

CJIG on the agenda in DC

Panels, papers, pre-convention workshop planned

Pre-convention workshop

Practical Partnerships: Working Models for Teaching and Moderating: Al Stavitsky, Oregon

Panelists: Kathy Campbell, Southern Oregon University; Judi Hetrick, Miami of Ohio; Cheryl Gibbs, Earlham; Reggie Owens, Louisiana Tech

Saturday, Aug. 5, 1-5 p.m.

“Inclusivity: Building Diversity in Framing News Reports and Covering Communities of Color”

Freedom and Responsibility panel

Co-sponsor: Minorities and Communication

Presiding: Jane Twomey, American University

Panelists: Ellen Foley, ME, Philadelphia Daily News; Jan Schaffer, PewCenter for Civic Journalism; Shirley Staples Carter, Wichita State University; Tanni Haas, Brooklyn College

Sunday, Aug. 5; 9:45-11:15 a.m.

Refereed Paper Session

Presiding: Kenton Bird, Idaho

Discussant: Jack Morris, Adams State University

“Teaching Crime and Violence Reporting from a Public Journalism Perspective,” Judy Belch and Esther

Thorson, University of Missouri

Civic Journalism in the U.S. 2000 Senate Race in Virginia,

Continued on page 2

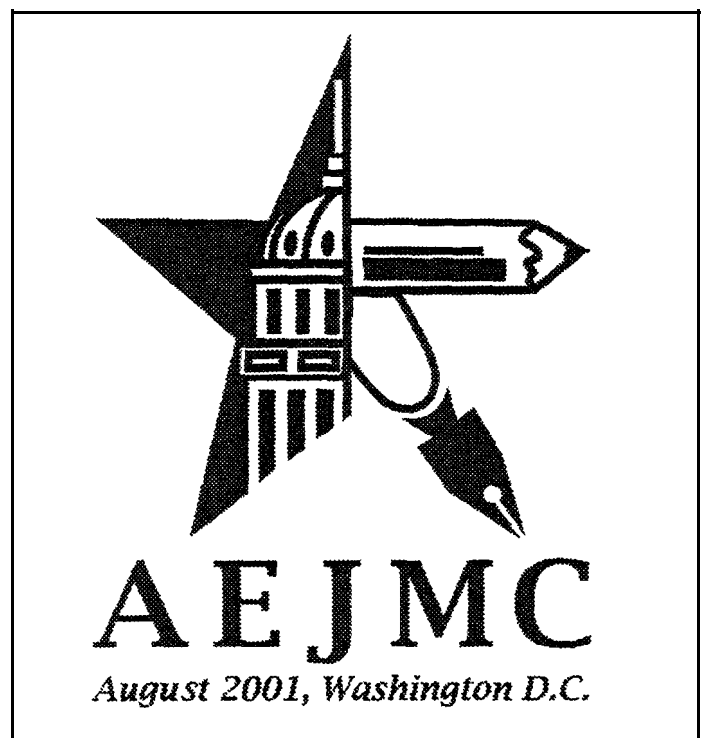
Come, attend-, serve – and no excuses!

by Kathy Campbell
CJIG president

Ahhhhh. If only I were more skilled in public relations and promotion, I would lead this column with an irresistible exhortation to all of you to pack your bags this minute for the fabulous AEJMC convention in Washington, D.C. I would entice you with visions of yourself strolling past the Washington Monument on a lovely summer evening, losing yourself in any number of Smithsonians, sailing the Potomac, lunching with George W. and Laura . . . all after a fulfilling day of engaging in intellectually stimulating discussion, shmoozing and socializing in our nation’s capital.

But, if you haven’t figured out by now that this is the AEJMC convention opportunity of the decade (Well, of the half-decade — is there a special word for that??), you’re on

Continued on page 2



Continued from page 1

David Kennamer and Jeff South, Virginia Commonwealth
Civic Journalism Influence on local TV NEWS Coverage of
the 2000 Elections, Amy Reynolds, Indiana, and Gary-
Hicks, Southern Illinois

Civic Autonomy in Journalism Education: An Alternative to
the Lure of Detachment, Michael McDevitt, New Mexico

“Researching New Trends in Community Newspapers: Ways to Identify Stakeholders and Find News”

Research session

Co-sponsor: Media Management and Economics

Presiding: Kathy Campbell, Southern Oregon University

Papers: Dan Suwyn, ME, Savannah Morning News; Ellen
Foley, ME, Philadelphia Daily News; Jan Schaffer, director,
Pew Center for Civic Journalism; Ken Smith, University of
Wyoming; David Coulson, University of Nevada-Reno
Sunday, Aug. 5; 4: 15-545 p.m.

Business Session

Presiding: Kathy Campbell, chair, Southern Oregon

Sunday, Aug. 5; 6-7:30 p.m.

Scholar to Scholar Session

“After Columbine, Public Journalism and the Needs of
Youth — A Case Study,” Jan Maxson, Washington Univer-
sity

Top Student Paper, CJIG

Monday, Aug. 6; 8: 15-9:45 a.m.

“Honoring Jack McLeod: Five Decades of Communication Scholarship”

Research panel

Primary sponsor: Communication Theory and Methodology

Presiding: Jessica Zubric, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Discussant: Jack M. McLeod, University of Wisconsin-
Madison

Papers: “Community Integration and Democratic Participa-
tion,” Lewis Friedland, University of Wisconsin-Madison;

“Media Orientations,” Daniel McDonald, Ohio State Uni-
versity

Monday, Aug. 6; 2:45-4:15 p.m.

“News in a Digital Democracy: Conver- gence and Specialized Audiences”

Professional Freedom and Responsibility panel

Co-Sponsor: Scholastic Journalism

Presiding: Sharon Hartin Iorio, Wichita State University

Presenters: Jim Warren, Washington Bureau of Chicago Tri-

bune; David Brauer, Minnesota E-Democracy Network;
Mindy McAdams, University of Florida; Candace Perkins
Bowen, Kent State
Tuesday, Aug. 7; 8:30-10 a.m.

CJIG and Pew Center for Civic Journalism Luncheon

Presiding: Jan Schaffer, executive director, Pew Center for
Civic Journalism

Keynote speech: “Covering a New America: How Multicul-
tural Communities are Shaping the Future of Journalism,”
Martin D. Baron, executive editor, The *Miami Herald*

Tuesday, Aug. 7: noon-2 p.m.

“In the Public Interest? Evaluating Media Coverage of the 2000 Election”

Professional Freedom and Responsibility panel

Primary sponsor: Communication Theory and Methodology

Presiding: Patricia Moy, Washington

Papers: “Missed Opportunities in Pre-Election Polling,”

Philip Meyer, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill;

“Why the Press Has Lost Touch with the Meaning of Our
Campaigns,” Tom Rosenstiel, Project for Excellence in

Journalism and vice chair, Committee of Concerned Jour-
nalists; “Sleuthing for Clues: How Voters Learned About

the Candidates,” Jan Schaffer, Pew Center for Civic Jour-
nalism; “What We Learned from Election Night Mistakes,”

Kathleen Frankovic, director of surveys and producer, CBS
News

Tuesday, Aug. 7; 2:45-4: 15 p.m.

Executive Committee Meeting

Presiding: Kathy Campbell, chair, Southern Oregon

Wednesday, Aug. 8, noon-1 p.m.

‘A Journalist’s ToolBox’

Four 13minute videos for training and discussion.

Retool some core competencies. This ToolBox will help
journalists ask better questions, find better sources, dis-
cover new stories and report them better. It draws on the
experiences of working journalists in Charlotte, Norfolk,
Tampa and Orange County, Calif. Cost is \$10 per four-
video set (for postage and handling). View transcripts
and order at [www.pewcenter.org/doing-cj/videos/tool-
box.html](http://www.pewcenter.org/doing-cj/videos/tool-
box.html). For a copy, call or e-mail the Pew Center,
202-331-3200 or news@pccj.org.

No excuses

Continued from page 1

your own. So here goes with what you'll get if you're there — I know you can figure out that this is what you'll miss if you're not! !

Pretty important decision-making:

So what are we going to do with ourselves? Is it time to make a move for division status? Or is it time to fold ourselves into one of the existing divisions — mainstream ourselves, so to speak? We need to talk, taking into consideration our overall membership, the number of research papers submitted, the number of actively involved members — and of course, our larger purpose. I think we can begin this conversation by revisiting our reason for being and then start talking about how we can best accomplish it. More visibility — that is, division status — may be one solution. Mainstreaming may be another.

And then there are the housekeeping chores: We need to elect new officers and start planning for next year's convention. Volunteers, email me (campbeka@sou.edu). Escape is not an option. You know that I will hunt you down at the convention and get you to the business meeting using all my powers of Persuasion — cookies bein' chief among them.

We have TWO business meetings

planned: The first is Sunday at 6 p.m. It is, unfortunately, scheduled against a number of research sessions, but we wanted to get it on the schedule early so that we can start some of these conversations and then have time to mull them over. The second business meeting is on the last day, Wednesday, at noon. Both will feature food in a shameless attempt to get you to attend. Please come!

Pre-convention session:

You just can't miss this. I mean it. Our pre-convention session is titled "Practical Partnerships: Working Models for Teaching and Research." This seminar will look at models for teaching civic journalism, emphasizing partnerships with professional media that can foster both innovative teaching and meaningful research. The key is connecting with media professionals in local communities, and the seminar will focus on these opportunities.

Panelists — so far — include Judi Hetrick of Miami University of Ohio, Cheryl Gibbs of Earlham, Reggie Owens of Louisiana Tech and me. If you want to participate formally, it's not too late. Just let me know. If you want to participate informally, bring your teaching materials and ideas and questions and frustrations.

Moderator will be Al Stavitsky, associate dean at the University of Oregon School of Journalism, whose real career is doing stand-up comedy. You will not be bored at this seminar. Again, there will be treats and lots of great, informal conversation. (It would be good if you can register for it, but if you can't, come anyway!)

Panels and papers:

We have an outstanding line-up of panels, many featuring professionals as well as professors from whom we have not heard before. Check out the full listing elsewhere in this newsletter. And don't forget to RSVP for the Pew luncheon on Tuesday at noon to hear Martin Baron, Executive Editor, The Miami Herald on "Covering a New America: How Multicultural Communities are Shaping the Future of Journalism."

It's free but you need to RSVP at: <http://www.pewcenter.org/doingcj/conf/aejmcluncheon.html>.

And, of course, many of our members are presenting papers and moderating panels and making themselves generally useful throughout the convention under the auspices of other divisions and interest groups. Take in all you can — and then see if you can get Dubya and Miss Laura to do lunch.

Research-speak

We've all read these phrases in research papers. Maybe we've even written them. Maybe we've seen them on one of those ever-circulating e-mail messages: What the research paper says, followed by the interpretation.

"It is believed that . . ."

"I think . . ."

"It is generally believed that . . ."

"A couple of others think so, too . . ."

"Correct within an order of magnitude . . ."

"Wrong"

"A statistically oriented projection of the significance of these findings . . ."

"A wild guess . . ."

"According to statistical analysis . . ."

"Rumor has it . . ."

A careful analysis of obtainable data . . ."

"Three pages of notes were obliterated when I knocked over a glass of red wine."

"It is clear that much additional work will be required before a complete understanding of this phenomenon occurs."

"I don't have a clue what this all means."

Who ordered that?

Civic journalism asks questions often forgotten

Marty Stefsens, consulting editor at the San Francisco Examiner, made the following remarks as the keynote address Saturday, Feb. 10, at the civic journalism conference in Eugene, Ore.

In the 1930s a physicist named Isidor I. Rabi, who later went on to win the Nobel Prize, was breaking the frontiers in the study of subatomic particles. By applying the mechanics of quantum field study, he discovered something that couldn't be explained — a particle almost invisible that was exponentially smaller than an electron. He was so surprised by this unexpected discovery after years of research that he uttered a phrase that is now legend in science circles: "Who ordered that?"

And to complete the circle, those of you who read *The New York Times* this week or the condensed version in *USA Today* learned that even smaller subatomic particles have been discovered by scientists at the Brookhaven Institute.

So the particle that Robbie discovered turned out to be called the muon. It sounds like a Pokemon card, doesn't it?

In this most recent discovery by the Brookhaven scientists who were studying the spin of accelerated muons in a magnetic field, these scientists deduced that there is even yet a smaller particle to which the muon reacts. They discovered it because of the way the muon wobbled. It spun and twirled as if it were dancing with an invisible partner, therefore telling scientists that yet something else existed.

I won't bore you with the details, but by looking for the unexpected, these scientists now believe that they've

proven the theory of strings. And by proving the theory of strings, they've proven that matter responds to all four mechanics of physics, including Einstein's theory of relativity.

OK, I know, too much science on a full stomach. But of course, you ask, how does all this relate to civic journalism?

Scientists study the essence of matter, by listening and observing, in their attempt *to* better understand the universe. That's really not much different than a civic journalist who listens and observes to better understand his universe, his community. And it's a lesson for all of us. The more we listen, the more we are open to the unexpected and the higher quality of our journalism.

We've heard a lot of examples in our sessions today about the Twin Cities television station that ascertained the mood of its community not by listening or talking to politicians but by listening to the citizens who empowered themselves and encouraged their community to tear down that drug house. And we heard Rob Chaney talk about how listening helped him and his readers learn that maybe one of the largest impediments to fighting forest fires isn't water or wind or heat but strep throat.

Every day, newspapers and television stations report the expected. We all know it. We create those budgets in the morning, and we, as editors and managers, love the expected, don't we? Stories turn out the way we said they would. It's written on the budget, they come in at the length we expect — precisely — and they even meet our expectations of being well-written

and include two to three real-people citizen voices. That's a goal for a lot of us at Gannett or Knight-Ridder, and it's what we expect.

But it's not what we really want, and it's not what our readers really want. We all know that the best stories, as well as the best things in life, are unexpected.

Indeed, in my civic journalism career, my most memorable stories have come from the unexpected. When we were still experimenting with some civic journalism techniques, we created the idea of a deliberative interview.

Our immediate goal was to do that old and faithful traditional journalism story: a 20th anniversary. In this case, it was of the tornado that nearly destroyed the small town of Xenia, Ohio. We didn't really want to do the standard looking-back piece, and desperately wanted to avoid the sounds-like-a-freight-train cliché that you see in most tornado stories.

So we gathered together 20 people who lived through the experience and put them all in a room, just a little bit smaller than this one, in a hotel in Xenia. Three reporters were in the room, not to ask questions, not to do interviews but to listen. And I got the job of facilitating the whole thing.

After the initial ice-breaker, the emotion of surviving the experience washed over the room. The years washed away in vivid stories of the storm and survival. By this time, the participants were almost asking and answering their own questions. They remembered how the storm smelled like gasoline because of all the overturned cars. They remembered it felt like sand — actually glass — so

Continued on page 5

Asking the forgotten questions

Continued from page 4

ground by the fury of the storm that it felt like sand matting in their hair.

Then, finally, the real surprise. Everyone in the room had agreed that the real value of the storm was that it had healed the racial divisions in the community, because the storm knocked out the physical divide that made one neighborhood a white neighborhood and one neighborhood a black neighborhood. Black and white churches worked together to rebuild the community.

Who would have thought that healing would come from a tragedy that killed 66 people? Indeed, who ordered that?

And in Binghamton, the **Press & Sun-Bulletin** hosted a two-year long project on reviving an economy battered by the downsizing of “Big Blue.” As the process went along, we asked citizens to create solutions that would revitalize the area. And we got the expected answers: create job training programs, lure more venture capital, improve the transportation grid; reduce government overhead, make governments cooperate, lower energy costs — New York is ahead of its time — and the like.

Far and away, the highest number of people thought that beautifying the area would lead to economic growth. It sounds almost frivolous. In creating action teams to work on these specific areas, I certainly could have disregarded those comments as naive and irrelevant. But, instead, we created a team to study beautification. And, at the first meeting of that team, we had about 200 people. The success of the Binghamton project has been well-documented in work by Lou Friedland and Dave Kurpius, as well as a later work by Pat Ford.

But now, six years after the project began, we have had a lot of success. The teams have long-since stopped meeting and Binghamton is home to a new county library. Route 17, which goes along the Southern tier, is now an interstate highway. And the refurbished airport opened last October. In fact, the biggest obstacle to Binghamton growing now is finding enough workers.

Planting flowers as a pathway to getting more jobs? Who ordered that? But now the most intact civic remnant is

a macho one by Latin and Caribbean standards, is really, they said, sending a message that men are devalued. In the room, as the talking increased, men talked a lot about how there were hundreds of women’s clinics on the island but only one clinic devoted to men. They said there was very little concern about spending money for preventative care and that men were expendable.

In fact, men in the room said that the culture so denigrated men that it led, in turn, to men caring less about life. So they got involved in risky drug-run-

ning, poor sexual behavior, and that led to the current spate of drug-related murders. Women in the room, of course, disagreed, saying that they were

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that beautification effort. They’re still meeting.

I’ve had the great fortune of carrying my civic journalism ministry around the world. Two years ago I was in Kingston, Jamaica, with the aforementioned Buzz Men-it, and we were working on a major civic problem in that community. We weren’t in the vacation area; we were in Kingston, which is the major city in Jamaica, where the murder rate is one of the highest in the world. It’s also a country with spiraling HIV rates, and men there suffer from some of the highest rates of prostate cancer in the world.

As I often do in leading civic journalism workshops, I do a core values exercise. As I lead the group through a series of questions, we as a group come to determine what’s most important to us. It’s a wonderful exercise to really get to the heart of an issue. As we talked with that group of Jamaican journalists, a theme emerged. And, I may add, they moved from English to patois very quickly, so it was a little hard to understand.

The Jamaican culture, while certainly

the glue holding Jamaica together. They have an easier time getting jobs, many of them in the tourist industry, and that men have forsaken their roles in the culture.

So the group concluded, the real story in Jamaica might be gender wars — not health, not crime. Who ordered that?

We, as civic journalists, must strive to find the unexpected, to find the unsung stakeholder in an issue, to listen to unheard opinions, to encourage the reluctant or forgotten citizen.

At the **San Francisco Examiner** we supported the work of Sandy Close and the Pacific News Service. Those of you who are not familiar with her work will find it incredibly eye-opening. Sandy has dedicated her life to giving her voice to those often not heard. If you go down to her office at Third and Market, you’ll find a bunch of teenagers who hang outside. The landlord’s not real fond of them. They’re called the Road Dogs. They’re a bunch of homeless teens who write for the

Continued on page 6

Asking the forgotten questions

Continued from page 5

Pacific News Service. Some of their writing is extraordinary. Other groups she's reached out to include youths in halfway houses or detention centers.

By looking for the unexpected, by listening to the unexpected, we can enliven our stories. It's only human, after all. It's our contradictions that define us, not our commonalities. As writers and editors, we can develop tools to extract the unexpected, to look for that muon wobble that will

show us what we can't see.

The next time you look at a story in a story meeting or go out on interviews, ask different questions. Harwood Research tells us to ask a rather interesting question: "What do you make of that?" By asking that question, you'll elicit a more thoughtful, response and certainly not a "yes" or "no."

Here's some more questions to ask: "What changed your mind?" Ask this of a candidate: "What is your opponent's or the opposition group's greatest strength?" "What event or what thing changed your mind? 'Where do you agree?' "What do you think went right?" "What's missing here?" "What question didn't I ask?"

And one of my favorite questions is this, and I use it in all of my civic journalism projects. It's a question that goes to the heart of personal responsibility. We ask citizens, "What can you do today or this week to solve this community problem?" We hope, and we actually know, that the answers will be surprising. It's what we count on as journalists.

stories is stockholders. We don't care about stockholders of PG&E, do we? Who are they anyway? Well, frankly, the people who own stock in utility companies are what, in the energy parlance, are called widows and orphans. It's a widow and orphan stock.

People on fixed incomes invest in utilities. They're the big loser — one of the big losers — in the California energy crisis.

Choosing surprise. Isn't that really saying that we choose truth?

journalism because it's unpredictable. Civic journalism requires a

leap of faith, almost like jumping off of a skyscraper. We enter into projects without knowing where the community conversation is going. And we can't orchestrate true deliberation. It thrives on the harmonic convergence of the unexpected.

Choosing surprise. Isn't that really saying that we choose truth? The truth is always unexpected, a surprise that resonates with us, a harmonic connection.

And true to the sense of surprise, I leave you with this line, from one of Robert Frost's lesser known poems: "Anything more than the truth would have seemed too weak."

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AEJMC Civic Journalism Interest Group

c/o Charlyne Berens
College of Journalism and Mass Communications
University of Nebraska
110 Avery Hall
Lincoln, NE 68588-0132