

Static

The Newsletter of the Radio-Television Journalism Division of AEJMC March 1999

Midwinter Conference Diverse & Provocative

by JIM UPSHAW
RTVJ Head

Six divisions of AEJMC have just discovered life in the fast lane.

Imagine scaling down one of the association's massive annual conventions to fit into a single day, and you'll capture the diversity of this year's Midwinter Conference in Nashville Feb. 6. More than two dozen research presentations on provocative topics, plus a rallying cry from a maverick newspaperman, made for a fast-paced Saturday at the Freedom Forum First Amendment Center.

Besides RTVJ, co-sponsoring divisions were Communication Technology & Policy, Mass Communication & Society, Media Management & Economics, Minorities & Communication, and Visual Communication. Faculty and graduate students from many universities participated.

Debbie Ritenour (Texas-Austin) reported on newsweeklies' coverage of the deaths of Princess Diana and, years earlier, Princess Grace of Monaco. Ritenour said her content analyses found Diana's demise commanding far more magazine pages than Grace's. Grace, on the other hand, was portrayed by writers as much more of a "dream" princess than Diana was. Ritenour suggested several ways of extending her research.

Chris Hanson (North Carolina-Chapel Hill), examining ABC's "Nightline" and the Clinton/Lewinsky

scandal, refuted theorist Jane Feuer's claims that television conveys an "eternal present" while reducing live broadcasting synchronous with events.

In a research-based counteroffensive against public criticism of journalism, Gerald Stone (Southern Illinois-Carbondale) said only 25 percent of respondents said they had heard the term "watchdog" applied to media. "Such an astounding conclusion is especially

"citizens ignorant of the fundamental role of the media 'cannot be expected to have an appreciation' for their value and methods."

alarming considering this survey's well educated sample," said Stone, suggesting that citizens ignorant of the fundamental role of the media "cannot be expected to have an appreciation" for their value and methods.

RTVJ members presenting research at the conference included Benjamin Bates (Tennessee-Knoxville) on "Regulating Broadcasting" and Hubert Brown (with Beth Barnes)(Syracuse) on "Advertising's Influence on Broadcast News Content." Also accepted and distributed were two papers by former division head Don Heider, who was unable to attend.

One of the day's most colorful events was an appearance by Geoff Davidian, publisher of "The Putnam Pit," a newspaper and web site in Cookeville, Tenn., which has waged a running battle with civic leaders over various issues. Davidian enthusiastically described the journalistic rewards and personal hazards of challenging City Hall with vigorous (and controversial) investigative reporting

The conference coordinators even managed to include a teaching panel (on how to promote accountability and ethics in the media classroom) and a professional-freedom-and-responsibility session (on responsible coverage of race and racial incidents).

Representatives of the six divisions expressed special thanks to two of our hosts at the Freedom Forum First Amendment Center: Randol Stephens, who coordinated the event, and Chris Amacher, who supplied technical support.



Head Notes

by JIM UPSHAW
RTVJ Head

March came in like a (sea) lion here in Oregon this year, with rain cascading and windstorms playing havoc with a giant freighter grounded off the southern coast. Nature's dramas pleased the snow-swamped mountain skiers but herded soggy lowlanders into espresso shops to sip and day-dream.

Among reflections crossing my cup was the thought that our division might benefit this year from a wind-storm of renewed focus—on research.

(Don't worry: This won't be a Jimmy-Carter-style "malaise" sermonette.)

In October's newsletter I noted the ways in which RTVJ members address the challenges of broadcast journalism and its emerging offshoots: Through research, teaching and service—old words that seem threadbare against the vivid diversity of our work—much is returned to a society which invests its confidence in us.

Sometimes that confidence comes a little haltingly. Sometimes others aren't sure how effectively we are pursuing the full range of our mission. Facing this, what is most important is that we look piercingly into our own routines for any signs of exhaustion or misplaced effort.

I bring this wintry reminder only to point out that for all the strengths of our division, we must constantly advance and showcase our quest for new knowledge and new creative paths.

Research remains essential to our academic future, and is an orientation and impulse critical to the future of broadcast journalism as well.

We all know that. For this winter's six-division midwinter conference in Nashville, almost one-fourth of the submissions came in through RTVJ. Our members contribute to major research journals and are invited into major colloquia. Because we include many former pros, our research finds credibility in newsrooms; this will increase when the journal "Electronic News," designed expressly to reach news pros on the job, makes its debut this year.

Elsewhere in this issue of *Static*, research chair Dave Kurpius points out how the Radio-Television News Directors Association generates material for studies our members could pursue. Vice head Chris Allen, the architect of our program at AEJMC's New Orleans convention next August, has arranged a showcase for creative projects that will be juried just as research papers are. Several research panels have been set aside for RTVJ and, this year for the first time, will be augmented by "scholar-to-scholar" sessions—again, with papers refereed.

Opportunities abound. We have a place at any table where broadcast journalism is practiced or examined. The key to this—beyond our students' promise—is the universal knowledge that RTVJ members have the tools and training to probe, understand and develop the field through research.

Research, from page 2

profession, good writing tends not to be an urgent issue—but we dare not overlook it.

This column is simply a reminder to think about ways in which each of us can strengthen our research indi-

vidually, which will strengthen the division and AEJMC collectively.

And finally, a quick plea for judges. To maintain rigorous standards of quality, we need to recruit well-qualified, committed research paper judges. This process is full of self-selection and fills a spot on the old vita.

Special Sessions Scheduled For Convention

by CHRIS ALLEN
RTVJ Vice Head & Program Chair

RTVJ has two sessions coming up in New Orleans to help our members get the academic recognition they deserve.

The first is a juried session for creative projects. Some RTVJ members may be involved in the creative aspect, producing videos, documentaries or web sites. This year we are linking up with Vis Comm to provide an outlet for those works. Vis Comm has conducted these types of juried sessions in the past, and has invited RTVJ to participate. You can find details about the competition on page 6, or by checking out the RTVJ web site at <http://www2.drury.edu/pub/rtvj>.

The second is a sort of "kick-start" for research. Over the past few years, research paper submissions to RTVJ have been disappointingly low. Last year fewer than 35 papers were submitted.

RTVJ will convene a panel of experienced researchers in a no-holds-barred session to generate ideas, discuss methodologies and refresh ourselves for the changes through which the broadcast industry is always going.

Craig Allen of Arizona State University, who has a long history of presenting papers in RTVJ and publishing in various journals, is one of the panelists. He is joined by Dan Berk-

see *Special*, page 4

If you are interested in playing an active role and have not received a judging invitation recently, your input is welcome. Simply send me an email (kurpius@lsu.edu) and the rest will be taken care of for you—except the actual judging!

Research Needs Stronger Connection to Industry

by DAVID KURPIUS

RTVJ Research Chair

Calling all scholars! I hope to encourage researchers from all areas of AEJMC to submit papers to this division in 1999. Our goal is to attract quality in addition to quantity. As a first step in this process, the focus of this column is to set the stage for the April deadline.

Last fall's Radio-Television News Directors Association convention was an occasion to consider the research direction of RTVJ and how it helps connect academic work and the broadcast industry. It also was a time to reflect on larger issues, and the result was this short list of possible research paths:

- RTNDA President Barbara Cochran noted the need for greater understanding of how to maintain local news **credibility** at a time when other types of news outlets are losing credibility. This problem is well documented in industry polls, but the reasons behind it may deserve another look.

- John Sears, RTNDA Chairman-Elect, noted the current trend toward establishing and expanding **investigative units** at broadcast stations. This is interesting in an era of diminishing resources and tight budgets. What's the explanation, and what does it imply?

- Speaking of resource limits, there also appears to be a trend toward acquisition of **helicopters** for broadcast news operations. One research idea would be to look at the cost and benefit of a helicopter (or expensive ENG technology in general) to the news operation.

- ABC News' Carole Simpson chaired a panel on news and **children's issues**. The primary focus was whether news

has become too risqué for kids. Sounds like a potential study to me!

- **Diversity** in newsrooms and in coverage routines drew much attention at RTNDA. FCC Chairman William Kennard voiced concern about the demise of the FCC's equal employment opportunity—rules Kennard credits with allowing him to get into the business. Without them, what directions will broadcast news operations take in the hiring of minorities? That's more research fodder.

- Coverage of **communities** was a key topic. The main focuses on the relevance of news presented to all communities within a station's coverage area. There are a lot of different avenues this sort of research could take. Good research is not simply the result of good ideas, though that is always a good place to start. Academically rigorous methodology, a strong tie to theory and solid writing skills are necessary to build upon the research foundation already in place in the division.

RTVJ papers at the last two national conventions focused heavily on survey and content analysis methodologies. A few papers made use of other methods, including case study, legal, historical and experimental designs. Noticeably missing from the mix are depth-interview techniques and ethnographic work. Nor is the tie to theory always apparent in the research, though the majority of authors accomplish this task effectively.

Since our division has a strong tie to the broadcast news

see *Research*, page 3

Surveying Survey Courses: On-line & In New Orleans

A dreaded assignment for some professors is teaching the survey course, that pesky "Intro to Mass Comm" or "Intro to Mass Media" course that many faculty members run and hide from. Most journalism/mass comm schools teach a survey course as a requirement for all their majors, or as a service course for the entire university, or both.

For what is believed to be the first time in 11 years, a panel at AEJMC will be devoted to survey courses. Montana's Bill Knowles, former RTVJ division head, has taught his school's survey course for a decade. He'll chair a panel which will feature four authors of survey-course textbooks, and another former division head, Don Heider of Texas at Austin. Heider believes that such courses should limit themselves to journalism and stay out of areas like motion pictures and the recording industry. Knowles takes the opposite view.

The four authors are John Vivian of Winona State in Minnesota, Shirley Biagi of Cal State Sacramento, John Bittner of North Carolina and Joseph Dominick of Georgia. They'll discuss their approaches to textbook writing in view of not only course scope, but also the wide variety of issues that survey courses tackle, such as new media, ethics, regulation, and basic media history.

In addition, the RTVJ website will host an on-line survey for all teachers of survey courses. In early April, Knowles will be emailing J/MC administrators to in turn ask their teachers of survey courses to respond to an online survey, to help us understand various approaches taken by various professors. Webmaster Larry Burkum will have the questionnaire up on the site by April 1.

The panel leads off the New Orleans convention at 8:15 a.m. Wednesday, August 4.

RTNDA Trying To Listen To Viewers

by DON HEIDER

RTNDA Liaison

When it comes to issues such as fairness and balance, the Radio-Television News Directors Association in partnership with the Radio-Television News Directors Foundation has embarked on a two year journey across the U.S., where they will host a series of public discussions to encourage news managers to listen to the audience. It's all part of a large research project, funded by the Ford Foundation, aimed at improving local TV news. The first part of the project involved a telephone survey (you can download the results from <http://www.rtna.org/issues/survey.htm> as long as you have Adobe Acrobat) which had both encouraging and discouraging results. The good news was that 66% of those surveyed said the quality of TV news was either good or excellent. The bad news was that 60%

said they have become more skeptical about the accuracy of news in general. Other results showed people had grave doubts about the use of hidden cameras, and whether reporters should be able to keep sources confidential. Audiences also report they believe a large consideration in news judgment of most organizations is the battle for ratings.

As a follow up to the survey, RTNDA and RTNDF will now be holding a series of 16 public discussions across the country. They will consist of forums where local news managers will hear from the public (a public, however, chosen in advance by a marketing firm) and then will hold workshops trying to help managers make better decisions for quality coverage. The first of these was held March 5th and 6th in Baltimore. All the rest of the locations are still being decided. I

have told the board that many University campuses would probably be interested in helping with and/or hosting these forums.

In other RTNDA news, the board is still trying to right the ship when it comes to the organization's budget, which suffered a shortfall of over a quarter of a million dollars last year. Two staff positions have been cut, the board is limiting travel expenses, and first time dues could be going up—though student and educator dues will remain the same. A board subcommittee is looking into adding a new category of membership to draw new media journalists into the organization. The September convention will be in Charlotte, North Carolina and the theme will be "News for the New Century." If you haven't visited the RTNDA web site, it's worth a look: <http://www.rtna.org>.

Special, from page 3

owitz of the University of Iowa, whose interests include, but are not limited to, broadcasting. A third panelist is Maria Grabe, Indiana University, who has presented papers about broadcasting in other divisions of AEJMC.

During the past decade RTVJ has excelled in its panels. No division has done better in examining the issues that face the industry and our students. We have heard about convergence, diversity, race, gender and economic issues. We have explored industry demands, content, curriculum and a host of things we need to be concerned about.

Our research presentations have been solid; there is no need to be concerned about the research that is being submitted to the division. The problem is not quality, it is quantity.

This is an exciting time for broadcast news. We as an industry are nearly

80 years old, and there is a lot of our past that should be recovered. Ample opportunities exist to research broadcast history, especially its social aspects. News processes are changing, and we have a chance to research reporters, operations, economics, management, decision-making, ethics and a host of topics as they relate to the industry today. We are converging with other media and will most certainly look different a decade from now that we do today, which provides a chance to speculate, research the technology and peer into the future.

If we think of the research panel as a big brainstorming session, we will identify myriad topics, examine methodologies, and perhaps explore new theory areas.

Join us in New Orleans to move RTVJ forward in research.

Ethics Teaching Workshop Offered

The AEJMC Ethics Interest Group is scheduling another Ethics Teaching Workshop for the 1999 convention. The workshop will be presented from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesday, August 4 in New Orleans.

Thirty spaces will be reserved on a first-come, first-registered basis. All AEJMC convention attendees are welcome to apply. To register, applicants should send a vita and a letter explaining why they would like to attend, plus e-mail, telephone and FAX contact information. Send to:

Dr. Virginia Whitehouse
Teaching Chair, Ethics Interest Group
Communication Studies
Whitworth College
Spokane, WA 99251-0307

RTVJ 1999 Convention Schedule

TUESDAY, AUG. 3:

1:00-5:00 p.m.

PRE-CONVENTION WRITING WORKSHOP

Credibility And Accountability:
It Starts With Reporting And Writing

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 4:

8:15-9:30 a.m.

TEACHING PANEL

Making Acquaintance:

Challenges Of The Intro-to-Mass-Comm Course

Co-sponsor: Mass Communication and Society Division

Contact: Bill Knowles, knowles@selway.umt.edu

9:45-11:15 a.m.

Refereed Research Session

1:00-2:30 p.m.

PF&R PANEL

Women In Sports Broadcasting:

Still The "Old-boy Network"?

Co-sponsor: Commission on the Status of Women

Contact: Hubert Brown, hwbrown@mailbox.syr.edu

4:15-5:45 p.m.

TEACHING PANEL

Tips Of The Trade:

Master Teachers Reveal Their Secrets

Co-sponsor: Community College Journalism Association

Contact: Matt Ehrlich, mehrlich@uxl.cso.uiuc.edu

6:00-7:30 p.m.

PF&R PANEL

Talking The Talk...or Walking The Walk?

The Truth About diversity

Co-sponsor: Media Management & Economics Division

Contact: Jeanne Rollberg, jnrollberg@uarl.edu

THURSDAY, AUG. 5:

1:00-2:30 p.m.

REFEREED RESEARCH

(All-division Poster Session)

2:45-4:15 p.m.

PF&R PANEL

The Effects Of Foreign Television

On Domestic Viewers

Lead co-sponsor: International Communication Division

Contact: Michael Elasmr, elasmr@bu.edu

4:30-6:00 p.m.

REFEREED RESEARCH

(Three-division Poster Session)

6:15-7:45 p.m.

PF&R PANEL

Refereed Creative Projects Presentation

Co-sponsor: Visual Communication Division

FRIDAY, AUG. 6:

8:30-10:00 a.m.

PF&R PANEL

The Status Of Broadcast Research

Co-sponsor: Communication Technology

and Policy Division

Contact: Chris Allen, cwallen@cwis.unomaha.edu

2:45-4:15 p.m.

TEACHING PANEL

A Study In White: The Disappearance

Of Minority Broadcasting Outlets

Co-sponsor: Minorities and Communication Division

Contact: Hubert Brown, hwbrown@mailbox.syr.edu

6:15-7:45 p.m.

Rtvj Division Business Meeting, Social,

And Presentation Of Distinguished Broadcast

Journalism Educator Award

SATURDAY, AUG. 7:

8:45-10:15 a.m.

TEACHING PANEL

Crossing The Great Divide:

Combining Print And Broadcast In The Classroom

Contact: Matt Ehrlich, mehrlich@uxl.cso.uiuc.edu

10:30 a.m.-Noon

TEACHING PANEL

Distance Learning:

New Opportunities For Journalism Educators

Co-sponsor: Visual Communication Division

Contact: Matt Ehrlich, mehrlich@uxl.cso.uiuc.edu

1:00-2:30 p.m.

Rtvj Division 1999-2000 Executive

Committee Meeting

2:45-4:15 p.m.

REFEREED RESEARCH SESSION

Call for Research Papers for the 1999 AEJMC Convention

The Radio-Television Division of AEJMC Invites Submissions of Original Research Papers on radio and/or television journalism for the 1999 Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 4-7, 1999.

All research methodologies are welcome.

Rules and Guidelines

1. Papers submitted to the Radio-Television Division may not be simultaneously submitted to any other AEJMC division, interest group or commission. Your paper, excluding notes, should be approximately 6,250 words or about 25 pages of double-spaced 11-12 point pica type.

2. Send the paper by first class or priority mail, postmarked no later than April 1, 1999. Acceptance by an overnight delivery service by the deadline is acceptable. Incomplete submissions will be returned. E-mail and fax submissions are not acceptable.

3. Include an abstract of no more than 75 words.

4. Identify the paper's author(s) on the title page only and include the mailing address, telephone number and, if available, e-mail address of the author to whom inquiries about the submission should be addressed. The title should be printed on the first page of the text and on running heads on each page of text, as well as on the title page.

5. Send six typed or computer-printed copies of the paper. If you prepare your paper on a personal computer, you are also required to include a Macintosh or IBM-compatible computer disk (3-1/2 inch preferred) containing the paper in digital form. Preferably the disk file will be in low-level ASCII, in a non-proportional font such as Courier with a line length of 65 characters or less. The complete paper should be in one file containing the title page, body, tables, references, etc. If this is not possible, the paper should be submitted in a standard word-processing format such as: Word, WordPerfect, MacWrite, or RTF. All the components of the paper should be in one file.

6. Papers are accepted for peer review on the understanding that they are not already under review for other conventions and that they have been submitted to only one AEJMC group for evaluation. Papers accepted for the AEJMC convention should not have been presented to other conventions or published in scholarly or trade journals prior to presentation at the convention.

7. Student papers compete on an equal footing in open paper competitions. Undergraduate and graduate students enrolled during the 1998-99 academic year may submit papers and the RTVJ Division awards \$100 to the best student paper. The top three student papers are selected for presentation at the convention. Students should identify themselves on the title page only of their submission.

8. At least one author of an accepted faculty paper must attend the convention to present the paper. If student authors cannot be present, they must make arrangements for the paper to be presented.

9. By May 15 authors will be advised whether their paper has been accepted and will receive a copy of the reviewer's comments.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Papers will be evaluated on their relevance to radio-television journalism, purpose, literature review, appropriateness and effectiveness of the research method chosen, relationship of evidence presented and the claims made in the paper, clarity of conclusions, relationship of conclusions to stated purpose of the paper, contribution of paper to knowledge and understanding of electronic media journalism and quality of writing.

Send papers to:

David Kurpius
Louisiana State University
Manship School of Mass Communication
Journalism Building #221 Baton Rouge, LA 70803-7202



The Creative Projects competition is co-sponsored by the **VISCOMM** and **RADIO-TV JOURNALISM** Divisions of **AEJMC** and provides a juried outlet for original, creative and offbeat work that may not otherwise have a public forum. Anything related to visual communication is fair game - from photography to typography to webography.

If you can: • **DEMONSTRATE** a unique teaching strategy • **EXPAND** the boundaries "non-traditional" research • **GIVE** an inspired 15-minute summary:

- Submit **FOUR** copies of your project - **ONE** with identification, and **THREE** without.

- Include an **explanation** of your work describing - the **SIGNIFICANCE** of the project - **RATIONALE** for creating/researching - **HOW** this work furthers the understanding or teaching of visual communication.

Submit the work in the best, most complete form possible. Make it understandable to the judges. Previous presentations have included slide shows, CD-ROM projects, design studies and videotapes. Internet Web design project submissions *must include* the **URL** for viewing. Projects will be blind refereed by a panel of independent judges, and presenters will be notified by mid-May of acceptances.

The creative project session is scheduled for August 5, 1999. **SEND ENTRIES to:**

Professor Rita Csapo-Sweet
Department of Communication
Lucas Hall
University of Missouri-St. Louis
8001 Natural Bridge Road
St. Louis, MO 63121

Projects **MUST BE** postmarked by April 1, 1999. Sorry, fax and e-mail submissions **CANNOT** be accepted.

Placement Service To Be Offered At AEJMC Convention

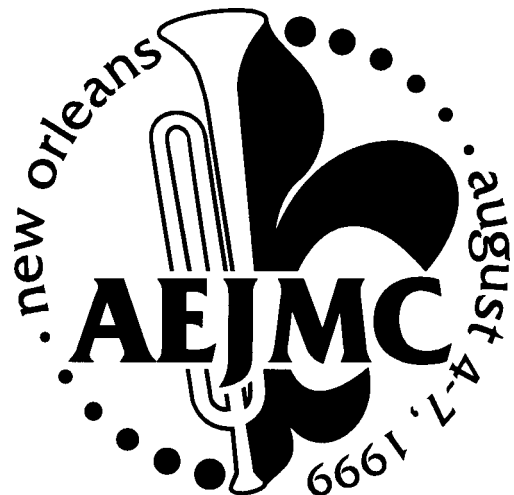
AEJMC's job Placement Service will be offered during the association's annual convention August 4-7 in New Orleans, LA. The service is for individuals seeking positions and schools seeking job applicants. Individuals may review files on position openings while schools may review vitas and/or schedule preliminary interviews with individuals seeking positions.

AEJMC members may use the service free of charge. Individuals who are not AEJMC members are charged \$25 to use the service.

Although interviewing rooms will be unavailable this year, AEJMC will assist interested parties in setting up interviews.

Applications are pre-numbered and are designed to be used individually. In order to provide a more complete and useful service for our members, the placement service will limit applicants to 150. You must receive an official application from the central office in order to participate in the service. You are strongly encouraged to call or write for an application as soon as possible. There will be **NO** onsite registration for individuals using the placement service.

Those wanting to use the service are urged to register early by calling Felicia Brown, Coordinator, Placement Service, at 803-777-2005, or writing AEJMC, University of South Carolina, 121 LeConte College, Columbia, South Carolina 29208-0251. Those interested in using the service will be mailed an application form which should be completed and mailed back to the AEJMC Central Office by June 30.



Call for Nominations

1999 Distinguished Broadcast Journalism Educator Award

The Distinguished Broadcast Journalism Educator Award is presented annually by the Radio-Television Journalism Division of the Association for Journalism Education and Mass Communication to an electronic media educator who has made a significant and lasting contribution to the field. Criteria for nomination and selection:

- **Teaching:** Evidence of excellent teaching may come from a nominee's dean, director, or department chairperson, current or former students, faculty colleagues, etc. Letters should contain specific examples of teaching quality.
- **Service:** Service may include major responsibilities or leadership in professional or educational organizations such as AEJMC, RTNDA, SPJ, state broadcast news organization, etc.
- **Research:** The nominee should exhibit enhancement of teaching and service through professional and/or academic writing and research. Examples include journal articles, articles in professional trade publications, and creative works for broadcast.

The award will be presented at the RTVJ's business meeting at the conference in Baltimore, MD in August. The recipient will receive a personal plaque and registration fees for attendance at the conference. In addition, the recipient's name will become part of a permanent plaque that is housed in the Poynter Institute for Media Studies in St. Petersburg, FL.

Nominations are solicited from the broadcast media, professional organizations and associations, and broadcast educators or students. Send nominations by April 1, 1999 to:

Prof. Robert H. Wicks
Department of Communication
Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences
Kimpel Hall 417
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Past winners: Jack Shelly, Iowa State (1983); Ed Bliss, American University (1984); Dick Yoakam, Indiana (1985); Henry Lippold, Wisconsin-Eau Claire (1986); Rod Gelatt, Missouri (1987); Mitchell Charnley, Minnesota (1988); Don Brown, Arizona State (1989); Irving Fang, Minnesota (1990); Ernest F. Andrews, Syracuse (1991); Al Anderson, Texas-Austin (1992); Michael Murray, Missouri-St. Louis (1993); Joseph R. Dominick, Georgia (1994); Joan Konner, Columbia (1995); Gordon Greb, San Jose State (1996); Travis Linn, Nevada-Reno (1997); Vernon Stone, Missouri (1998).

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of AEJMC Volume 38, No. 2, March 1999

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c/o Communication Department
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