

# MC & S NEWS

The Newsletter of the Mass Communication and Society Division, AEJMC Winter 2003 Vol.36, No. 2

## State of the Division

By Kathy Brittain McKee  
Berry College

By now you've either heard, read or discussed the "State of the Union" or the "State of the State" addresses for 2003. The tone for most this year was somber, offering overviews of multiple challenges. However, as chair of the Mass Communication and Society Division, I would take a different note if asked to reflect on the "State of the Division." My tone would most definitely be optimistic and perhaps even joyful, with plenty of evidence to justify the tone.

For example, consider the state of involvement in division activities. Again in 2002, the division offered a tremendous variety of teaching, research and PF&R activities that were well attended. More than 90 scholars submitted manuscripts for possible presentation, and a variety of scholars and professionals participated in panels. The Promising Professors Workshop again offered excellent teaching tips, and entries for the Promising Teaching Awards continued to be strong while numbers increased. The executive committee provided excellent leadership in planning this programming. Our division's journal, *Mass Communication and Society*, is continuing to thrive under the leadership of Carol Pardun. It, too, receives a variety of manuscripts and has maintained a low acceptance rate, ensuring top quality for its contents. Subscriptions continue to increase. Our web site, [www.aejmc-mcs.org](http://www.aejmc-mcs.org), has been revived this fall by webmaster Tom Gould, and I'd urge you to visit the site often to stay in touch with what the division is doing. We continue to seek to offer mentoring opportunities for junior faculty. If you are interested in either serving as a mentor or in being mentored, please contact me. This can provide a valuable service for division members. In short, the division is thriving – and your involvement will help it continue to do so. I am hoping that we will be able to build an electronic distribution list of our membership so that we can notify you by email of the calls for papers, nominations, etc. **If you would like to be a part of this distribution list, please email me at [kmckee@berry.edu](mailto:kmckee@berry.edu) with permission to add your email address to the distribution list**, and you will then receive occasional notices from the division about opportunities and information. Also, please note the multitude of opportunities noted within this newsletter: the calls for research submissions for the summer AEJMC meeting; the Promising Professors competition and workshop; the need for judges for the research competition; and the call for nominations for editor of *Mass Communication and Society*. The Kansas City meeting will provide a wide variety of opportunities as well — panels, research presentations, an off-site trip, the business meeting and informal social. You are welcomed, encouraged and invited to participate actively in division activities this year.

**Association for Education in Journalism  
and Mass Communication  
2003 Convention,  
Kansas City, MO  
July 30 - August 2, 2003**

# Preliminary Program set for 2003 AEJMC Convention

By *Dane S. Claussen*  
*Point Park College*

The 2002 AEJMC chip “auction” was successful, and your officers believe that MC&S has some great programming planned for the July 2003 convention in Kansas City. Thank you for your ideas about programming and events.

The most important fact to know about this year’s participation by your Mass Communication & Society Division is that the busiest day of the convention for our division is Saturday, and the second busiest days are Friday and Thursday. This is in contrast to many years, when most of our sessions were on Wednesday and Thursday, while Friday and Saturday were busy for other divisions but not for us. So if you can’t attend the entire convention, please consider coming to the convention later and leaving later. As the AEJMC headquarters staff points out, convention attendance is higher on Saturday afternoon than it is on Wednesday afternoon anyway—contrary to popular belief.

Our line-up, as usual, is timely and valuable. We’ve got our annual Promising Professors workshop on Tuesday night; a tour of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum on Wednesday morning; and, among others, sessions on the Catholic church scandals (Thursday afternoon), media corporate executives’ ethics (Saturday afternoon), and planning to conduct research on the 2004 elections (Saturday morning).

You might be familiar with the David Weaver/G. Cleveland Wilhoit studies of American journalists, conducted every 10 years and published in book form. The last such book was *The American Journalist* in the 1990s: *U.S. News People at the End of an Era*. The Mass Communication & Society Division was asked last year to be the primary co-sponsor of a mini-plenary panel at the 2003 convention at which the results of the latest Indiana University survey of U.S. journalists would be unveiled—and we’re pleased to tell you that that session is at 1:30 p.m. on Friday.

If I can answer any questions for any MCS members about our participation in the convention, the convention hotels, or the Kansas City metro area generally, please don’t hesitate to email me at [dsclaussen@hotmail.com](mailto:dsclaussen@hotmail.com) or [dclaussen@ppc.edu](mailto:dclaussen@ppc.edu). See you in July in Kansas City!

## SCHEDULE:

### TUESDAY, July 29

5:30 p.m.—

Promising Professors Workshop

Co-sponsor: Graduate Education Interest Group

### WEDNESDAY, JULY 30

9 a.m.—

“Tour of Negro Leagues Baseball Museum”

Co-sponsor: Minorities and Communication Division

5-6:30 p.m.

Competitive Paper Session

### THURSDAY, JULY 31

8:15-9:45 a.m.

Competitive Paper Session

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

Invited Panel: “Should Academics Take a Proactive Role in Getting the Voices of the Disenfranchised Heard in the Media” (tentative title)

Co-Sponsor: Civic Journalism Interest Group

3:15-4:45 p.m.

Invited Panel: “Sex, Religion, Media: Covering the Roman Catholic Church, its Priest Scandals and More”

Co-Sponsor: Religion and Media Interest Group

5-6:30 p.m.

Competitive Paper Session

### FRIDAY, August 1

8:15-9:45 a.m.

Invited Panel: “Thinking in Time in Mass Communication History”

Co-Sponsor: History Division 1:30-3 p.m.

Mini-Plenary; Invited Panel: “The American Journalist in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”

Co-Sponsors: Media Management & Economics Division; Communication Theory & Methodology Division; Internships and Careers Interest Group

**see SCHEDULE, page 10**

# Journalists' Moral Development: Study Shows They May Be Surprisingly Good at Ethical Reasoning

By *Renita Coleman*  
*Louisiana State University*

Stealing e-mail, rigging vehicles to explode for the camera, making up sources and even whole stories, invading people's privacy, and plagiarizing — the list of ethical transgressions by our nation's media goes on and on. Ask the average American to rank journalists' ethical conduct and the result is somewhere near used car salesmen. And all this while awareness and research into media ethics is at an all-time high, ethics and media law classes are required in most journalism schools, seminars on ethics draw more journalists than any other aspect of journalistic practice (Zelizer, 1999), and trade journals prominently feature discussions of ethics.

Is this picture of journalists as moral pygmies really accurate? There is a voluminous amount of academic research into journalism ethics. One line of study focuses on categorizing journalists into different types of ethical decision-makers using statistical techniques such as Q-factor and factor analysis (Singletary et al., 1990; Black, Barney & Van Tubergen, 1979; Whitlow & Van Tubergen, 1978). Another type of research uses qualitative methods such as interviews and case studies to analyze in depth journalists' thought processes about ethical choices in specific situations (Voakes, 1998; Borden, 1996). Yet journalists' ethical reasoning has not yet been studied in the quantitative way that psychologists use to measure the moral development of various other groups of professionals. My colleague Lee Wilkins of the University of Missouri and I have embarked on a long-term project that seeks to do just that — measure the mean level of moral development of journalists and compare them to other professions. The aim of this study is to gather baseline data on a large sample of journalists, using a valid and reliable instrument that measures moral development.

Almost every type of profession and quasi-profession that must grapple with significant ethical issues has been studied in the context of moral development, including doctors, nurses, dentists, accountants, teachers, and social workers. Our pilot study, conducted on 72 journalists, indicates that the popular

perception of journalists as ethical Neanderthals may be grossly inaccurate; according to our data, there is even evidence that journalists exhibit higher levels of moral development than many other professionals. This preliminary study will be published in the next issue of *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*.

The instrument we are using is a test of moral development devised by psychologists 30 years ago. The DIT, short for "Defining Issues Test," uses Lawrence Kohlberg's (1981, 1984) stages of moral development as a theoretical framework and has been tested for validity in more than 400 published studies. It is the premier quantitative instrument used to measure moral development. Participants read six ethical dilemmas, decide on a course of action, and rank how important certain issues were in making their decision. A score is calculated that shows how often participants use the highest stages of moral reasoning.

The news from our preliminary study is encouraging; journalists scored fourth highest among all professionals ever given this ethical reasoning instrument. The journalists who took this "ethics test" ranked behind seminarians/philosophers, medical students, and physicians, but above dental students, nurses, graduate students, undergraduate college students, veterinary students, and adults in general.

The mean moral development score for our sample of 72 journalists was virtually the same as that obtained by another researcher (Westbrook, 1995); ours was 48.17, his was 48.1. In both these studies journalists scored higher than three groups whose members had higher education levels than the average journalist — dental, veterinary, and graduate students. Education is consistently one of the best predictors of moral development; as education goes up, so does moral development. These journalists had, on average, a four-year college education, while dental, veterinary, and graduate students have one- to two years more education.

Furthermore, while the mean moral development score indicates journalists are capable of relatively sophisticated ethical analysis across a broad range of issues, when the questions become professionally

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## Thinking Clearly about Disciplines, Research, and Professionalism

By Dane S. Claussen, Vice-Head  
Point Park College

The National Communication Association, to which many AEJMC members belong, is rushing ahead of AEJMC, putting together—so claims NCA Immediate Past President Bill Balthrop—“valuable partnerships with the American Association of Higher Education, the National Science Foundation, the Council of Graduate Schools, other professional societies, foundations, and private organizations.”

Further, he told the NCA convention in New Orleans in November, the Council of Communication Associations, of which the NCA is a key member, has “increased the likelihood” that communication Ph.D. programs will be “included in the next study of doctoral education by the National Research Council.” All of this, and much more, is a part of what used to be called the “speech communication” field’s efforts to increase its credibility inside academia, the government and, presumably, with the media and the general public. It is an odd effort in many ways, as it almost shouts to the world, in the words of Oliver North’s attorney (who was often ignored), “I am not a potted plant,” or to paraphrase Shakespeare, “the field doth protest too much methinks.” NCA’s problem is that the hierarchy of the (speech) communication professors want to have it both ways: they are busily, even urgently,

“reach[ing] out to other disciplines, professional associations, educational institutions, corporations, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, diverse communities, electronic and print media, and the public at large,” in the words of the call for its 2003 convention. (Its theme is “Reaching Out/Reaching

“ “ *I’ve heard speech majors told they can get jobs in human resources, which prompts the question of why they don’t major in human resources management, or mediation and arbitration, but that’s a small profession, filled with law school graduates, requiring advanced training and ideally certification.* ”

In.”) This, the 2000 Convention theme (“The Engaged Discipline”), another year’s theme (“Communication in action”), and other evidence—such as the perception that two of the strongest growth areas in speech communication are health communication and political communication—suggest that the field is dramatically repositioning itself as a practical, pragmatic, professional field. I’ll ignore, for the purposes of my argument, the blatant anti-intellectualism of a discipline’s leaders telling its rank-and-file, in effect, to be less theoretical (social scientific) and more practical (professions oriented).

The even more obvious problem with this is, of course, that every other professional program or major on American college campuses is directly tied to specific, even unique, jobs and industries. Journalism schools train journalists, photojournalists, advertising

and PR practitioners; law schools train lawyers; medical schools train physicians; architecture schools train architects; etc. In contrast, political communication courses train whom, exactly? Political candidates? Pollsters? Policy wonks? Speechwriters? Campaign consultants? Voters? Almost surely all, and none, of the above, and probably not as well as public policy or public administration programs, political science programs, journalism programs, and per-

haps even English departments, depending on what you’re going to do. Health communication courses train whom, exactly? Physicians? Nurses? Hospital administrators? Patients? Again, almost surely all, and none, of the above. (Health communication scholars often study communication between patients and their physicians, but there are no jobs out there for people who stand in an examination room and serve as a translator between physician and patient.) I’ve heard speech majors told they can get jobs in human resources, which prompts the question of why they don’t major in human resources management, or mediation and arbitration, but that’s a small profession, filled with law school graduates, requiring advanced training and ideally certification. One can go on and on about NCA divisions and affiliates that bear no direct connection to

**see THINKING, page 7**

## Call for Editor for Mass Communication & Society Journal January 2004 - December 2007

The Mass Comm & Society Division of AEJMC calls for applications for the editor of our journal, Mass Communication & Society.

MC&S members interested in the position should provide evidence of experience and ability to edit and produce four issues annually. The editor's institution needs to provide administrative support, which minimally would include paying for postage and other incidentals to usher manuscripts through the review process, and optimally would include administrative time (usually in the form of a graduate assistant) and office space. The editor receives an annual stipend of \$2,500.

The editor works in close partnership with Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, our publisher, the 50 editorial board

members, and the division executive committee. The new editor should be committed to rigorous scholarship demonstrated in a variety of methodological approaches.

Interested members should send a letter outlining the reasons for seeking the editorship describing how their experience, skills and interests make them an appropriate candidate. In addition, they should send a current CV, and a letter from their institutions assuring administrative support.

The executive committee of Mass Comm & Society and a representative from Lawrence Erlbaum Associates will accept proposals until July 15, 2003. The committee hopes to make a recommendation to present at the division's business meeting in Kansas City.

Applications  
should be sent to:

Dr. Kathy B. McKee  
Associate Provost  
Berry College  
P.O. Box 495029  
Mount Berry, GA  
30149-5029

[kmckee@berry.edu](mailto:kmckee@berry.edu)

### MORAL

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focused the level of ethical analysis improves even more. The combined scores for three dilemmas that focused exclusively on journalism problems were significantly higher than the combined scores for other, non-journalism issues. Our interpretation of this numerical finding is that journalists are, in fact, more practiced at reasoning ethically about their own profession – in other words, ethical muscles are developing as part of professional

work. In addition, ethical reasoning about journalism as a profession occurs at a more sophisticated level for our journalists than ethical reasoning in general.

These findings are certainly counter to the wide-spread public perception of journalists as ethically bankrupt. In fact, our pilot study was the second such study conducted; another similar study, done as dissertation work at the University of Texas-Austin, yielded the same results (Westbrook, 1995). So far, two stud-

ies have hinted that popular perception is a myth. It is our aim that this third study with a larger number of journalists drawn from an appropriate sample will be able to make a definitive statement about the quality of journalists' ethical reasoning.

If these early findings from two small studies are borne out in a larger, third study, that will make an undeniable contribution toward changing the popular perception of journalists' ethical abilities. (At least it will give us some objective

data to argue the point with.) This type of academic research, with real-world applications and focused on a topic of widespread popular interest, has the potential to be reported in the national mass media. Thus, there is the potential for this research to start a public discussion about the quality of journalism in America that could alter the course of the current discourse. That, in turn, could change public perception of the credibility of information provided by  
**see MORAL2, page 8**

# Call for Promising Professor Competition Entries

By Stacey Cone

## Teaching Standards Co-Chair

If you're doing the job right, Tom Bowers tells students in his graduate-level pedagogy course, you *should* feel a bit nervous before you teach each time. Having butterflies means you care about your students' learning. That's one of hundreds of pieces of wisdom and advice Bowers shares with future classroom instructors at the University of North Carolina's School of Journalism and Mass Communication as they begin thinking about, and preparing for, careers in academe. For his years of dedication and contribution to teaching, Bowers has been chosen as the MC&S division's 2003 Distinguished Educator. About seven years ago, Bowers realized that although the School's graduate students were receiving great preparation for doing research, they were formally learning little about how to be good teachers. He decided to change that by developing a course in pedagogy, and it has become a favorite of the students. One of the messages he tries to get across is that research is important to an academic career but so is teaching, and newly minted Ph.D.s are increasingly required to excel at both, no matter where they go. Bowers isn't popular only among graduate students. He won a university-wide award for distinguished undergraduate teaching and service a few years ago. But he confesses that he didn't always understand what good teaching meant. When he first started at UNC-Chapel Hill in 1971, he tells

students that he learned to teach the hard way, trying things in the classroom that didn't work. Over the years, he says, he had to study different teaching styles and revise his approach and philosophy several times in an effort to improve his performance. For students studying pedagogy with Bowers, the energy he devoted to gaining new insights wasn't wasted. Putting everything he's learned at their disposal, Bowers now channels his time and experience into helping future instructors *before* they face the challenges he once did. His method clearly works. For the past four years in a row, his students have won university-wide graduate assistant teaching awards.

At this year's AEJMC convention in Kansas City, Bowers will talk about his experiences and share teaching tips with all who attend the fifth annual pre-convention Promising Professors Workshop. The workshop, co-sponsored by the MC&S division and the Graduate Student Interest Group, is scheduled for Tuesday, July 29 at 5:30 p.m. Bowers will share the podium with five winners of the Promising Professors competition who each will receive cash awards for their creativity and accomplishments as teachers.

### About the competition

**Rules:** Both full-time faculty and graduate students can enter. To be considered for the faculty competition, you must have taught no more than five years as a faculty member. Graduate students entering the competition must have primary

responsibility for teaching at least one class. All entrants must be members of the Mass Communication and Society Division. If you're not a member, contact AEJMC to join. Winners **must** be a presenter at the division's Promising Professor Workshop.

### Send three copies of a packet containing the following:

- Current vita
- Letter of support from your department chair or dean
- Brief statement of your teaching philosophy
- Brief statement of what makes your teaching unique, along with your assessment of your strengths and weaknesses as an instructor
- At least two syllabi from classes you have taught within the past two years (Graduate students may send only one if they have not taught more than one class.)
- At least two examples of specific assignments used in those classes in the past two years
- Other materials demonstrating teaching creativity

**Procedure:** Send all materials to Professor Stacey Cone, MC&S Teaching Standards Co-chair, W420 Seashore Hall, School of Journalism, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242. The deadline is March 15. All entries will be acknowledged but not returned. A panel of at least three judges will review the entries. Winners will be notified no later than May.

**Awards:** Three faculty winners and two graduate student winners will be selected. Prizes in the faculty category are as follows: first place \$250; second place, \$100; third place, \$50. The graduate student winners will receive \$50 each. All winners will appear as panelists at the pre-conference workshop in Kansas City.

Good luck, and congratulations to all of our excellent teachers out there who are rewarded every day.

# Call for Papers: General and Special Research Paper competition call

The Mass Communication & Society Division encourages paper submissions on any topic related to the general field of Mass Communication & Society. In addition, the division is sponsoring a special call for research papers on the topic "Media and Family" for presentation at a special research panel at the 2003 convention. A cash award will be presented for the top paper in the competition. The MC&S Division is interested in papers using any recognized research method and any recognized citation style. Please note that the division is interested in research presentations, rather than essays or commentary. For the "Media and Family" panel, the division is particularly interested in research that is not commonly the subject of research in this or other divisions. All papers not accepted for presentation at the special panel will be considered for presentation during other research panels at the convention. Both the general competition and the special competition are open to faculty and students.

**GRADUATE STUDENTS:** The Mass Communication & Society

Division encourages graduate students to submit papers (on any topic related to Mass Communication and Society) to the Leslie J. Moeller Award competition, which includes a \$100 first prize and \$75 second prize. Moeller competition papers must be accompanied by a letter from a sponsoring faculty member to indicate that the paper was written for a class during the previous 12 months. Theses and dissertations are not eligible for the Moeller competition.

**SUBMISSIONS:** Please follow the guidelines presented in the AEJMC Uniform Call for papers. In addition, all text, references, tables, and other materials should not exceed 30 pages. Papers intended for the special "Media and Family" competition or for the Moeller competition should clearly note as such on the title page or they will not be considered for those awards.

All submissions should be sent to:  
Donica Mensing, MC&S  
Division Research Co-Chair,  
Reynolds School of Journalism,

MS 310, University Of Nevada,  
Reno, NV 89557, (office) 775-784-  
4187. E-mail: [dmensing@unr.edu](mailto:dmensing@unr.edu).

Questions also may be addressed to Jennifer Greer, MC&D Division Research Co-Chair, (office) 775-784-4191.

E-mail: [jdgreer@unr.edu](mailto:jdgreer@unr.edu).

In addition to the calls above, the Mass Communication & Society Division is co-sponsoring a special paper call with the Media Disabilities Interest Group on the effects of media coverage of disability on society. The top paper in the competition will receive a cash award and be scheduled for a scholar-to-scholar session in Kansas City.

Papers should be no more than 25 pages in length. Submissions for this special competition should be submitted to:

Laura Deen Johnson, MDIG  
Research Chair, Communication  
Arts Department, University of  
Pittsburgh at Bradford, 300  
Campus Drive, Bradford, PA  
16701. Telephone (814) 362-5014.

E-mail [ldj1@pitt.edu](mailto:ldj1@pitt.edu).

## THINKING

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any employer, profession or position: the Ken Burke Society, the semiotics commission, the communication apprehension and avoidance commission, and so on. What many speech communication courses teach and how little connection it has with specific, especially unique, job skills in specific, especially unique, jobs, that students wouldn't obtain in other majors, is not unlike what journalism schools would be like if they taught a lot of media criticism, media literacy and

mass communication theory—as if the economy's private sector were demanding professional "media critics" and "media theorists."

Yes, the NCA has a Mass Communication Division, in which I admittedly have been somewhat active, but it is surprisingly immature. At the New Orleans convention, much of the meeting was taken up with fairly basic issues surrounding the judging of convention papers, the awarding of paper prizes, etc., issues that almost all of the AEJMC's divisions resolved a long  
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**MORAL2****continued from page 5**

journalists — information that the public and politicians rely on when deciding crucial social questions such as the course of foreign policy, domestic welfare programs, health care policy, and political leadership.

Also, this study is designed to measure myriad variables that have been shown to be important in good quality ethical reasoning in other professions, as well as some variables suspected to be important to good ethical reasoning in journalism but that have never been tested. This will enable us to discover the best indicators of high ethical reasoning in journalists so that we can emphasize teaching in those areas and development of those types of personal qualities — in other words, to help build better journalists.

Finally, this research also includes questions that will allow us to compare different subsets of journalists on ethical reasoning. It is a popular notion within the field, for example, that broadcasters have lower ethical standards than print journalists. These data will help us either confirm that

perception or dispel that myth.

This research will also allow comparison of civic journalists and investigative journalists, large news organization journalists and small organization journalists, men and women, managers and workers. Unbelievably, no objective, empirical data exists on this topic — only anecdotes and perceptions.

Since those preliminary data were gathered, we have embarked on short journeys around the country to gather data on a larger, representative sample of the U.S. population of journalists. Approximately 200 journalists have participated in the study so far; we are aiming for an N of 250. Our eventual goal is to produce a book based on this large-scale survey that also includes several smaller experiments. We hope this work will shed much needed light on journalists' ethical decision-making in order to help researchers, teachers, and working journalists better understand what kinds of things play a role in good ethical decision-making and how to improve the teaching and practice of journalism.

**Reference:**

Black, J., Barney, R.D. & Van

Tubergen, G.N. (1979). Moral development and belief systems of journalists. *Mass Communication Review*, 6(3):4-16.

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Zelizer, B. 1999. Making the neighborhood work: The improbabilities of public journalism. In Glasser, T.L. (Ed.) *The idea of public journalism*. New York: The Guilford Press. p. 152-174.

Singletery, M.W.; Caudill, S.; Caudill, E.; & White, A. (1990). Motives for ethical decision-making. *Journalism Quarterly*, 67(4): 964-972.

Voakes, P.S. (1998). What were you thinking? A survey of journalists who were sued for invasion of privacy. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 75(2): 378-393.

Westbrook, T.L. (1995). The cognitive moral development of journalists: Distribution and implications for news production. Unpublished dissertation, University of Texas at Austin. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A*, Vol 56(3-A).

Whitlow, S.S. & Van Tubergen, G.N. (1978). Patterns of ethical decisions among investigative reporters. *Mass Communication Review*, 6(1):2-9.

**THINKING2****continued from page 4**

time ago.

In Balthrop's November presidential address, he also complained about NCA members who "characterize the work of others as not being intellectually rigorous, as being 'faddish' and not 'doing real scholarship.'" Well, I was at a

2002 NCA Convention session at which a panelist read a poem in place of presenting a scholarly paper. It should go without saying that poems do not get published in social science journals nor are they a qualification for almost any job; in other words, whether speech communication is going to remain a liberal art or

try to become a professional program, poetry isn't intellectually rigorous, or real, social scientific or even applied scholarship (unless you're getting a degree in poetry).

Most notably, however, Balthrop claimed that, "We are producing more scholarship, better scholarship, and scholarship

that can make significant contributions as we address the 'grand social issues' of our time." (He also said that his field needs "more journals, more books.") Balthrop didn't define what the 'grand social issues' of our time" are, but allow me to give it a crack for the sake of argument.

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# Attention Kansas City Convention Goers!



Join us this summer for a tour of two of the city's most exciting museums—the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum and the American Jazz Museum—on Wednesday, July 30<sup>th</sup>.

The tour is sponsored by the Mass Communication & Society Division and the Minorities and Communication Division of AEJMC.

The first stop will be the all-new Negro Leagues Baseball Museum. It's arranged on a timeline of African American and baseball history from the 1860s-1950s, and it features a 10,000 square-foot multi-media exhibit, including two film exhibits, two video exhibits, and fifteen computer interactive stations. The gallery's center is called "Field of Legends," and it contains twelve life-sized bronze-cast sculptures of the most impor-

tant players in Negro Leagues history.

Our second stop, the American Jazz Museum, is one of the most interactive museums in the country. You'll have the chance to gain new insight into the jazz experience watching the film "Jazz Is?," featuring Max Roach, Jay McShann, David Baker and Shirley Horn. You'll also learn about jazz greats, such as Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong, Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald and Charlie "Bird" Parker, touring exhibits that contain audio listening stations, personal artifacts, rare photographs and informative timelines. You'll be able to experiment with the musical concepts of rhythm, harmony, and melody in a studio-like environment. Five listening stations acquaint you with the different instrumental sections

of a jazz band. The museum's "Blue Room" is its most versatile "exhibit," remaining part of the museum's celebration of Kansas City jazz by day, but by night becoming a working jazz club featuring local and national artists. A Jazz Discovery Room (the Wee-Bop) is designed for children under eight years.

Each museum takes just one hour to see. Usually, entry to the museums costs \$8 a piece. With a group of 25 or more, our tour will cost only \$5 (age 12 and up) and \$2 (age 11 and under). We plan to meet in the Hyatt Regency lobby at 8:45 a.m. and share cab fare over to the museum. The tour starts at 9:00 a.m. To sign up, please email Stacey Cone at the University of Iowa

([stacey-cone@uiowa.edu](mailto:stacey-cone@uiowa.edu)).

*All that jazz!*

2003 Convention • Kansas City, MO • July 30-August 2, 2003

**SCHEDULE**

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3:15-4:45 p.m.

Special-Topic Competitive Paper Session

6:45-8:15 p.m.

Members' Meeting; Kathy McKee, presiding

**SATURDAY, August 2**

8:15 a.m.-9:45 a.m.

Competitive Paper Session

8:15 a.m.-9:45 a.m.

AEJMC Officer Training

10-11:30 a.m.

Invited Panel: "Research Agendas for Campaign 2004"

Co-Sponsor: Communication Theory & Methodology Division

11:45 a.m.-1:15 p.m., off-site

Executive Meeting: Dane S. Claussen, presiding

1:30-3 p.m.

Invited Panel: "After Enron, WorldCom, Xerox, etc.: Perspectives on Media Executives who also Take Stock Options, Bonuses and 'Consulting' Contracts"

Co-Sponsor: Media Ethics Division

3:15-4:45 p.m.

Invited Panel: "Media Criticism: Who's Doing It, Who's Not Doing It, and Who's Listening"

Co-Sponsor: Media Ethics Division

5-6:30 p.m.

Invited Panel: "Reporting on Aging Issues"

Co-Sponsor: SciGroup

*We will also attempt to secure at least one more regular session for competitive papers (probably 8:15-9:45 and/or 11:45-1:15 p.m. on Wednesday, July 30), plus participate in at least one of the Scholar-to-Scholar Sessions, which are Thursday, July 31, 1:30-3 p.m. and/or Friday, August 1, at 11:45 a.m.-1:15 p.m.*

**THINKING3**

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Certainly I would include sexism, racism and homophobia, but all of these are difficult to measure. Coincidentally, the January/February 2003 Atlantic Monthly includes an article, "The American Paradox," whose author (Ted Halstead) was kind enough to list America's "worsts"—measures by which the United States ranks in bottom three countries among the world's "advanced democracies." These characteristics are: poverty; economic inequality; carbon-dioxide emissions; life expectancy; infant mortality; homicide; health-care coverage; HIV infection; teen pregnancy; personal savings; voter participation; and obesity. Certainly politicians, various professionals, the news media and the public each have a role in communicating about these problems.

Curious as to what kind of contributions NCA members are making to solving them, I searched for these terms and closely related terms on the 2002 NCA convention program. I could find no convention papers about the poor/poverty; carbon dioxide emissions or any aspect of exhaust or other pollution; infant mortality; health insurance, Medicare or Medicaid; or personal or family savings. The convention included one panel about unequal access to the Internet, but it hardly addressed the broader issue of income inequality. The three papers touching on homicide/murder concerned transgendered persons organizing after a murder in Boston; Vietnamese immigrants' narratives in the United States about the murderous regime they left behind; and the question: is murder a form of terrorism? The one paper on pregnancy apparently concerned how women who already are pregnant talk about it, an issue probably not related to preventing pregnant teens, although more encouraging was another paper, "Family Climate, Frequency, and Quality of Family Discussions about Sexual Issues and Perceived Sexual Self-Efficacy of Adolescents." Written by Jennifer L. Davis of Penn State, the latter paper was, however, relegated to a poster session with several dozen other papers. As for life expectancy, the NCA has a Commission on Communication and Aging, but it covers a lot more than dealing with why the United States' life expectancy isn't longer (such as age discrimination), and in fact rarely tackles life expectancy at all, since

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## THINKING4

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the United States' lack thereof is often considered solely a health issue rather than a political or economic one.

On HIV/AIDS, the NCA convention, however, included a pre-convention seminar, "HIV/AIDS, STD's & Sexual Behavior: Conversations Leading to Action," and a dozen papers on the topic spread out among a poster session and nine different divisions/caucuses' sessions. Several seemed to be on point: "Gay Communication in Action: The Rhetoric of HIB, AIDS Prevention/Protection Found in Gay Men's Bars" (Gregory A. Tillman, Florida State); "Sharing Information about an HIV Diagnosis" (Kathryn Greene, Rutgers); "Invisibility Fuels the Epidemic: Understanding the Prevention-Related Needs of Persons Living with HIV/AIDS" (Maria K. Lapinski, Western Michigan; Mark Peterson, Midwest AIDS Prevention Project); and perhaps "Rethinking AIDS: The Campaign to Introduce a New Perspective on the AIDS Virus" (Jason Edwards, Minnesota State—Mankato). On voter participation, numerous papers—especially in the Political Communication Division and the Mass Communication Division—had something to do with voter apathy, voter cynicism and so on. Surely many, if not most, of the Political Communication Division members would say they have insight into fixing declining voter turnout—usually tweaking campaign ads or campaigns' news cov-

erage. But I could find only two papers dealing with the most obvious issue, which is that young people vote the least: "Impacts of Political Advertising's Depictions of Young Voters" (Karla M. Hunter and Johan L. Wanstrom, University of Oklahoma) and "Candidates and Young Americans Discuss the Youth Vote: A Closer

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Examination of the Cycle of Neglect" (four co-authors at the University of Texas at Austin).

Obesity and/or losing weight specifically were addressed by at least six papers, five together in one session called "Pressure, Social Stigma, and Paternalism: Student Papers [all from Minnesota State University at Mankato] on Media and Governmental Influence on Obesity." Two of them seemed quite on point, as one looked at the Surgeon General's statement on obesity and another looked at the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports' "narrative." One not on that panel also seemed most on point, "Promotion of Successful and Healthy Weight-Loss: What Works?" (Alicia D. Adkins, Texas A&M University), although it too was relegated to that poster session with several dozen other papers. The NCA convention included about 80 papers and lectures on

"body image," but this term now means much more than feelings or opinions about obesity. And it must be noted that much of NCA members' research on obesity and/or body images and self-images has been concerned with how, bluntly, to help obese people have higher self-esteem. This, of course, treats a symptom of obesity but does little, if any-

thing, about its cause.

Granted that NCA members still write a lot about sexism and racism.

But considering the fact that the 2002 convention, by NCA's own count, featured 1,282 separate paper sessions and other meetings—including hundreds (thousands?) of scholarly papers—one must give the NCA's membership a grade of only about C-, at best, in terms of the raw quantity of scholarly research on the "grand social issues" of our time," as Bill Balthrop put it. (And then there's that issue of quality.) So, for NCA scholarship to be valuable to a larger audience, to justify "more journals, more books," it will need to raise that grade—plus actively avoid publishing in its journals, such as *Critical Studies in Media Communication* (to which I subscribe), the sometimes nearly impenetrable articles.

Despite the emphasis that the NCA hierarchy has put in recent years on, as NCA says, "coloring outside the lines," becoming an

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## THINKING5

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'engaged discipline,' reexamining and 'radical(izing) our roots,' and demonstrating 'communication in action,'" I don't expect that most NCA members' apparent lack of interest, or even avoidance, of "grand social issues" of our time will change very much anytime soon. Speech communication professors are under no pressure to turn out graduates with identifiable, especially unique, easily monitored and demanded skills the way that schools of education, law, medicine, business, dentistry, agriculture, education, journalism and mass communication, etc., are. Second, a visit to any NCA convention will show you that the typical NCA member takes social science theory more seriously than the average AEJMC member does; the organization even has an "Applied Communication Division," as if to admit that the rest of the field is strictly academic/ theoretical/ impractical. Third, the more than speech communication professors use literature they should use from other disciplines—such as mass communication, medicine, psychology, political science, public policy/ administration, law, anthropology, theater/drama, and various minority and ethnic studies—the more it becomes obvious that speech communication is none of them and can't pretend to be as advanced or practical in those areas as those disciplines are by themselves already. And yet the less speech communication professors consult research in other disciplines, the lower the quality of their own work would often become, if only for the realization of reinventing the wheel. (This willingness to blur lines while not acknowledging that it is being done has now trickled down to students, who now want to be waived out of graduate-level mass communication theory courses because they took a [speech] communication theory course as an undergraduate; ditto research methods and occasionally even history courses.)

The irony of all of this is that the speech communication discipline's top-down efforts to become more professional, more practical, more prominent, and more powerful, came before and after Lee Bollinger's

halting of a journalism dean search at Columbia University. His now well-known words, "To teach the craft of journalism is a worthy goal, but clearly insufficient in this new world and within the setting of a great university," seem to have turned up the heat again on the issue whether journalism schools should be more academic/scholarly/research-driven or more professionally/ practically oriented. Importantly, however, this is a now traditional debate about changing, broadening and/or deepening the journalism and mass communication curriculum, and those changes' impacts, if any, on faculty hiring practices—not a 180-degree turn in the discipline. Journalism and mass communication professors, to the extent that they conduct research (many conduct none, and many others only a little), already tend to keep their research rather practical/ professional-oriented—which is pressure on our discipline from the bottom up. (Yes, we also produce some irrelevant, even bad, research—but I haven't heard any JMC professor take responsibility for the "'grand social issues' of our time"). And despite the quiet tension between the "green eye-shades" and the "chi-squares" in our discipline (which produces both "academic" and "professional" research), JMC educators can all pretty much agree on what professions and industries we're training our students for, and we rarely endeavor, let alone pretend, to be experts on some other discipline. Therefore, those who think that the journalism and mass communication discipline is undergoing an identity crisis need only observe the increasingly obvious phenomenon of the liberal art once known as speech quite willfully and voluntarily becoming schizophrenic.

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