

Annual report: CJIG now largest interest group

By **Jack Morris**
 CJIG head
 and **Sharon Iorio**
 research co-chair

The Civic Journalism Interest Group recently submitted its annual report to AEJMC. The following are highlights from that report.

Overview

CJIG is the largest interest group in AEJMC with 110 members. According to AEJMC, 44 of our members are male, 46 female, 79 Caucasian, 8 African American, 7 international, 2 disabled, 1 Asian American and 1 Latina/ Latino. A survey will be conducted at the convention to acquire a more detailed demographic breakdown that includes officers, paper judges, panelists, moderators and discussants. The group's financial account balance is \$4,014.43.



Jack Morris



Sharon Iorio

Research

Research activities this year were focused, engaged interest across the association and provided leadership for the field of mass communication. However, the group would like to attract more research paper submissions.

At our annual business meeting in New Orleans last year, the idea for this year's pre-convention research workshop was put forward to encourage submissions. The workshop will focus on the following topics:

- networking to establish partnerships between academics and professionals
- making connections for grant requests
- building effective research
- continuing successful partnerships through data collection
- realizing productive outcomes for the newsroom and researcher

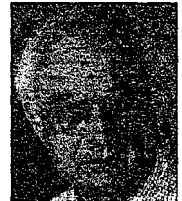
We encourage student research and judge it for convention presentation. CJIG gives \$100 to the top-rated fac-

Continued on next page

THE SCHEDULE

Tuesday, Aug. 8

Preconvention Workshop
Professional Partnerships:
Newsrooms and Applied Research, 1:30-4:30 p.m.



Phil Meyer

Moderating:
 ■ Sharon Iorio,
 Wichita State

Panelists:
 □ Philip Meyer,
 North Carolina-Chapel Hill



Rebecca Payne

■ Rebecca Payne, Arizona-Tucson

■ Esther Thorson,
 Missouri-Columbia



Frank Fee

■ Rick Thames,
 The Wichita Eagle

■ Frank E. Fee Jr.,
 North Carolina-Chapel Hill

Wednesday, Aug. 9

Map Your Community, Diversity Your Reporting, Your Newsroom, 9:45-11:15 a.m.

Wednesday, Aug. 9 (cont.)

Continued on Page 4

Report

Continued from front page
ulty and student papers presented at the annual meeting. Papers are judged according to guidelines provided by AEJMC, and judges' evaluations are mailed to authors of papers. The Pew Center for Civic Journalism gives certificates for top faculty and student papers.

This year CJIG will hold one research paper session with five presentations, and it will sponsor four papers to in the scholar-to-scholar session.

The quality of the submissions show that CJIG is engaging mass communication research. Research on which the papers were based spanned traditional methodologies, including both qualitative and quantitative methods.

The papers and meeting panels also reflect new methods such as civic mapping, life histories and the triangulation of several types.

The status of theory in the group's research efforts is expanding dramatically from civic journalism's early ties to the work of Lippmann and Dewey. Literature reviews for papers to be presented this year emanated from a humanities-centered core (both pre- and post-Dewey) and from a social science perspective embracing interactive orientations and structural functionalism.

Topics of research papers both last year and this address

journalistic techniques, educating professional and student journalists, evaluating civic journalism outside the United States, and juxtaposing civic and community journalism.

As the above information shows, CJIG is a setting for innovative, theory-driven, action-oriented work. The number of faculty research paper submissions was 11; number of acceptances was 7, or 60 percent. The number of student research papers submissions was 4; the number of acceptances was 2, or 50 percent.

Teaching

The CJIG consistently strives to bring researchers, teachers and practitioners together in a creative synergy to address practical problems in journalism. Among the CJIG-sponsored or co-sponsored convention sessions that address this by exploring journalism pedagogy and methodology are:

"Map Your Community; Diversify Your Report," in which a panel will discuss the emerging practice of civic mapping and its potential to increase community connectedness, evaluate media effects, and prompt new approaches to teaching (see schedule, Page 1).

Civic mapping involves identifying and defining subsets of the larger community; civic election coverage involves asking citizens what the issues are; and civic and developmental journalism attempt to empower citizens by including them in

the process of writing news.

"Designing Media Research to Enhance Professional Practice" will be a panel focusing on how research can be shared between professional consultants and academics.

"What's Coming? Will We Be Ready for It?" a luncheon sponsored by the Pew Center for Civic Journalism, will focus on equipping journalists and teachers for the new communications era.

"Teledemocracy in the Age of the Internet" address questions about the impact of non-journalistic organizations, especially on the Internet, delivering the news.

"Campaign 2000: How Well Are We Covering It?" will focus on new approaches to political news coverage.

"Coaching and Critiquing Student journalists Part II: Put Me in Coach; I'm Ready to Write" is a three-hour session on coaching student writers. It will focus on the theory, practice and pedagogy of writing. Recent communications research suggests coaching is to teaching as civic journalism is to traditional journalism.

Professional Freedom and Responsibility

This year, the CJIG concentrated on three areas of PF&R: inclusiveness, free expression and media criticism.

Racial, gender and cultural inclusiveness are central to civic journalism, which always seeks

Continued on next page

Report

Continued from previous page
new ways to include the news audience and other citizens in constructing the news.

These aforementioned convention sessions address inclusiveness: "Map Your Community; Diversify Your Report" and "Campaign 2000: How Well Are We Covering It?"

Another convention session that focuses on inclusiveness is "Civic and Developmental Journalism: Parallels and Differences." It will include a discussion of the connection between practice and theory of democracy, journalism and the public sphere. Media criticism of developmental journalism and civic journalism has identified a common focus on empowering citizens through participation in the news process.

Free expression and privacy issues on the Internet comprise one of the hottest areas for public debate today. "Teledemocracy in the Age of the Internet," mentioned earlier, will include a discussion of these topics.

"What's Coming? Will We Be Ready for It?" will focus on equipping journalists, teachers and media critics for the new communications era.

The CJIG is the primary sponsor for all of the above convention sessions except the coaching session.

Two CJIG newsletters have been published since the last

convention, and another is in the works. We also have publicized our activities at mid-year meetings and through the Pew Center for Civic Journalism "Civic Catalyst" newsletter.

Accomplishments, Goals

CJIG's primary accomplishment in teaching this year was the successful negotiation at the winter meeting to create a back-to-back session on teaching news writing. While we are not listed as the session's primary sponsor, CJIG Vice-Head Kathy Campbell was instrumental in proposing the co-sponsored session and following through in its organization. She will be a panelist in that session.

CJIG's primary accomplishment in professional freedom and responsibility this year was the creation of the three previously mentioned panel discussions that focus on inclusivity.

One goal we did not accomplish this year was a mid-year CJIG meeting. We simply ran out of time and open dates. If the group wants such a meeting next year, plans should be made during the business meeting at the convention in Phoenix. Members who want to spearhead such a project should come ready to volunteer a site and make a proposal so planning can begin immediately.

As the civic/ public journalism movement matures, it must continue to more carefully define itself and ask why it exists. Will the name eventually dissolve back into simply jour-

Thanks, judges!

Many thanks to the following people who served as judges in this year's paper competition: Aileen Ratzlaff, Florida; Lewis Friedland, Wisconsin-Madison; Pat Dooley, Wichita State; Frank Fee, Ohio; Sharon Iorio, Wichita State; Danc Claussen, Southwest Missouri State; Jack Zibluk, Arkansas State; Henry Overduin, McNeese State; Carol Reese Dykers, Salem College; and Vernon Keel, Wichita State.

nalism, as Davis Merritt suggested in his seminal book, "Public Journalism & Public Life: Why Telling the News is Not Enough" (1995)? Or will it become a permanent specialized area of mass communication? The answer to this question will have a significant bearing on whether CJIG applies for division status.

The following goals stem from these considerations:

- Solicit research papers that focus on the practice, criticism, teaching and ethics of civic journalism.
- Propose co-sponsored convention sessions that try to define civic journalism through specific practices, criticism and teaching methods.
- Decide at the August business meeting whether to have a mid-year meeting.

THE SCHEDULE (CONTINUED)

Continued from front page

Moderating:

- Walter Dean, Pew Center for Civic Journalism

Panelists:

- Robert M. Ruggies, Florida A&M
- Lew Friedland, Wisconsin
- John X. Miller, Public Editor, Detroit Free Press

Campaign 2000: How Well Are We Covering It? 1-2:30 p.m.

Moderating:

- Jan Schaffer, Pew Center for Civic Journalism

Panelists:

- Tom Rosenstie, Project on Excellence in Journalism
- Karon Speckman, Truman State
- Anders Gylienhaal, Raleigh News & Observer

Civic and Developmental Journalism: Parallels and Differences, 4: 15-5:45 p.m.

Moderating:

- Theodore Glasser, Stanford

Panelists:

- James Carey, Columbia
- Shelton Gunaratne, Morehead State
- Minabere ibeiema, Alabama
- Jay Rosen, New York

Designing Media Research to Enhance Professional Practice, 6-7:30 p.m.

Moderating:

- Dave Kurpius, Louisiana State

- Donica Mensing, Nevada

Panelists:

- James Gentry, Kansas
- Steve Lacy, Michigan State
- Steve Smith, editor, Statesman Journal, Salem, Ore,
- Jan Schaffer, Pew Center

Thursday, Aug. 10

Pew Center luncheon, noon-1 p.m.

Moderating:

- Jan Schaffer, Pew Center

Teledemocracy in the Age of the Internet, 2:45-4:15 p.m.

Moderating:

- Jan Schaffer, Pew Center

Panelists:

- Nora Paul, Director of New Media, Minnesota
- Mindy McAdams, Knight Chair, Internet and Democracy, Florida
- Alex Sheshunoff, President; e-the Peoplecorn
- Jack Morris, Adams State

Respondent:

- William J. Leonhirth, North Florida

Research Papers, 4:30-6 p.m.

Moderating:

- Sharon Iorio, Wichita State

Gettin' Down to Biz, 6:15-7:45 p.m.

Presiding:

- Jack Morris, Adams State

Friday, Aug. 11

Put Me In Coach, I'm Ready to Write, 1-4:15 p.m.

Primary sponsor: Small Programs interest Group; co-sponsors: CJIG, Community College Journalism, Radio-TV Journalism

Moderating:

- Sonya Duhe-Forte, South Carolina
- John Hanc, New York Institute of Technology

Panelists:

- Larry Burkum, Drury
- Lew Friedland, Wisconsin
- Carroll Nardone, El Paso Community College
- CA. Tuggie, North Carolina
- Kathy Campbell, Southern Oregon
- Kristin Giiger, Arizona Republic
- Arlene Scadron, Pima Community College
- Chip Scanian, The Poynter Institute

Send news, essays and teaching tips

If you have a civic journalism event to publicize, teaching tips to share, or a short essay about civic journalism you'd like to see published, this is a good place to do it.

Articles should be 500 words or less, written in journalistic (not academic) style.

Send to Cheryl Gibbs, Earlham College, via e-mail: chergibbs@aol.com. If you have questions, phone her at (765) 983-1506.

Good stories come from expanding news values

By Rebecca Payne

CJIG member

We've learned a lot about broadening our news frames and newsgathering techniques in ways that help readers identify more with newspapers, thanks to public journalists. Yet we may not have gone far enough in encouraging real change.

If we teach students only traditional approaches to news, are we perpetuating the problems public journalists attempt to address?

We teach that news is — generally — conflict, novelty, timeliness, prominence, impact and proximity. If our front pages are any proof, our students have learned their lessons well.

Expanded news values — cooperation-consensus, the ordinary, timelessness, the common, relevance and community — make it into print far less often.

Expanded frames for understanding news raises important issues for instructors of reporting and writing classes.

The shift in focus requires reconsideration of how we define news, find news and present it, a process that also reconsiders the traditional neutral role we encourage students to master.

The traditional set of values leads us to define news as events and to focus on well-known people and institutions.

It sets journalists up for asking and answering the questions “what” and “who.”

The expanded values suggests news as a process and even ordinary folks as valid news sources. It encourages journalists to ask and answer “how” and “why-”

A recent semester was a process of discovery for both me and my students.

Some came to my class — their second journalism course — cynical already of journalism as a career.

Some students admitted they find newspapers boring, in what seemed like a simple but accurate summary of many readership polls.

After several discussions about alternative practices, we set out to find stories for general circulation newspapers that students themselves found newsworthy and interesting.

First, students went into the community and found an ordinary person they considered interesting, but whom they didn't already know. They became participant observers for a semester in the lives of the people they wrote about.

They drew on non-traditional news values — such as cooperation, community, relevance — and explored the questions of how and why.

They placed stories about the lives of ordinary individuals into the larger context of com-

munity by doing research and interviews with experts.

One story focused on a gay student's transition into fraternity life. The student writer explored how cooperation among a few fraternity brothers helped the notoriously traditional Greek community accept the gay student into the ranks.

Another story examined a priest's decision to enter the church and described the ongoing need to renew the commitment that led him to give up a traditional lifestyle.

Still another student studied the reasons why a 19-year-old daughter of divorced parents had committed herself as her father's caretaker.

Nearly every student produced publishable in-depth pieces about social issues they found important and interesting.

The non-traditional approaches seemed to inspire students to new levels of growth.

And several said they've changed their minds and will stick with journalism as a career after all.

The extra effort it took to rework lesson plans and experiment with broader frames in student storytelling was worth it.

Rebecca Payne is an assistant professor in the Journalism Department at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

Registration still open for CJ/G workshop

Our pre-convention workshop, "Professional Partnerships: Newsrooms and Applied Research," 1:30-4:30 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 8, will feature discussions with editors and faculty researchers about creating partnerships for research.

Topics will include:

- networking to establish partnerships between academics and professionals
- making connections for grant requests
- building effective research
- continuing successful partnerships through data collection
- realizing productive outcomes for the newsroom and researcher

You'll see recent American Society of Newspaper Editors projects and share your own ideas for future research.

The workshop grew out of a discussion at our annual business meeting in New Orleans last year. One goal of the workshop is to encourage research paper submissions.

AEJMC Civic Journalism Interest Group

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