

Can trust, quality save journalism?

'A Wake-Up Call' Aug. 9 before AEJMC annual convention

By Leonard Witt

Public confidence in the news media continues to deteriorate. We as academics and teachers must ask what that erosion means to our students and to the profession.

"The Journalism and the Public: Restoring the Trust" conference, which will be held Tuesday, Aug.

9, in San Antonio, will ask what we can do to ensure greater trust.

The need for reflection on trust issues becomes more and more apparent. A 2004 Gallup Poll reports that just 44 percent of

Americans express confidence in the media's ability to report stories accurately and fairly. The Project for Excellence in Journalism's "The State of the Media 2004" reports, "Americans think journalists are sloppier, less professional, less moral, less caring, more biased, less honest about their mistakes and generally more harmful to democracy than they did in the 1980s," but adds that "Journalists believe they are working in the public interest and are trying to be fair and independent in that

cause."

"The State of the Media 2005" reports the good news is that by 2005 things haven't appeared to worsen; however, the bad news is, "It may be that the expectations of the press have sunk enough that they will not sink much further.

People are not dismayed by disappointments in the press. They expect them."

As educators, some of the responsibility for what is happening must rest with us. And as scholars, we must help determine what is going on here and answer the

next question: "How can we help fix it?"

Trying to deal with trust issues is exasperated by the almost daily predictions of the demise of the news media as we know it. In a recent Business Week article, Orville Schell, dean of the University of California at Berkeley's graduate journalism school, says, "The Roman Empire that was mass media is breaking up, and we are entering an almost-feudal period where there will be many more centers of power and

influence. It's a kind of disaggregation of the molecular structure of the media."

In that same article, Alex S. Jones, co-author of the book, *The Trust: The Private and Powerful Family Behind The New York Times*, says, "I still think that *The New York Times* has a stature and a position of journalistic authority that is greater than any news organization in the world. Could that be destroyed? I believe that it could be." If *The New York Times* is vulnerable, which news organization is not?

In this trust-building, interactive, participatory conference, everyone will be asked to be involved. Panelists like Philip Meyer, author the new book, *The Vanishing Newspaper: Saving Journalism in the Information Age*, will help us understand where the news media stands at the moment. Jay Rosen, chair of the journalism department at New York University, and Jeff Jarvis, blogger at Buzzmachine.com and president and creative director of Newhouse's Advance.net, will help us address if the blogging, citizen-publishing movement can be a saving grace or just more nails in the coffin.

Dori Maynard, president and chief executive officer of the Robert C. Maynard Institute for Journalism Education; George

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Journalism & the Public: Restoring the Trust

An AEJMC pre-convention
conference and workshop

Noon to 10 p.m. Aug. 9

Marriott Rivercenter Hotel, San Antonio

www.restoringthetrust.org

Registration \$49 with AEJMC
convention package.

Includes panels, reception, dinner,
mini-expo, networking

Interactive journalism summit:

When consumers become creators

By Jan Schaffer
J-Lab Director

“We’re not competing with the paper. We’re complementing it.”

That’s the vision of two of the newest hyperlocal community journalism initiatives that have launched within the past 11 months—NorthwestVoice.com and MyMissourian.com.

Where blogs were last year’s force to be reckoned with, this year mainstream media are seeing—and sometimes contributing to—the rise of new citizen journalism ventures. Some are independent for-profit enterprises, some are J-School-driven projects and others are mainstream media ventures.

All are embracing the belief that connecting with community is critical to the future of journalism and to engaging citizens. And all subscribe to the belief that one way to connect with citizens in this era of participatory journalism is to invite citizen-created content.

J-Lab invites you to hear more about these developments at its “Interactive Journalism Summit: When Consumers Become Creators.” from 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. Friday, Aug. 12, at the AEJMC convention.

It’s a free lunch, co-sponsored by CJIG and the Council of Affiliates, but you must register in advance at news@j-lab.org. It is supported by a grant from the Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation.

New technologies are increasingly opening the doors to the production of news and newsworthy information from quasi-journalists, student journalists and citizen journalists. A key part of this trend involves journalism capstone courses that launch community news sites.

At the luncheon, you’ll hear from Mary Lou Fulton, a former AOL executive who is now publisher of NorthwestVoice.com and other innovative initiatives affiliated with—but not always branded by—the Bakersfield Californian.

You’ll hear from Clyde Bentley, associate professor and founder of MyMissourian.com, at the University of Missouri.

You’ll also hear from one of the 10 New Voices grant recipients, who were announced in late April. The 10 were selected from 243 applications. (See www.j-lab.org.)

Fulton last summer told an audience of Hispanic journalists that when she was assigned to look into creating a community newspaper, she thought to herself: “I wonder what would happen if we created a community publication in which readers contributed almost all of the articles and pictures and events? ... What would happen if we had a policy that said “yes” to everything instead of being gatekeepers and telling people that what was important to them really didn’t matter? What if we just said: ‘You know what: If it’s local and it’s legal, we’ll take it.’ ”

NorthwestVoice launched last May and, indeed, all submissions are published to the Web, provided that they’re local and legal. And much of the content is included in biweekly print editions published every other Thursday and distributed for free.

Observes Fulton: “We have to also train our readers and contributors to be active participants rather than passive readers.”

MyMissourian.com launched in October as a student-run, community-powered local news site for Columbia, Mo. Columbia residents do the writing, guided by the news



Jan Schaffer

judgment of journalism students.

Although the students initially debated whether to judge submissions by merit, they eventually decided “there was nothing too stupid to be on the site,” Bentley has said. Instead, they laid out four ground rules: no nudity, no profanity, no personal assaults and no racial, ethnic or gender-based attacks.

“We made a conscious decision early on that this is journalism,” Bentley said, “and journalism requires editors.”

You can read about more Citizen Media Spotlights at <http://www.j-newvoices.org/index.php/site/spotlights/>.

Civic journalism article in *Education and Culture*

I have an item that may be of some interest to those reading the next issue of the CJIG newsletter.

An article of mine, “Civic journalism: News as transactional pedagogy,” appears in the most-recent issue of *Education and Culture*, a peer-reviewed publication of the John Dewey Society.

The full reference is: Perry, D.K. (2004). Civic journalism: News as transactional pedagogy. *Education and Culture*, 20(2), 25-41.

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8th-graders, collegians link in project

By Andrea Breemer Frantz

How early can students begin to learn and apply the ideas of civic journalism?

A group of eighth-grade students at Wyoming Seminary Lower School in Forty Fort, Pa., would argue that they are precisely the right age to not only learn the concepts, but effectively put them to use.

At Wilkes University, I initiated a new peer mentoring program during the 2004-05 academic year called the Students in Media Project. The basic idea was to link interested eighth-grade students (13- and 14-year-olds) with college peer mentors (20- to 22-year-olds), who would introduce the young people to the fields of radio, television and print journalism.

The college students, like the eighth-graders, were all volunteers, and they participated in the program mainly because they saw value in coaching the young people. One college mentor noted it was his own small way of "planting seeds" with future journalists.



Student mentor Kristin Kile checks the map and discusses what it represents with students.



Eighth-graders Neil O'Donnell, left, and Hannah Frantz work as a team to report and photograph city challenges in downtown Wilkes-Barre.

There were 13 regular participants among the eighth-graders and approximately 10 regular college students engaged throughout the year.

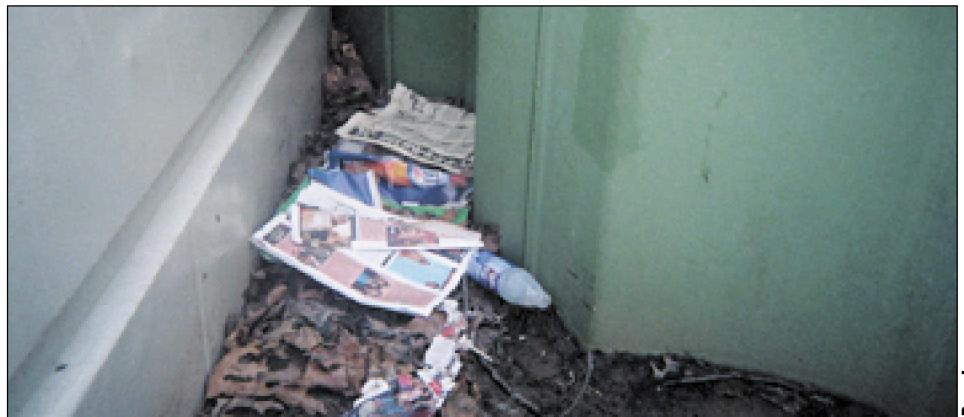
The civic journalism component of the project challenged the students of both groups to discuss, research and ultimately create public messages designed to inspire viewers/listeners/readers to address specific challenges facing their community.

Some of the issues the eighth-graders raised and researched included the importance of voter education, environmental issues

(particularly as they applied to the Susquehanna River), drug and alcohol abuse among teens, and the general physical decline of the downtown area.

Each of the sessions focused on developing the students' communication skills as they applied to different media. The first few sessions involved developing questions for roundtable discussions that were taped in the television studio at Wilkes University and aired in a half-hour show on the local cable channel. The eighth-graders formed two groups, wrote

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Students involved in the peer mentoring program thought trashy areas reflected a lack of civic pride in property in the downtown Wilkes-Barre area.

Gabe LeDonne

Gabe LeDonne

Ryan Leas

Convention topics: technology, trust, teaching

Jeff South
CJIG co-vice chair

Blogs. Interactive journalism. Democracy. Credibility. Trust. Teaching ideas.

Those are some of the topics of the programs that the Civic Journalism Interest Group will sponsor at the 2005 AEJMC Convention in San Antonio.

The CJIG events kick off with a daylong pre-convention conference called "Journalism and the Public: Restoring the Trust" on Aug. 9. It "will bring together citizens, journalists and academics to seek ways to 'Restore the Trust' through panels and small group discussion."

The CJIG also is co-sponsoring a luncheon and discussion organized by J-Lab: The Institute for Interactive Journalism at the University of Maryland. The "J-Lab Luncheon and Interactive Journalism Summit: When Consumers Become Creators" will be held Aug. 12.

During the Aug. 10 through 13 convention, the CJIG will sponsor or co-sponsor six panel discussions:

- "Setting an Agenda: News Blogs, Moblogs and their Discontents" on Aug. 10.
- "Civic Journalism on the Web," also on Aug. 10.
- "When the Classroom Isn't Always a Classroom: Teaching in the Trenches (Literally)" on Aug. 11.
- "Involving Citizens in Democracy: Is Modern Journalism Engaging or Dividing Americans?" also on Aug. 11.
- "Putting Students in Charge: A New Project to Bring Citizens and Journalists Together in the Community" on Aug. 12.
- "What Research Assistance, Skills Training and Theoretical Underpinnings Can Academia Provide Citizen Journalists?" on Aug. 13.



Moreover, the CJIG will hold a research paper session on Aug. 10 and its business/membership meeting on Aug. 11. Here are details on all the events.

Tuesday, Aug. 9
11 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.
Restoring the Trust:
A Wakeup Call

The CJIG is the primary sponsor. Co-sponsors include the Community Journalism Interest Group, the Robert D. Fowler Distinguished Chair in Communication at Kennesaw State University, the Reynolds School of Journalism at the University of Nevada at Reno, and the Public Journalism Network.

"According to most indicators, trust in the media is at a 30-year low," says Leonard Witt, who is coordinating the workshop. "Journalists, news organizations, journalism schools and our democracy are all deeply affected by this continuing erosion."

The conference will discuss how to address that problem.

"Attendees also will be invited to network with trust building foundations and organizations at a mini-expo and reception," Witt said. "Change will not begin by itself. It needs catalysts for action; with your participation, this conference will be one of those catalysts."

The registration fee for the conference is \$49 before July 10 and \$69 after July 10.

Wednesday, Aug. 10
10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
CJIG research paper session

Sandra L. Nichols, co-chair of the CJIG Research Committee and an assistant professor at Towson University, will moderate this session. The presenters will be announced after the papers have been judged and selected.

Wednesday, Aug. 10
1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.

"Setting an Agenda: News Blogs, Moblogs and their Discontents"

The CJIG is the primary sponsor of this PF&R panel. The co-sponsor is the Cultural and Critical Studies Division.

• Presiding/moderating: Nikhil Moro, assistant professor, Kennesaw State University.

Panelists:

- Mike Martinez, Knight Ridder.
- Keven Ann Willey, *Dallas Morning News*.
- Brian Stelter, blogger for Media Bistro.
- Glenn Reynolds, law professor at University of Tennessee and blogger (www.instapundit.com).

Description of panel: The 2004 presidential election turned the spotlight on a new form of citizen-powered media blogs. The sting potential of bloggers is embellished by Moblogs, by which users can post images, text and video from their camera phones instantly to the Web. Blogging gives new meaning to agenda setting.

Wednesday, Aug. 10
5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

"Civic Journalism on the Web"

The CJIG is the primary sponsor of this teaching panel. The co-sponsor is the Media and Disability Interest Group.

• Presiding/moderating: Jan Schaffer, executive director, J-Lab: The Institute for Interactive Journalism, University of Maryland.

Presentations and panelists:
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- Searching for Democracy / Beat Blogs—Ryan Pitts, online producer, SpokesmanReview.com, Spokane, Wash.

- Public Insight Journalism / Interactive Exercises – Andrew Haeg, senior analyst and producer, Minnesota Public Radio, St. Paul, Minn.

- Civic Mapping Online – Lew Friedland, professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

- Mapping Special Communities: the Disabled. – Dr. Jack A. Nelson, emeritus professor/journalism, Brigham Young University, and editor of *The Disabled, the Media and the Information Age*.

Description of panel: Civic journalism has moved from convening in real spaces, such as town hall meetings, to cyberspace, with citizen correspondents, citizen bloggers, interactive news exercises and new civic mapping software. All help journalists frame and report stories and help citizens understand issues.

Thursday, Aug. 11

8:15 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

“When the Classroom Isn’t Always a Classroom: Teaching in the Trenches (Literally)”

The CJIG is the primary sponsor of this teaching panel. The co-sponsor is the Science Communication Interest Group.

- Presiding/moderating: Len Witt, Kennesaw State University.

Presentations and panelists:

- “Turning the City into the Classroom: Recognizing the Citizen in the Student” – Andrea Breemer Frantz, Ph.D.,

Wilkes University.

- “From Campus to a Military Town: Putting Public Journalism into Practice” – Les Anderson, Wichita State University.

- “City Voices: Teaching students how to access layers of a disenfranchised community” – Venise Wagner, Ph.D., San Francisco State University.

- “Relating cultural values to risk communication” – Colleen Connolly-Ahern, Ph.D, Penn State University.

- “Risk assessment as an every-day activity: Evaluating channels of communication” – Susan Grantham, Ph.D., University of Hartford.

Description of panel: As student journalists wrestle with the challenges of crafting cultivating and maintaining sources, and meeting deadlines, they also find themselves negotiating civic identities. What does it mean to be part of a community and also to report on it? And how do journalism programs prepare students to listen for community issues and respond to crisis? This teaching panel will examine the challenges of infusing journalism curriculum with an awareness of and commitment to community. Presenters will offer best teaching practices in civic journalism and crisis communication.

Thursday, Aug. 11

3:15 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.

“Involving Citizens in Democracy: Is Modern Journalism Engaging or Dividing Americans?”

The CJIG is the primary sponsor of this PF&R panel; the co-sponsor is the Mass Communication and Society Division.

- Presiding/moderating: Tony DeMars, Texas A&M University-Texarkana.

Presentations and panelists:

- “Civic Life, Civic

Journalism,” Lynnell Burkett, *San Antonio Express-News*

- “The End of the Age of Journalists,” Donald Shaw, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

- “Civic Engagement Through Incorporating Service Learning into the Television Production Class,” Suzanne Williams-Rautiola, Trinity University.

- “Doing Stories That Matter in Daily Television Reporting,” Tony DeMars, Texas A&M University-Texarkana.

Description of panel: Concerned citizens, journalists and scholars recognize that American citizens may be increasingly apathetic about civic engagement and involvement. At the same time, increasing attention to concerns of liberal bias and conservative agendas in mainstream media validate journalists’ roles in a democracy. The media can play a role by engaging the public or by creating divisiveness. Educators also play a role by the values instilled in future journalists during their education. This panel thus covers issues of civic involvement and representations of all viewpoints and the relationship of the media to involvement of the citizenry in a democracy.

Thursday, Aug. 11

8:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

CJIG Business & Membership Meeting

- Presiding/moderating: Tony DeMars, CJIG chair.

Friday, Aug. 12

11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.

J-Lab Luncheon and Interactive Journalism Summit: When Consumers Become Creators

J-Lab: The Institute for Interactive Journalism at the University of Maryland is the primary sponsor of this PF&R event. Co-sponsors include the CJIG and the Council of Affiliates.

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PROJECT

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and rehearsed questions and follow-ups, and then interacted on camera with local experts in two areas—a political scientist to address voter education issues and an expert from the Department of Environmental Protection. The college students coached the eighth-graders about what to wear, how to sit and speak, and how to ask follow-up questions.

In the radio component of the project, students worked in small groups with the college students to research, write and record their own public service announcements, which aired on the college radio station, WCLH 90.7 FM.

Finally, the students developed a photo documentary project in which the eighth-graders took photos of the assets they see within their community and then what they saw as its challenges. In teams, they took photos and recorded information in notebooks. Then they wrote short essays to accompany the visuals.

Local press picked up on the project. The NBC news affiliate interviewed the students as they completed a walking tour of the downtown during their photo documentary component. Both local newspapers also covered the students, and one opted to run the eighth-graders' photos as a slideshow in its online version. For the students, this exposure extended and made real the potential for reaching community members and making positive change.

Ultimately, the eighth-graders learned about the power of initiating public discussion through the media and the college students affirmed what they knew because they saw it from a fresh perspective.



Sean Dickinson

Above, cracks in the sidewalks reflect downtown deterioration. Below, the Susquehanna River is a natural resource for Wilkes-Barre.



Russ Singh



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•Presiding/moderating: Jan Schaffer, executive director of J-Lab: The Institute for Interactive Journalism at University of Maryland.

Panelists:

- Mary Lou Fulton, publisher, www.NorthwestVoice.com, Bakersfield, Calif.
- Clyde Bentley, associate professor and founder, MyMissourian.com, University of Missouri.
- New Voices grant recipients (to be announced in mid-April).

Description: New technologies are increasingly opening the doors to the production of news and news-like information from quasi-journalists, student journalists and citizen journalists. From blogs to hyperlocal citizens media, the consumers of news are helping to create it in compelling, new ways. A key part of this trend involves journalism capstone courses that launch community news sites. How do these developments impact the future of journalism and journalism education? Can they foster entrepreneurship and diversity?

Friday, Aug. 12

3:15 to 4:45 p.m.

**Putting Students in Charge:
A New Project to Bring Citizens
and Journalists Together
in the Community**

The Community Journalism Interest Group is the primary sponsor for this teaching panel. The CJIG is the co-sponsor.

- Presiding/moderating: Peggy

Kuhr, University of Kansas.

Panelists:

- Carol Nunnelley, director, National Credibility Roundtables Project, for APME and the Ford Foundation.
- Andrea Breemer Frantz, Wilkes University.
- Chris Roush, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
- Steve Reese, University of Texas.

Description: Since 2001, more than 150 newspapers have held credibility roundtables with their readers and non-readers. Now, for the first time, journalism students and their professors are using roundtables to build bridges from the classroom to the newsroom and into the community. By the time AEJMC meets in San Antonio, eight professors will have worked with their students to hold a credibility roundtable for a partner newspaper. The topics range from coverage of religion, to political bias, to coverage of the drug industry. Panelists will discuss the benefits and challenges of letting students lead the way to a national discussion on news media credibility.

Saturday, Aug. 13

10 to 11:30 a.m.

**What Research Assistance,
Skills Training and Theoretical
Underpinnings Can Academia
Provide Citizen Journalists?**

The CJIG is the primary spon-

Brainstorm with citizen journalism's top thinkers

A recent AP article mentioned how Craig Newmark, founder of Craigslist; Jeff Jarvis, of Newhouse's Advance.net, and Dan Gillmor, author of the *We the Media*, are brainstorming on the future of citizen journalism.

You can join the brainstorming sessions, too, at the Wake Up Conference Aug. 9 in San Antonio (www.RestoringtheTrust.org).

Register early and take your pick of panelists you will share a

sor of this teaching panel. The co-sponsor is the Commission on the Status of Women.

•Presiding/moderating: Andrea Breemer Frantz, assistant professor of communication studies, Wilkes University.

Panelists:

- Clyde Bentley, associate professor, advertising and editorial, the University of Missouri School of Journalism.
- George Cisneros, owner, VuTURE ART, San Antonio.
- Larry Pryor, assistant professor, Annenberg School of Communication at University of Southern California.
- Leonard Witt, Robert D. Fowler Distinguished Chair in Communication, Kennesaw State University.

Description: Today, anyone with a computer can be a worldwide publisher. Papers like OhMyNews in South Korea and the Northwest Voice in California are mainly citizen-written. The Indy News organizations have been striving to supplement traditional journalism. Thousands of bloggers are challenging the established press. So, can academia help them find their voice, improve their skills, gain credibility and be more effective players in our democracy? This panel will ask first what citizen journalists need, and then if and how academia can meet those needs.

dinner conversation. Whether you want to converse with folks from the *Wall Street Journal* or *The New York Times* or with folks involved in citizen journalism to ethnic startups, they all will be there.

If you register via the AEJMC, afterward e-mail Cori Marguriet, cmarguri@kennesaw.edu, to reserve which dinner table conversation you want to join. But you must register for the conference first with AEJMC.

Minutes from CJIG business meeting in Toronto

It's been an exciting year getting ready for a great convention in San Antonio.

Jeff South and I got the opportunity to review and place several great panels during the conference, along with another big pre-conference program, along with a Friday luncheon sponsored by J-Lab. To help everyone catch up, here's an overview of our business meeting in Toronto last August.

The Civic Journalism Interest Group business meeting at AEJMC Toronto was called to order by Leonard Witt at 6:45 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 5, 2004, with 15 members in attendance. The meeting began with members introducing themselves, followed by an overview of CJIG—noting its membership at about 100, increasing members on the listserv and its mission.

Witt then talked about CJIG involvement with the mid-winter meeting and offered to host it at Kennesaw State University in Georgia. Brief discussions occurred regarding PJNet, a potential name change for CJIG (the group agreed a name change was not in order), about committees, and about the convention



panels and papers submission process.

In officer selection, Tony DeMars moved up from vice head to head, while Andrea Frantz and Jeff South were selected as co-vice heads, Leonard Witt was selected as secretary, Venise Wagner was selected as teaching chair, Kathy Campbell as PF&R chair, Sandy Nichols as research committee chair and Les Anderson as newsletter editor.

Discussion then focused on the possibility of giving an award for teaching, and the top CJIG paper awards were noted. The CJIG budget was noted as being at about \$5,100, and it was suggested that, although AEJMC helps pay travel expenses for non-AEJMC people to participate in the convention, CJIG might also put in some money for our speakers.

In other discussion, Andrea Frantz gave a detailed report about the public journalism sub-committee meeting earlier in the day, followed by comments on a recent resurgence of interest in public journalism and some of the issues regarding research submissions and drawing on more people in CJIG's calls for papers.

Making a proposal for a Civic Journalism-themed journal or civic journalism book chapters was discussed. A symposium hosted by Ted Glasser at Stanford was noted as a possible model to be followed. It was suggested that a theme might be "rediscovering public journalism" or "the new wave of public journalism."

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8 p.m.

—Tony DeMars

■ TRUST

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White of UCLA's Center for Communications and Community, and George Cisneros, president of VuTure Art, will explain how the once disenfranchised have found ways to do news trust building in their own communities.

Professors Peggy Kuhr and Jock Lauterer of the Community Journalism Interest Group will help us learn lessons from trusted community newspapers.

The conference will start at

noon on Tuesday, Aug. 9, so people can arrive early for the AEJMC convention and not need to book in for another night. The attendees will be invited to an evening mini-expo built around food, drink and networking with each other and trust building organizations.

Of course, all Civic Journalism Interest Group members are encouraged to attend. The cost is only \$49. It includes membership in the Public Journalism Network. The price has been kept low, thanks to the Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation, which is, in part, underwriting this conference and

the year-long "Journalism and the Public: Restoring the Trust" project developed by the Fowler Chair at Kennesaw State University and the Reynolds School of Journalism at Nevada, Reno.

The conference has been planned in conjunction with the CJIG, the Community Journalism Interest Group and the Public Journalism Network (PJNet.org).

AEJMC members can register for this conference while registering for the full AEJMC convention. Complete "Restoring the Trust" details can be found at Restoring the Trust Web site: www.restoringthetrust.org.