

spig news

Newsletter of AEJMC's Small Programs Interest Group

Fall 2013

Old methods, new tools worked in Boston *Columnist used access, blogger went live to report on bombing*



Boston Globe staffers Kevin Cullen and Teresa Hanifan

By Jill Van Wyke

News coverage of the Boston Marathon bombing lay bare how technology and the demand for immediacy have profoundly altered the jobs of reporters and editors.

A panel of journalists at this year's Hot Topic session in Washington, D.C., weighed in on the impact of social media, the unrelenting drive to be first, the heavy responsibility to readers and viewers during and after a terrorist attack, and the importance of access to sources.

Two Boston Globe journalists, Kevin Cullen and Teresa Hanafin, said the April 15, 2013, terrorist bombing was deeply personal. Both said they felt a burden to deliver accurate, truthful information to a fear-gripped city during the four-day manhunt for the bombers.

Cullen, a long time Globe reporter and now columnist, said he'd covered violent unrest in Northern Ireland, "but this was my home. This was a completely different reporting

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HEAD NOTES

3 new reports point the way

By Michael Ray Smith

A few days ago, I saw a Facebook post on "Searchlights and Sunglasses: Field Notes from the Digital Age of Journalism," an e-book. In short order, "Educating Journalists: A New Plea for the University Tradition"

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SMITH



Scholarship of Application winner

Michael Longinow, left, and Kay Colley, right, congratulate Cathy Yungmann of Cabrini College, winner of the Scholarship of Application competition presented at the 2013 AEJMC meeting in Washington, D.C.

Brian Steffen photo

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experience. This was deeply, deeply personal to the town."

His decades of living in and covering Boston gave him unparalleled access to the city's police, paramedics and firefighters, many of whom he knew personally. "You get access at a time like that if you're trusted, if you're known," he said.

That access paid off with 12 columns in 11 days that were searing in their detail, depicting a tight-knit city reeling but unbowed.

Hanafin is director of user engagement and social media at Boston.com and BostonGlobe.com. Using a live-blogging tool called "ScribbleLive," she manned the Globe's live blog for five days until one of the suspects, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, was caught hiding in a boat in a Watertown backyard. She said her goals were to keep the blog uncluttered, very clear, very concise and as accurate as possible while conveying as much information as possible.

"I realized immediately that everyone in the universe was going to be coming to [our sites] for information," Hanafin said. "I realized that I had a tremendous responsibility at that point, all of us did in the news-gathering operation, to give them information as clearly as possible."

SPIG leader publishes a novel with recipes

SPIG member Margo Wilson of California University of Pennsylvania culminated two years of work with a new novel that starts with recipes titled "The Main Ingredient." Each chapter opens with a recipe in the new book authored by the former head of SPIG.

The Ramsfield Press novel is about three Midwest women who open a restaurant that soon burns down. They must track down who

Panelist Dina Temple-Raston, who covers counterterrorism for NPR, praised the work of the Boston journalists. As a national correspondent, she approached the story differently and offered four tips for covering terrorist events:

First, "in the early stages, it's best to not get too far out in front of the story." Early information is incomplete and sometimes inaccurate, she said, and a good editor will force a reporter to slow down.

Second, "the echo chamber of news reports can kill you." Several media outlets erroneously reported the arrest of a suspect on Wednesday, two days after the bombing. NPR didn't. "Stick with the sources you know and trust, and the people who helped you get it right in the past, and also the people who were cautious in the past," she advised.

Third, "when you know you're going to be burdensome (to a source), you apologize ahead of time." Temple-Raston told her sources to expect her to call in the middle of the night if something big broke in the investigation. Sure enough, the suspects' hijacking of a motorist, the killing of an MIT police officer, the pursuit of the two suspects, and a shootout that killed Tsarnaev's brother unfolded overnight. "Because I'd warned them that I was going to call them in the middle of the night," she said, "they all

picked up phones on the first ring."

Fourth, "ask specific questions so there can be no misunderstandings. In the hubbub of it all, you think you're communicating really well, and you may not be communicating as well as you think." She cautioned against making assumptions to fill in gaps in information.

Temple-Raston also noted the huge role technology -- particularly the vast trove of bystanders' mobile photography and video -- played in identifying the suspects. "One source told me that if they had had this much video, iPhone footage and pictures available during the Olympics bombing, they would have captured Eric Rudolph right away instead of years later," she said.

Finally, panelist Kelly McBride, ethicist for the Poynter Institute, said the Boston bombing coverage was an example of "iterative journalism," or "piece-by-piece-by-piece" journalism. McBride said journalists need to be "radically transparent" about how they gather information so the public can better determine the credibility of a news source.

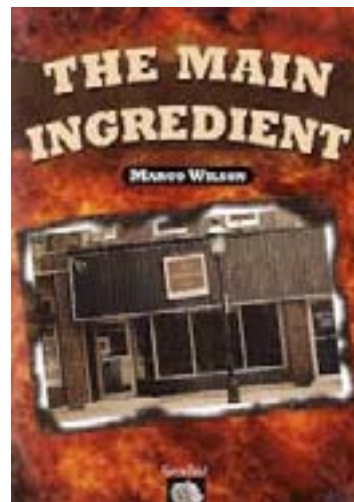
The panel session is available to view on C-SPAN at <http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/AEJ>

Jill Van Wyke teaches at Drake University.

set the blaze or go to prison because they are suspects. The book, narrated by a journalist, also is about friendship, family dynamics, urban renewal and food.

"All the characters are fictional. The narrator is not me," said Wilson, even though she has been a working journalist, grew up in the Midwest and once owned a restaurant.

For more information about the novel, go to www.margowilson.com.



Lisa Phillips profiled the voices of public radio

SUNY New Paltz teacher and author swam across Hudson River twice

What is your current primary job title and employer?

I am an assistant professor of journalism at the State University of New York at New Paltz.

What subjects do you teach?

I teach our introductory course in journalism, feature writing, digital storytelling, radio journalism, and entrepreneurial journalism.

Tell me an interesting fact about you.

I was the concertmaster of my high school orchestra. I ran cross-country my freshman year and consistently placed last.

What was your first job?

My first job was selling tickets at the original Water Wizz waterslide, built by my father (who by training was an endodontist) in Misquamicut Beach, RI. The second Water Wizz, in Cape Cod, is featured in the film "The Way, Way Back."

Tell me about your education.

B.A. in English from Oberlin College

M.F.A. in Writing from the University of Pittsburgh

Tell us about your professional work and your current research focus?

I have a terminal master's degree, only roughly related to journalism. I have been a professional journalist since 1992, with more than a decade in public radio and a long freelancing career (*New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, various magazines and public radio programs). My book, "Public Radio: Behind the Voices" (Perseus, 2006) was considered comparable to a Ph.D. when I was hired. The book profiles the main announcers, hosts and reporters in public radio. Now I'm

SPIG PROFILE



LISA PHILLIPS

working on something completely different: a nonfiction book exploring women and unrequited love, now under contract with HarperCollins.

What do you like about your job and your workplace?

SUNY New Paltz is a great place to work. I hear a lot of talk about the entitlement generation -- but my students take little for granted. They are hard working, engaged in the world, and care deeply about journalism. I value the privilege of mentoring and teaching them. I also run the James H. Ottaway Sr. Visiting Professorship program, meaning I get to recruit stars in the journalism field to teach for us for a semester or a short term residency. NPR foreign correspondent Deborah Amos taught on our campus for two weeks last spring and rocked

everyone's world -- particularly with her insights about Syria.

Tell me something about your personal life (such as family and children).

I am married to Bill Mead, a visual artist and museum mountmaker. We are the proud parents of Clara, 9, and she is already singing and acting with our local professional summer stock theater. Sometimes I call myself Professor Stage Mom.

What other significant achievements have you had?

I swam across the Hudson River twice.

What are your personal or professional goals now?

Finish my book! Get tenure!

What leadership roles have you had in the AEJMC and the Small Programs Interest Group?

I have been a member since 2011, but a quiet one. So I guess it's time to step out of the shadows.

What goal do you have for SPIG?

At this point, I wouldn't say that I had specific goals for SPIG. I'd just like to help bring together a great slate of panels for next year's conference. Allez Montreal!

If you had to describe yourself, what words would you use?

Serious. Every close friend I ever had has remarked on my seriousness. But I also have a flaky side and love to joke and laugh.

SPIG profiles are compiled by the newsletter's co-editor, Richard Hendrickson of Los Angeles, a retired John Carroll University associate professor who now teaches at UCLA and other colleges.

Send nominations for this feature to newsprof@mac.com.

Top paper eyed digital literacy

3 Texas Tech scholars did a pilot study

By Pat Sutherland

Four research papers were presented during the Aug. 9 SPIG Scholar-to-Scholar poster session at the AEJMC 2013 Conference.

The First Place paper was "Teach Thyself: The Surest Path to Digital Literacy" by Yunjuan Luo, Randy Reddick and Shi Li of Texas Tech University. Reddick said the paper was a pilot study designed to assist educators to help their students to become more reflective on the efforts and utility of innovations, the study of digital literacy.

The Second Place paper, "Preparing Students for New Challenges: A Learner-Centered Approach for the 21st Century Journalism Education," was by Mohammad Yousef of the University of Oklahoma. Yousef said the idea for his study came from his experience as a student in a

communications course that found him wondering if there were better ways to engage students with the subject matter.

Elia Powers and Jacqueline Incollingo of the University of Maryland, co-authored the Third Place Paper, "Multimedia Journalism Professors on an Island: Resources, Support Lacking at Small Programs." The authors are planning to conduct a survey to further research this topic.

Honorable mention was given to Kehbama Langmia of Bowie State and Amy Glass of John Hopkins for their paper, "Coping with Smart Phones 'Distractions' in a College Classroom." Langmia said these technological distractions in the classroom won't stop and need to be discussed by college teachers across disciplines.

Pat Sutherland teaches at Bethany College.



Mohammad Yousef wrote second place paper.



Elia Powers and Jacqueline Incollingo co-authored third place paper. Pat Sutherland photos

Can student journalism be crowdfunded?

By Mary Alice Basconi

Crowdfunding has come to journalism. But is it sustainable? And, would it work for student projects?

Panelists at an AEJMC conference teaching session told how producers of documentaries, Web comics and journalism-training tools raise money from online donors. Such funding may complete a project, or it can provide seed capital. Yet soliciting on a regular basis can create what educator and SPIG member Dave Weinstock called "crowdfunding fatigue."

"There's a fine line between advocating and spamming," said Weinstock, whose son, Ethan, has

used crowdfunding for film projects.

SPIG co-sponsored the panel with the Community College Journalism Association. Moderator Toni Albertson of Mount San Antonio College opened a discussion of Kickstarter, a funding platform for which her son Andy served as chief technology officer. Panelists also discussed Indiegogo, Fundable and Flattr.com.

Flattr.com is a Swedish site launched in 2010. Panelist Doreen Marchionni of Pacific Lutheran University likened it to an Internet tip jar.

See **CROWDFUNDED** page 8

GIFT winners' idea helps teach web-based reporting

By Kay Colley

This year's winner of the Great Ideas for Teachers Contest came all the way from New Zealand to make her presentation and collect her award.

Catherine Strong of Massey University and her colleague Grant Hannis won for their GIFT submission, "Teaching students web-based reporting fast and efficiently." The entry was deemed the best of the 54 submissions by a panel of 10 judges.

This was the first time that Strong and Hannis had submitted to the GIFT competition, and the first time that Strong had submitted on her own, making the top 25 with her own poster, "Immersing journalism students in other cultures."

GIFT is co-sponsored by the Small Programs Interest Group and the Community College Journalism Association. The refereed poster presentation is popular with AEJMC attendees, showcasing the best of teaching.

"GIFT focuses on a core part of AEJMC, excellence in teaching," said John Kerezy, GIFT coordinator. "Those participating get to share their best classroom techniques with their professional colleagues, improving the teaching of college journalism."

For copies of all 25 GIFT finalist papers, send a \$10 check, made payable to the Community College Journalism Association, c/o John Kerezy, Cuyahoga Community College, 11000 W. Pleasant Valley Road, Parma, OH 44130.



Former SPIG head Kay Colley, left, and CCJA vice president and GIFT coordinator John Kerezy, right, congratulate Catherine Strong of Massey University. Michael Smith photo

Kay Colley teaches at West Texas University.

The dreaded 'A' word

How to make assessment as painless as possible

By James Simon

When future Prof. Pam Parry was a high school basketball player, there was one training exercise she hated more than any other: suicide wind sprints.

Now as an academic leader, she is reminded of that hard-court torture every time she starts collecting student artifacts, crafting a rubric and launching another round of program evaluation.

"Assessment is the academic

equivalent of suicide wind sprints," said Parry, associate professor in the Department of Communication Studies at Belmont University in Nashville. "They hurt. Everyone avoids them. Yet if you do them, you are a better team."

Parry was one of four speakers on an AEJMC panel in Washington, D.C., titled, "The Dreaded 'A' Word: Using Assessment To Make Long Overdue Changes, Validate What You Are Doing Right." Panelists

presented success stories and horror stories, discussed what they wish they had known before they started the process, and how to make the inevitable as painless and productive as possible.

Paul Parsons, dean of the School of Communications at Elon University, said times had changed from 20 years ago when an administrator could just wish away assessment of student learning outcomes. Ten years

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2014 panels air hyperlocal news, narrative forms

Entertainment messages for social justice also on Montreal agenda

By Michael Ray Smith

Here is a reminder and an update as we plan for Montreal 2014.

1. Research topics

Please consider submitting a research paper for Montreal 2014. The formal call should be coming soon.

2. Panels for Montreal

While the details are still under way, vice head Lisa A. Phillips of the State University of New York at New Paltz has shepherded some quality programs. Here's a sample of tentative panel proposals:

A) Hyperlocal News on Both Sides of the Border (PF&R)

Description: Hyperlocal journalism, which focuses on geographically small or narrowly defined coverage areas, is evolving as a response to the shrinking number of legacy news outlets, corporate consolidation, and the rise in online news reading and reporting. In a time when Big Hyperlocal (AOL's Patch, Journatic) is under scrutiny and startup news sites try to figure out how to become sustainable for the long haul, this panel will examine trends, issues, and innovation in hyperlocal journalism on both sides of the U.S.-Canada border.

Co-sponsor: Community Journalism.

B) Opportunities and Challenges of Entertainment-Education Interventions for Global Justice (Teaching)

Description: This panel will explore the benefits and disadvantages of embedding pro-social messages in entertainment. Panelists will cite case studies that suggest the advantages of this approach along with examples of messages that are co-opted by third parties with questionable motives. This panel will explore the many opportunities and challenges of strategically using entertainment media to promote global justice and meet critical social needs throughout the world. Presenters will consider the use of entertainment-education to promote peace, reduce ethnic and religious conflict, advocate good health practices, and advance educational goals. Examples of entertainment-education interventions will be discussed from

many different countries.

Co-sponsor: Entertainment.

C) Teaching the New Narrative (Teaching)

Description: How are educators teaching the new forms of multi-platform, narrative journalism that are being embraced by journalistic storytellers around the world? To answer that question, we would build on a panel proposed to the International Association for Literary Journalism Studies. We'd start with a survey, being conducted with IALJS, SPIG and Magazine Division members, to gauge what our colleagues around the world are doing to help their students understand and engage with new -- often digital -- forms of literary journalism. Second, panelists would share their best practical strategies for the classroom. Third, there will be two specific case studies. Finally, in a discussant section, we would examine some of the fundamental assumptions underlying this panel.

Co-sponsor: Magazine.

We have a couple of other panels in the works and we're hopeful that the virtual chip auction works as well as we think it will and the convention will be a success. We had a dozen or more panel ideas submitted and we heard from one AEJMC leader that SPIG's aggressive approach is the kind of planning that will serve our colleagues well. Special thanks to Lisa A. Phillips for her vigilant work on this project and thank you to the members of Small Programs Interest Group for submissions.

SPIG Head Michael Ray Smith is a professor of communication studies at Campbell University, Buies Creek, N.C.

SPIG NEWS CO-EDITORS

Richard D. Hendrickson
Journalism instructor, Los Angeles
newsprof@mac.com 323-806-1427

Sandra L. Combs
Arkansas State University
scombs@astate.edu 870-972-2704

Miller endows SPIG's Teacher of the Year award

By Mary Alice Basconi

The honor became sweeter for SPIG's Teacher of the Year when Ginger Rusedeal Carter Miller endowed the annual teaching award during the annual SPIG convention luncheon.

"We needed to endow the award, and we have it now," said Miller, who retired this year from Georgia College and State University because of a medical disability. "I can't think of anything I'd rather leave my money to than this group."

Miller's will gives \$10,000 to endow the award. Miller and her father, Leman Rusedeal, plus friends Janet and Don Richardson and Jimilene Davis, made an additional contribution

See **MILLER**, page 8



Former SPIG Head Ginger Carter Miller speaks at the annual Teacher of the Year luncheon in Washington, D.C.

Mary Alice Basconi photo

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popped up.

In a matter of hours, "Engaged Journalism: Connecting With Digitally Empowered News Audiences" found a spot on the Web as a project coming in 2014. All three are compelling for journalism educators and Mediabistro.com has provided a service by linking to all three in a column posted in October.

<http://www.mediabistro.com/10000words/digitaljournalismbooksresources/b23628>

The reports that are ready now will take a while to digest but all have a similar theme: journalism is a public trust and much is up for grabs as the old display advertising business model withers and journalism educators wonder who will underwrite the free flow of information that is crucial to keep

this fragile democracy thriving.

I'm wondering if history will repeat itself and we will return to the likes of the partisan press, where journalism will have some kind of sponsor who will want a particular message to be reinforced over and over, perhaps in a covert way.

For a snapshot into today's journalism, "Searchlights and Sunglasses" is a breezy report by Eric Newton of the Knight Foundation that also deals with some somber topics.

"Educating Journalists" is a bit more academic and includes heavyweights such as Jean Folkerts, John Maxwell Hamilton and Nicholas Lemann. along with the journalism powerhouse, Columbia Journalism School. Not surprising, the authors underline the need for timeless topics to be taught in J schools. Among them are history and theory, two areas critics often say are

missing in the praxis of what some see as formula writing and glorified stenography.

"Engaged Journalism," written by Southern Methodist University professor Jake Batsell, uses the faithful method of interviewing journalists from all over in a quest to find out what is working well in newsrooms around the nation. The book is in the works but it is receiving lots of good buzz even now.

These reports, while a bit alarming, can provide some insight into how journalism and mass communication educators can rethink our roles to do the good that drove us into this field in the first place.

SPIG Head Michael Ray Smith is a professor of communication studies at Campbell University, Buies Creek, N.C.

CROWDFUNDED, from page 4

Each month, Flattr looks at the content that each user (posts) and then distributes his or her donation in equal portions — after deducting a 10 percent service fee.

The old advertising model is broken, Marchionni said.

“The ‘sugar daddy’ model — one big Macy’s ad a month — has disappeared,” she said. Marchionni called the new model “a hybrid between buying a service and giving to a charitable organization.”

One reason Flattr works is that it connects cash to the habitual gesture of “liking,” she said. To Marchionni, the implications for journalism are clear: Newsrooms that succeed will become platforms of individual talent.

“Flattr is not trying to make any one person or organization wealthy,” she said. “...Is it going to fund *New York Times* investigations? Of course not.”

Ralph Hanson of University of Nebraska-Kearney said American journalism is perceived as a corporate business. Yet the donor model has its precedent: McDonald’s indirectly supports National Public Radio because Ray Kroc, the restaurant chain’s founder, set up a foundation that underwrites NPR programming.

Hanson has used Kickstarter for several media projects. A project is proposed, reviewed by Kickstarter and only funded if it meets its goal.

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that doubles the current prize value.

During the Aug. 10 luncheon, Mary “Mitzi” Lewis of Midwestern State University became the first Ginger Rusedeal Carter Miller Teacher of the Year, after the award was renamed in Miller’s honor.

“I am so appreciative for SPIG and what SPIG offers,” Lewis said. “You’re like my family here.”

In her teaching philosophy statement, Lewis wrote: “I try to provide students with tools and opportunities to help them find and develop their strengths so that they leave my classes with a sense of self-respect for what

Kickstarter may not finance an entire project. “Sacred Poison,” a film about contaminated Navajo lands, raised \$50,000 through traditional channels and had \$12,000 to go. Through Kickstarter, it collected that money in 30 days. Hanson said that although Kickstarter takes 5 percent of proceeds, it provides credibility.

Panelists agreed that social media drives traffic to crowdfunding sites. Weinstock said his son targets Twitter users with plenty of followers.

E-learning also taps into crowdfunding at “For Journalism: Data Journalism for All,” a resource for working journalists that turned to Kickstarter for content development funds. Again, Twitter builds traffic.

Weinstock doubts Kickstarter would work for student projects because most students have yet to build large social media networks. Plus, “monster campaigns” launched by celebrities make it harder for smaller projects to get noticed.

Albertson asked what happens after donors back a project. “Is there

a central clearing house for journalism projects?” she asked. “Can the funders help with distribution?”

And Marchionni said journalists with a “20th century mindset” are unlikely to embrace crowdfunding. “It’s hard for them to wrap their heads around the idea.”

Mary Alice Basconi teaches at East Tennessee State University.

they have accomplished, a sense of wonder for what is still left to explore, and the confidence and tools to go about that exploration as they continue on their path as life-long learners.”

Midwestern’s mass communication chair, Jim Sernoe, praised her teaching, scholarship, service and leadership in launching the online journal *Teaching Journalism and Mass Communication*.

Sernoe wrote: “Dr. Lewis personifies all we in the SPIG hope our members can achieve.”

Mary Alice Basconi teaches at East Tennessee State University.

*“The ‘sugar daddy’ model -- one big Macy’s ad a month -- has disappeared.”
The new model is “a hybrid between buying a service and giving to a charitable organization.”*

-- Doreen Marchionni

Q&A: What books do you use in literary journalism?

A conversation on the SPIG Discussion List

Donna Harrington-Lueker (Salve Regina) asked:

*Can anyone recommend a good nonfiction title to read in a feature writing class? I’ve used *The Soloist before--and it went over quite well--but that was a few years ago, and I suspect student tastes have changed. I’m looking for something current that students will enjoy. Any thoughts? Titles you’ve had good luck with lately?**

John Hanc (NY Institute of Technology): Fellow SPIGers John Capouya, Mitzi Lewis and I did a presentation on this very topic at last year’s conference of the International Association of Literary Journalism Studies, in Toronto.

David Abrahamson has (on the IALJS website, I believe) a bibliography of the 100 greatest works of literary journalism. Some of them date back to the late 1800s, but some are recent. We discussed that, and examined others that had seemingly worked (and not) for us.

I don’t believe in shoving the Sixties down my students’ throats, either. In our presentation at IALJS, John C. noted that no matter how hard he tries to convince his students of the greatness of Talese’s “Frank Sinatra Had a Cold” is, the fact is, they don’t really know Sinatra, and thus care not a bit about him or his cold; so part of the whole point of that classic story is lost on them.

That said, I wouldn’t be so fast to dismiss everything from the past.

A couple years back I asked students to choose a literary non-fiction work to read and write about, as part of a class in feature writing. Told them they could draw from Dr. Abrahamson’s list or make

CONVERSATION

a case for something more recent.

Several students, independently of each other, found (and loved) Barbara Ehrenreich’s “Nickel and Dimed,” because they could relate to the idea of people working crappy jobs. Two other students really surprised me. One chose and loved “How the Other Half Lives,” by Jacob Riis, a book published in 1890. Another thoroughly enjoyed Jack London’s “People of the Abyss,” his 1903 account of the London slums. Obviously these two books have something in common (about the urban underprivileged, living in the ghastliest slums of conditions.)

One other journalist that resonated with them (and who I would defend as being literary in his own way) was the WW 2 front line reporter Ernie Pyle. Maybe it’s because even Millennials know about WW II (from “Band of Brothers” or “Call of Duty,” not sure which) or maybe it’s because they’ve grown up in wartime and some have served. Regardless, I found that they really liked and were often moved by Pyle’s simple, but powerful writing and reportage.

The moral? If it’s seen as a topic of interest to them, if it’s well written, many of them will respond, no matter what the copyright date is.

Kim Pearson (The College of New Jersey): I plan to use “Tom’s River: A Story of Science and Salvation” this fall in a course on health and environmental reporting. Author Dan Fagin managed to make the story of a community’s long and tortured relationship with an industrial polluter a real page-turner while supplying helpful context about the

evolution of dye manufacturing, the history of occupational medicine, the methods and limits of epidemiology and the politics of environmental regulation.

In magazine writing classes, I’ve used Helen Epstein’s work to teach structure and form, especially Her 1978 *New York Times* magazine profile of Vladimir Horowitz and excerpts of her book, *Children of the Holocaust*. (Chapter 4 is a reverse bildungsroman, for example.)

And I still use the opening of “Frank Sinatra Has a Cold.”

For first person, I love Jelani Cobb’s essay collection, “The Devil and Dave Chappelle.” I especially love the pieces on the Million Man March, and the poignant essay about losing a stepdaughter to divorce, “My Daughter, Once Removed.”

Finally, Margo Jefferson’s collection of Pulitzer-winning writings for *The New York Times* can teach volumes about voice in writing. (<http://www.pulitzer.org/citation/1995-Criticism>)

Lisa Phillips (SUNY New Paltz): I’ve had wonderful experiences with these two books: “The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks” brought up issues of journalism and medical ethics, reporter persistence, reporter-source relationships (especially source vulnerability) and when a reporter should put herself in the story. “Random Family” is a tour de force of immersion journalism which led to great discussions on reporter responsibility, what journalism can do to shed light on difficult social issues such as the “culture of poverty,” character development, and endless other stuff. Happy to share materials on either -- just email me. phillipl@newpaltz.edu

See **BOOKS**, page 10

ASSESSMENT, from page 5

ago, departments had to at least show plans. Five years ago, they needed to show some results.

Today, driven by accreditation standards, programs not only have to engage in formal assessment of learning outcomes, they have to use a feedback loop or some other means to show how the program has improved because of assessment.

"It is wishful thinking to think we can ignore assessment, that we can hold it off long enough that it will go away," he said.

When done well, assessment is worth the time, Parsons said. Each department has to decide what works best and how the results have an impact on students' learning.

The speakers discussed various assessment techniques, such as direct assessment (e.g., collecting student work and evaluating it against set criteria) and indirect (looking at syllabi as an indicator of what is intended to happen in the classroom). Some departments use pre-tests and post-tests to try to measure how much students learn.

At the University of North Carolina, Asheville, panelist Sonya DiPalma said she was appointed as assessment liaison even though she was a junior member of the Department of Mass Communication. An initial reaction from colleagues was, "I'm glad I don't have to worry about this because you have it all," she said.

DiPalma said she has worked hard to make assessment

a shared responsibility in the department. When done well, it helps refocus academic efforts on a student's success, not a professor's effort. If successful, it can lead to better data-driven decision making and higher customer satisfaction.

John Williams, former chair of the Mass Communication Department at Principia College in Elisha Ill., agreed. Assessment should focus on outputs – how much can you demonstrate that the student learned –

rather than inputs such as the number of hours spent teaching, how quickly the professor returned papers, or how enthusiastic the person was.

Faculty members can be relieved to learn the focus is on aggregated students, not individuals, and often on multiple courses instead of a single section, he said. Departments that are struggling with

assessment should look at what tools they are already using to measure student learning and build them into an assessment plan, he said, rather than starting from scratch.

Parry, entering her third year as chair, said faculty members will take their cue from the chair.

If the chair displays a positive attitude, delegates much of the work and leverages studies that are already underway, she said, the process can produce results that will aid in teaching and student learning.

James Simon teaches at Fairfield University.

(political scandal, potential war, government response to natural disasters); others the standards (murder, war, man vs. nature).

Kay Colley (West Texas): Last year I used "Friday Night Lights" and "A Zoo Story" as two of my choices. "Friday Night Lights" went over really well because most had seen the movie and/or TV series. Good contrast.

Maureen Boyle (Stonehill): "The Good Soldiers" by David Finkel was one of many I used in my nonfiction narrative course. "Sam: Boy Behind the Mask" by Tom Hallman is also good but it is out of print. I had to get copies directly from the author. Students seemed to like both books.

"It's wishful thinking to think we can ignore assessment, that we can hold it off long enough that it will go away."

-- Paul Parsons

BOOKS, from page 9

Maureen Boyle (Stonehill): I've matched "Hiroshima" with "The Good Soldiers" to show the progression of war narrative. I'm also adding "The Perfect Storm" for the first time this year and plan to marry it with newspaper narratives. "In Cold Blood" always works as a classic, although not without flaws.

Patricia Ann Miller (Valdosta): "Breach of Faith," "New Jack" (good for first person narration), "The Perfect Storm" (good for showing failure of speculation: when journalism really becomes fiction), "In Cold Blood" (for structure); "The Bridge at No Gun Ri," "And the Band Played On," "Factory Girls" (factory girls in China) -- another good for first person; "All the President's Men" and "Hiroshima." Some of these have historical perspective with contemporary correlations

Minutes of the SPIG 2013 business meeting

Washington, D. C.

Welcome and Introductions

Kay Colley, SPIG 2012-13 Head, welcomed new and returning members to the Aug. 10, business meeting in Washington, D.C. She thanked the officers, the editors of the *Teaching Journalism and Mass Communication Journal*, and the SPIG membership for a year filled with many first from a heightened social media presence to a special edition of *The Journal* to the renaming of the Teacher of the Year award to honor Ginger Carter Miller.

Colley noted that the Small Programs Interest Group is now the second largest Interest group with 109 members. The Political Communication Interest Group leads the interest group division with about 300 members. She mentioned that *The Journal* helps to define us as a group as well as SPIG's sponsorship of hot topics such as the panel on the Boston Marathon bombing, which CSPAN covered. Ideally, Colley hopes our recruitment theme will be "Each one, bring one."

Expanding Our Social Media Presence

Social media co-chairs Sonya DiPalma and Carolyn Kim discussed SPIG's social media presence on Facebook and Twitter. While last year was about acquiring "likes" on Facebook, this year the social media co-chairs hope to make Facebook more viable as a means for engagement on issues facing the discipline or the profession. DiPalma mentioned the need to have more members starting conversations on Facebook and that the listserv has been a valuable tool for driving members to Facebook for "likes." Over the course of 2012-2013, it appeared that SPIG membership preferred using the listserv rather than Facebook. Members expressed the desire to utilize the listserv for comments that may be more critical in nature such as job descriptions, and textbook recommendations, and use Facebook for discussion pertaining to the profession or discipline.

Kim noted that Facebook allows non-members to better understand the interests of SPIG and to view links for the newsletter and *The Journal*. However, when no conversations are happening, then it may appear as if we're not engaging with members. Lastly, the social media co-chairs emphasized that they are not asking to get rid of the Listserv, but need people to engage with social media.

Teaching Journalism and Mass Communication Journal

Vivian Martin thanked Michael Ray Smith and Michael Longinow for a job well done on the special service-learning edition of *The Journal* and the subsequent panel held at AEJMC. The special edition accomplished a number of SPIG's goals by speaking to teaching, making use of multimedia, and including a variety of research methodologies.

SPIG had 2,254 unique visitors to the special edition of *The Journal*, which is primarily responsible for driving traffic to the SPIG website. Martin said having the special issues is a good way to sustain *The Journal* since we're a small group and it takes a lot of team effort. Having guest editors provides some break to the regular editors. In addition, she said the *The Journal* editors discovered a winter and summer edition works best given everyone's teaching load.

Brian Steffen expressed interest in becoming the new editor of *The Journal*, and the editors will begin making this transition over 2013-2014. The next call for papers for *The Journal* will be in September. Others interested in working as editor or on production of *The Journal* should contact Vivian Martin.

Scholarship of Application

Colley encouraged members to apply for the Scholarship of Application Contest because it is a natural fit for most teaching 12 credit hours per semester. Several members suggested providing application examples at the beginning of the academic year so those interested may prepare to submit in the spring.

Other new business

Election of 2013-14 Officers: Kay Colley introduced the new slate of officers for 2013-14. Jim Sernoe, Midwestern State University, moved the election of Michael Ray Smith, as the incoming head,

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as well as the other officers. Jack Zibluk, Southeast Missouri State University, seconded, and the membership unanimously approved her election and the election of the other officers with a voice vote. The officers for 2013-14 are:

Head: **Michael Ray Smith**, Campbell

Co-Vice Heads: **Gail Henson**, Bellarmine University, and **Lisa Phillips**, State University of New York at New Palz

Secretary: **Sonya DiPalma**, UNCA Asheville

Research: **Patrick Sutherland**, Bethany College, and **Mia Moody**, Baylor University

Teaching: **Stephanie Bor**, University of Nevada at Reno, and **Liz Atwood**, Hood College

PF&R: **Michael Longinow**, Biola University, and **Katherine Orloff**, Hood College

Newsletter Editors: **Richard Hendrickson**, John Carroll University, and **Sandra L. Combs**, Arkansas State

Website: **Mitzi Lewis**, Midwestern State

Listserv: **Brian Steffen**, Simpson

Membership: **Cindy Simoneau**, Southern Connecticut State, **Jim Simon**, Fairfield University

Social Media: **Sonya DiPalma**, UNC Asheville, and **Carolyn Kim**, Biola University

G.I.F.T Liaison: **Mary Jean Land**, Georgia College & State University

Hot Topics: **John Jenks**, Dominican

Liaison, Commission on the Status of Women: **Sandra L. Combs**, Arkansas State

Liaison, Commission on the Status of Minorities: **Lona Cobb**, Winston-Salem State

The Journal: **Vivian Martin**, Central Connecticut, and **Mitzi Lewis**, Midwestern State

b. SPIG goals for 2013-14: **Michael Ray Smith**, newly elected SPIG Head, outlined his primary goals for the upcoming year.

- (1) Engage members and continue to add members.
- (2) Promote the newsletter and *The Journal* to AEJMC through our social media. Increase social media traffic on Facebook likes and post on Facebook.
- (3) Continue the trend of partnering with divisions for panels that are relevant to our mission.
- (4) Continue growth in the research competition.
- (5) Transition our founding journal editors into past editors.
- (6) Expand SPIG's identity. Kay Colley will help by developing YouTube videos on Teacher of the Year and a branding campaign for SPIG. She is looking for assistances on this campaign.
- (7) AEJMC 2014 conference is in Montreal and members should make sure they have an up-to-date passport. Carrie Buchanan offered to scout for locations to hold the SPIG social in Montreal.
- (8) SPIG has a budget of about \$1,500. AEJMC is about \$8,000 short of its Centennial fundraising goal. Smith suggested SPIG donate another \$100. The recommendation was unanimously approved with a recommendation to AEJMC that money be awarded to graduate students wanting to attend next year's conference.

Minutes provided by **Sonya DiPalma**, UNCA Asheville