native Americans receive little coverage nationally. She said factors like the small numbers of Native Americans (less than 2 million), and Native Americans' limited economic clout both contribute to sparse coverage. These factors, linked with the fact that Native Americans belong to complex societies which often are not easy to report on, all contribute to a lack of coverage. Lincoln-Michel had recommendations for improving coverage, include requiring secondary and college students to take more history, and hopefully history that includes Native American perspectives. She

also suggested that editors and educators could require in-depth think pieces that include historical perspective. Finally, she said an excellent course of action would be to encourage reporters to visit Native American communities, to begin learning more about tribal life and government.

New York Times sports writer Ira Berkow talked about how sports stories must also be historically grounded. Berkow contended that sports journalists need to know about history as well as law, medicine and labor because sports coverage now is much more than simply giving scores or highlighting a game. He also criticized sports teams for not respecting Native Americans by keeping insensitive names.

Carl Burrowes from Marshal University had several recommendations for improving the historical perspective in news. First he said, newspapers could be offering more op/ed pieces providing historical perspectives on current issues. Burrowes also suggested reporters could fairly easily insert paragraphs into stories offering more historical context. Finally, he suggested sidebar stories could also offer historical facts that would help frame reader's understanding of issues.

Jim Mueller, from the University of Texas at Austin, presented research

he'd done comparing press coverage of the short-lived 1900 presidential campaign of Admiral George Dewey, hero of the Spanish-American War, with that of the informal campaign of General Colin Powell, hero of the Gulf War. The two heroes had many similarities that the press overlooked. Journalists who compared Powell to other hero-candidates usually mentioned Dwight Eisenhower. Mueller concluded that the press failed to place Powell's possible candidacy in historical perspective by ignoring his similarities with other hero-candidates, especially Dewey. The lack of proper historical perspective may well contribute to a false sense of Powell's viability as a candidate.

The author offered results from a study he did in Albuquerque, New Mexico and Honolulu, Hawaii where community leaders said time and again reporters they encounter had little, if any, knowledge of regional history, and this lack often was detrimental to coverage of the most basic issues in their communities. Local historians offered to train local journalists, if only they would ask for help.

There was a consensus among panelists; that was that knowledge of history is essential for fair, accurate and complete coverage.

Principles

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their colleagues when they run into a conflict over principle. She said reporters often feel that they're alone in conflicts over management decisions, and talks with others would put the problems in perspective.

Smith said that in his experience, reporters and other newsroom personnel who clashed with management rarely quit over a single event. He said that over time, the journalists would realize that a particular station was not

the kind of place where they wanted to work, and they would move on. He said the journalists who leave almost always find better jobs elsewhere.

All the panelists agreed that the decision to either take a stand or leave a news operation on an issue of principle is difficult whether the journalist is a rookie or a veteran. However, they said, even those reporters, photographers, and producers in their first year need to have an idea of what principles they would go to the mat for, and be prepared to back them up, by quitting if necessary.

Check Out



RTVJ Online

at

<http://cedar.evansville.edu/~rtvjweb>

Choppers

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But Chicago police official Jenkins challenged the crowd, "Are you not community residents as well as journalists?" Jenkins passionately insisted that reporters have civic as well as professional responsibilities, must get involved in events at times, and shouldn't put abstract ethics ahead of human consequences.

Supporting that view generally was Silva, who spent 10 years as a Denver cop, then the last 15 as a

pilot-reporter for KCNC-TV. Silva once became a newsmaker by landing his chopper in front of a fleeing gunman who had killed an officer. And apart from civic duty, he noted, broadcasting has changed, driven by economics: "News is not entertainment, but it is entertaining." Helicopter footage of breaking stories is in demand; the main points Silva considers before takeoff—often without a journalist to help him—are whether he can reach the news scene safely, observe events competently, and report what he sees.

However, as Thom Johnson affirmed at the session, his role at WMAQ-TV may represent an escalation of efforts to involve television in making news, not just covering it. When hired away from a traffic-chopper job early this year, Johnson was quoted as saying, "It's one thing to help people out of traffic jams, but my dream is to arrive on the scene of a major, breaking story in time to help save a life." His station now leases not one but two news helicopters.

Special to Static

RTNDA Election Results

The Radio-Television News Directors Association named and elected officers at its 1997 RTNDA International Conference & Exhibition in New Orleans. As of September 22, RTNDA Chairwoman Lucy Himstedt Riley has taken over the reins from outgoing Chairman Mike Cavender. Riley is news director for WSEA-TV in Montgomery, AL. Cavender, vice president/news at WUSA-TV in Washington, will serve as past chairman of RTNDA and as chairman of the Radio and Television News Directors Foundation (RTNDF).

RTNDA members elected five officers to the organization's board of directors. John Sears is the 1997-98 chairman-elect. As part of his duties, Sears will be executive producer of RTNDA98 in San Antonio, September 23-26. He also will serve as the 1998-99 chairman. Sears is news director for KPTV in Portland, OR.

There are four new directors-at-large. They are: Jerry Bell, news director, KOA Radio, Denver; Bruce Cramer, executive producer, KFSN-TV, Fresno, CA; Robert Garcia, general manager, CNNRadio, Atlanta (incumbent); and Paul Paolicelli, VP/GM, Metro Video News, Houston.

The regional directors elected this summer also began their terms following the conference. They are: Robin Briley Cowan, TV news operations manager, KXLY-TV, Spokane, WA; Al Gibson, news director, CKCO-TV, Kitchener, Ontario (incumbent); Joe Izbrand, news director, KTRH NewsRadio, Houston; Mark Millage, news director, KELO-TV, Sioux Falls, SD (incumbent); Brian Rublein, news director, WHAS Radio, Lexington, KY; Bob Salsberg, broadcast editor, Associated Press, Boston (incumbent); and Ken Selvaggi, news director, WSAZ-TV, Huntington, WV.

Call for Papers New Media and Free Speech: Challenges for the Future

An early Spring conference sponsored by the Mass Communication & Society Division and the University of South Florida, Tampa

April 2-4, 1998

Does the growth of new media in society affect freedom of speech and our First Amendment rights? This conference will examine the impact of technological change on free speech, and the challenges we face as communicators and educators.

Paper submission guidelines:

Papers from all methodological approaches relate to the topic of the conference should be no more than 25 pages, exclusive of tables and references. Submit four copies (three blind) to:

Prof. Paul Grosswiler
Communication and Journalism Department
University of Maine
Orono, Maine 04469-5743
(207) 581-1287

Papers must be postmarked by Dec. 16, 1997. No FAX or e-mail submissions accepted. Enclose a self-addressed stamped post card for notification of receipt.

JOURNAL OF RADIO STUDIES

CALL FOR ARTICLES AND BOOK REVIEWS

FOR AUGUST 1998 ISSUE

(Deadline: February 1, 1998)

The Journal of Radio Studies is the only scholarly publication in the world dedicated exclusively to radio studies. The Journal strives to encourage interdisciplinary inquiries regarding radio's contemporary and historical subject matter. In addition, JRS seeks to promote dialogue generated by various methodological points of view. Areas of interest include, but are not limited to, formats and programming, technology and regulation, rating systems, commercial and noncommercial networks, management and innovations, personalities, radio popular culture, interpersonal studies of radio, and international radio.

FOCUS OF AUGUST 1998 ISSUE:

The Editors are especially interested in manuscripts dealing with contemporary issues of radio, especially the effects of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, market concentration, diversity, and the reordering of the radio industry.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

Submitted manuscripts undergo a blind peer review and are evaluated according to their conceptualization, importance to radio studies, contribution to the mass media literature, interest to JRS readers, soundness of research and methodological procedures, and the clarity of presentation.

Manuscripts should be sent in four high-quality photocopies, and conform to APA style. Mailing address and brief biographical summaries of authors should be provided on a separate page. Include an abstract of no more than 100 words.

Submit manuscripts to:

Frank J. Chorba, JRS Editor
Mass Media Department
Washburn University
Topeka, KS 66621
913-23-1010 ext. 805

Submit book reviews to:

J. Steven Smethers
School of Journalism/Broadcasting
Oklahoma State University
309 Paul Miller Building
Stillwater, OK 74078-4053
405-744-6448

Teaching Standards Committee Sponsors Paper Competition

AEJMC's Teaching Standards Committee has voted to continue sponsoring, for three more years, a special paper competition designed to promote excellence in teaching.

The authors of this year's top papers will be awarded plaques and, possibly, cash prizes. A decision about cash awards will be made at AEJMC's winter meeting.

In addition, the five top papers will be presented at AEJMC's 1998 convention in Baltimore—and submitted to *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator* for consideration by its editor.

The Teaching Standards Committee encourages a diversity in topics and methodologies. Applicants can submit papers that encourage excellence in teaching of any type or at any level: undergraduate, graduate, distance, etc.

Papers might, for example, assess courses or programs; compare the effectiveness of various teaching techniques; investigate the innovative application of computers; analyze successful or innovative programs; consider diversity issues; or address instructional objectives and the measurement of those objectives.

Papers will be refereed and should go beyond simple descriptions. They should include a rigorous analysis of the findings: an analysis that suggests some direction for the future. Teaching tips, literature reviews, and papers about curriculum design are not appropriate for this competition. However, teaching activities that include a careful, systematic assessment of results are encouraged.

The competition is open to both faculty members and graduate students. Applicants should send one original and four copies of their papers to:

Fred Fedler
School of Communication
University of Central Florida
Orlando, FL 32816-1344

A cover page, attached to only the original, should list the name, title, address, affiliation, and office and home telephone number of every author. Also include a 250-word abstract, the paper on a 3.5-inch computer disk, and the AEJMC permission form published in early 1998.

The maximum length for papers is 25 pages, excluding endnotes and tables. Papers must be postmarked by April 1, 1998. Faxes will not be accepted. Enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope or postcard for notification of arrival.

Only original papers will be accepted. A paper presented to another organization or submitted to other AEJMC divisions, conventions, or publications is ineligible.

Call for Papers

(abstracts of work in progress)

The Radio-Television Journalism, Communication Technology & Policy, Media Management & Economics, and Newspaper Divisions of AEJMC invite you to submit abstracts of work in progress (or of completed research papers) for their mid-year conference. The conference theme is media convergence, but papers are not restricted to this theme. The conference will be held at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas on Saturday, February 21, 1998.

Paper Requirements:

1. Submissions must be postmarked on or before December 1, 1997.
2. Each entry should designate one division (either Radio-TV Journalism, Newspaper, Media Management & Economics, or Communication Technology & Policy) for peer review. If no division is designated, peer review selection will be at the discretion of the paper coordinator.
3. Presentation is required, either by the author or on her/his behalf.
4. Submit four abstracts of no more than 2 pages in length. Place the paper title, author(s) name(s), university affiliation, address, telephone number, and e-mail address on one copy. The other three copies should contain only the paper title.
5. Include a self-addressed, stamped postcard for acknowledgment of receipt.
6. Presenters should bring 25 copies of the abstract and (if possible) 15 copies of the research paper or the work in progress to the conference. Completed papers are not required.

Remember, since papers also can be submitted to the AEJMC Convention in Chicago, this mid-year conference serves as a great opportunity for critique and revision.

Send submitted abstracts for all participating divisions to:

C.A. Tuggle
Research Chair
Midwinter Conference
AC II 317-A
Florida International University
North Miami, Florida 33181

Please Post

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Newsletter of the Radio-Television Journalism Division
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✓ **RTNDA Update:** Bill Davie reports on RTNDA's annual convention, and its new relationship with broadcast journalism educators. **2**

✓ **HEAD NOTES:** Don Heider sets forth his goals, including a task force on continuing education for broadcast professionals and a push for paid internships. **3**

✓ **RTVJ RESEARCH:** A summary of the Top Faculty Research Paper from the Chicago Convention. **4**

✓ **HIGH-TECH NEWS:** Jim Upshaw reports on a lively RTVJ convention session, the use of technologies that help—or at least hype—the news process. **6**

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