

Is civic journalism dead? Judging by activities, no

By Cheryl Gibbs
Head of CJIG

The subject line of her e-mail said, simply, "One question."

"Is civic journalism dead in the U.S.?" Ana Maria Miralles wrote in August.

Having invested countless hours in both teaching and coordinating public journalism in her home country of Colombia, she was concerned that something had gone wrong.



Cheryl Gibbs

She had heard foundation support for the great experiment that people still struggle to name—public or civic?—was coming to an end and some speculated it had run its course. Did that mean the experiment had failed?

In late January, Miralles' fears no doubt were assuaged as she joined 23 other journalists and educators from four continents at Kennesaw State University near Atlanta as they met to create the Public Journalism Network.

That meeting was one of many significant signs of life in civic/public journalism — with more to come, as this and articles in this newsletter attest.

This summer, for example, this interest group will sponsor several thought-provoking panel discussions and research paper presentations about public/civic journalism at the AEJMC convention in August.

Before the convention, we will hold a workshop at which we hope to draw together journalists, researchers and educators from throughout the country. Our goal is to think together about what's been done so far and to discuss how we can continue to explore the important ideas and techniques that have changed the way countless journalists do their jobs.

Researchers also are encouraged to enter papers in the competition that will result in the best papers about civic/public journalism being selected for presentation at the convention.

In addition to these future events, here are some additional developments since we updated members of this group in our last newsletter:

- At the AEJMC convention in August, members of this interest group reaffirmed their sense of purpose and collective desire to continue. For more on this, please visit our Web site: <http://www.has.vcu.edu/civic-journalism/>.

- The Pew Center for Civic Journalism's grant was extended and the center is now slated to close in May. It relocated in November to the University of Maryland, where it shares space with a successor project called J-LAB, The Institute for Interactive Journalism. For more on this, see <http://www.pewcenter.org> and www.j-lab.org.

- The Pew Center's archives will have a permanent home with The Wisconsin Historical Society at the Univer-

THE SCHEDULE

Kansas City, here we come!

CJIG's programming plans came together without a hitch during the mid-winter conference in Palo Alto. The result is a schedule of activities spread neatly throughout the conference, kicking off with a pre-conference session and ending on a high note with our research session on Saturday.

Right in the middle is our membership meeting, set for 6:45 p.m. Thursday, July 31. (A quick digression to brag a bit! At CJIG's suggestion, the former "business meetings" have been renamed "membership meetings" to better reflect what they're all about. Cool, huh?)

It's important for our members to support these panels and the presenters by coming to listen and talk. It would be wonderful if every member would commit right now to attending at least three of our sessions—and bringing a friend to each one! For CJIG to stay relevant and intellectually provocative, we need new ideas, new members and new energy. Let's start in Kansas City by "Making New Connections"!

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What's up at Pew?

The Pew Center for Civic Journalism has given an eight-month extension on its grant to continue its work archiving its collection of civic journalism projects, preparing a final report and on other outreach. The center is now scheduled to sunset May 31.

The center continues to address a strong interest in civic journalism from newsrooms, civic groups and journalism schools, and responds to steady streams of e-mails, speaking requests, writing requests and requests for training material.

Its popular website, www.pewcenter.org, is updated with all its training material. By May, updates also will be posted on the 120 projects the center has funded since 1993.

The Center has moved to College Park, Md., where it shares space with a successor project, J-Lab: The Institute for Interactive Journalism, a center of the University of Maryland's College of Journalism.

J-Lab will build on the trail of interactivity blazed by civic journalists who pioneered the use of town hall meetings and focus group in reporting projects. J-Lab will help news organizations use new technologies to help people actively engage in critical public issues. See www.j-lab.org.

J-Flash email updates will continue to be sent. To subscribe, e-mail news@pccj.org.

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, or Les Anderson, Wichita State University, les.anderson@esc.wichita.edu. If you have questions, phone Gibbs at (765) 983-1506.

Pew's new address: 7100 Baltimore Ave., Suite 101, College Park, Md. 20740. Phone: 301-985-4020. E-mail Jan Schaffer at jans@pccj.org or jans@j-lab.org.

Last chance: Pew publications

There is a dwindling supply of Pew Center publications and training videos available for journalists and educators. While all the publications are available online at www.pewcenter.org, hard copies may be obtained, as long as supplies last, by filling out the order form at <http://www.pewcenter.org/doingcj/pubs/orderpubs.html>.

Donations for mailing apply.

Attention, researchers

The Pew Center has collected more than 750 newspaper civic journalism projects over the last decade and more than 200 broadcast projects. These include funded projects, entries for the Batten Awards for Excellence in Civic Journalism and projects spotlighted in the Civic Catalyst newsletter or on the center's website.

All these projects—including self-reports of the supervising editors and formal narrative reports of funded projects—will be available to researchers by year's end under funding from the Pew Center to the Wisconsin Historical Society, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The society houses the nation's largest mass communications history collection. Grant reports and narrative reports on the Pew Center itself also will be available.

Professor Lew Friedland's Center for Communication and Democracy at U-Wisconsin will archive the Pew Center's Web sites, www.pewcenter.org and www.civicjournalism.org. The center also has custody of the archives of the Knight Foundation's Project on Public Life and the Press, making Madison a one-stop shop for future civic journalism researchers.

New: The Batten Awards for Innovations in Journalism

Deadline: June 12, 2003

Well before the current interest in civic journalism, one journalist began talking about how the media needed to

change, "to invent new ways to make the public's important business rivetingly interesting—and much more difficult to ignore."

"We need a fresh journalistic mindset rooted in the best of our past but shrewdly and tough-mindedly in touch with the realities awaiting us," said the late James K. Batten, as chairman and CEO of Knight Ridder Inc. in a seminal 1989 speech at the University of California, Riverside.

To honor Batten and his vision for the future of journalism, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation in 2003 established the Batten Awards for Innovations in Journalism.

The awards program spotlights emerging models of journalism that most creatively use technologies to engage and educate citizens about important public issues in compelling new ways.

The Batten Awards for Innovations in Journalism is the successor to the Batten Awards for Excellence in Civic Journalism, funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts from 1995 through 2002. These awards honored innovative journalism that supported people's involvement in the life of their community.

The Batten Awards for Innovations in Journalism were created to honor excellent journalism that is more than multimedia journalism. It specifically seeks to reward journalism that uses new technologies in innovative ways to involve citizens actively in public choices by showing as well as telling, by providing new entry points that stir their imagination and invite participation. Honored will be novel approaches to journalism that spur non-traditional interactions and have an impact on a community.

The awards program provides for a \$10,000 grand-prize winner and two \$2,500 runners-up. It is open to print, online, television and radio journalism efforts originating between Jan. 1, 2002, and April 30, 2003.

The new Batten Awards for Innovations in Journalism will be administered by J-Lab: The Institute for Interactive Journalism. For more information, visit www.j-lab.org.

—Jan Schaffer

THE SCHEDULE

TUESDAY, JULY 29
Noon-5 p.m.

(includes working lunch)

Pre-conference session: "Making new connections: Introducing the Public Journalism Network." This session will be a roundtable discussion of the potential partnerships between CJIG and the Public Journalism Network, a new professional society dedicated to the principles of civic journalism. It will be preceded by a brief presentation of the first exhaustive report on civic journalism in practice during the last decade.

Co-sponsor: Graduate Education Interest Group

WEDNESDAY, JULY 30
1:30 to 3 p.m.

"New Technologies, New Voices, New Empowerment? Blogs and Other Forms of Interactive Journalism"

Lead sponsor: Communication Technology and Policy

Panelists:

- Jan Schaffer, executive director, J-Lab, University of Maryland
- Ken Sands, managing editor of Online and New Media, *The Spokesman-Review*
- Steve Outing, senior editor, The Poynter Institute
- Aaron Barnhart, *Kansas City Star*

WEDNESDAY
JULY 30

3:15-4:45 p.m.

"Designing news for narratives"

Lead sponsor: Visual Communication; co-sponsor: Critical/Cultural Studies

This is a mini-plenary session with details still being confirmed.

THURSDAY, JULY 31
11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.

"Pro-Active Academics: How Far Can You Go In The Classroom?"

Co-sponsor: Mass Comm and Society

THURSDAY, JULY 31
1:30 to 3 p.m.

Scholar-to-Scholar

THURSDAY, JULY 31
3:15 to 4:45 p.m.

"What theory of democracy underpins the teaching of journalism?"

Co-sponsor: Comm Theory and Methodology

THURSDAY, JULY 31
6:45 to 8:15 p.m.

Membership meeting

FRIDAY, AUG. 1
8:15 to 9:45 a.m.

"Combining qualitative and quantitative methods in professional and academic research."

Lead sponsor: Comm Theory and Methodology

Panelists:

- Sharon Iorio, Wichita State University
- Kathy Campbell, University of Oregon
- Chris Peck, editor, *Memphis Commercial-Appeal*



Aaron Barnhart



Steve Outing



Jan Schaffer



Ken Sands

FRIDAY, AUG. 1
5 to 6:30 p.m.

Teaching Students to Get Diverse Voices in News Stories: Using Public Journalism and other techniques"

Co-sponsor: Small Programs

SATURDAY, AUG. 2
11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.

Research

ALIVE?

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sity of Wisconsin at Madison. The archives of the Project on Public Life and the Press of the mid-1990s are also housed at Wisconsin with the Civic Practices Network. Many of the PPLP archives are available online at the CPN Web site: <http://www.cpn.org/topics/communication/index.html>.

- Still more materials—including many from other countries—are available online at Central State University's International Media and Democracy Project, <http://www.imdp.org/artman/publish/>.

- You can read the charter adopted at the Civic Journalism Summit Jan. 24 and 25 at Kennesaw State, along with other materials about that meeting, at the following Web site: <http://kennesawsummit.kennesaw.edu/index.htm>.

- The Kettering Foundation in Dayton, which oversaw the Knight Foundation-funded Project on Public Life and the Press, continues to explore the relationship between journalism and democracy. In January, the foundation brought journalists together at the National Issues Convention in Philadelphia.

In February, the foundation also hosted a gathering at which participants discussed a phenomenon that has clear ties to public journalism: The emergence of several new centers for media and democracy at universities across the country.

So, given all that, is it safe to say public journalism is far from dead?



Breaking new ground

Reporting textbook emphasizes civic journalism, role of journalists

By Sharon Hartin Iorio
Wichita State University

At last, a textbook for basic news writing and reporting presented from the civic journalism point of view is available.

Long ignored by standard reporting textbooks, on the few occasions when civic journalism would be included, it often was treated as a "trend," relegated to a specific chapter, mentioned in passing reference, or, most demeaning of all, reduced to a footnote. Fortunately, that no longer is the case.

Getting the Whole Story, as the title implies, is a textbook devoted to comprehensive news coverage. But, beyond a solid grounding in reporting and writing, students of this text will learn the basics of journalism from the perspective of experienced journalists committed to supporting democratic processes in their work. At 451 pages, the book covers the standard elements presented in a basic journalism course.

What is unique to this particular textbook is the emphasis on the idea of civic journalism and the role of the journalist in democratic society. This underlying philosophy starts with the introduction and runs throughout each chapter. Chapter one is titled "The Journalist's Role in Society."

The key role of the journalist in maintaining democratic freedoms is presented powerfully. Students

REVIEW

*Getting the Whole Story:
Reporting and Writing the News*
by Cheryl Gibbs
and Tom Warhover

quickly will realize that this text breaks new ground without ever tossing over traditional standards of quality.

Foundational chapters on interviewing, writing, covering beats, and producing in-depth stories are included, and, as in all good texts, key concepts, exercises, suggestions for further reading are also offered within each chapter. The organization of the book is straightforward.

Current examples and a clear, breezy style make the work accessible to entry- and mid-level students. More accessibility is provided through lists of websites and movies that supplement the textual information.

Along with the conventional skills of the journalist (e.g. use of attribution, safeguards for accuracy), the authors integrate the tools of civic journalism. These range from instructions on how launch a community mapping project to a discussion of framing news reports.

Appendices list and describe various newsroom jobs; cover common grammar, punctuation and spelling mistakes; show how to

cover emergencies; and provide several journalists' creeds, platforms, and codes of ethics. The book ends with a glossary of newsroom terms.

The heart of the text is its presentation of the profession. The impetus of civic journalism undergirds the traditional view of journalists as professionals who report and provide context for the ongoing story of daily life. It is presented as the journalist's responsibility to provide "a 'public space' for people to share perspectives and work through challenges" and "play a key role in maintaining . . . democratic freedoms."

The authors are long-time CJIG member and the group's current chair, Cheryl Gibbs and Tom Warhover. Warhover, after a career in reporting and editing at *The (Norfolk) Virginian Pilot*, is now an associate professor at the University of Missouri School of Journalism and the executive editor of the *Columbia Missourian*.

The book was published in 2002 by Guilford Press.

For faculty interested in updating their journalism texts, *Getting the Whole Story*, should be given serious consideration. This book deserves to be incorporated across university-level journalism programs.

\$100 awards at convention for top student, faculty papers

The Civic Journalism Interest Group welcomes both student and faculty paper submissions. A \$100 award will be given for the top student paper and the top faculty paper. Send papers to Chike Anyaegbunam, School of Journalism, University of Kentucky, 140 Grehan Building, Lexington, KY 40506-0042. Telephone: (859) 257-7820. E-mail: canya2@uky.edu.

