

Static

The Newsletter of the Radio-Television Journalism Division of AEJMC

July 1999

Teaching Ethics Up To The Minute

by HUB BROWN
Syracuse University

"Why are we even discussing this?" The student in the back of the large classroom was visibly indignant. She saw no reason for the class to even talk about whether the news media in East Lansing, Michigan should hand over their videotapes and film to law enforcement officers investigating the riots that took place there March 27 and 28. Of course you hand over the tapes, she said. The news media have an obligation to help police solve crimes, and if a tape which shows individuals rioting can help police find those responsible, then give it to them, she told the class. A number of heads nodded in agreement.

Here we go again, I thought. I had imagined that I'd face a few challenges in my first semester teaching this journalism school's ethics class, but I hadn't anticipated having to defend very basic concepts like journalistic independence. Having come from a generation of college students who didn't have to be encouraged to be suspicious of authority, I thought I would have to advocate for the other side, to encourage students to understand why some would think that there were circumstances where a dialogue with police would be helpful. I was wrong. I found myself spending an uncomfortably large amount of class time rhetorically pulling students out of the back pockets of the cops and other government officials.

This time, however, another student shot back, "If you hand over the tapes, you're just an arm of law enforcement!" And still another: "What if the tapes show the *police* doing something wrong? You going to hand it over then?" For the mo-

ment, at least, I was not fearful of unleashing this bunch on an unsuspecting world.

Every issue was fair game in the News 345 Critical Perspectives class, and we never came close to running out of issues to discuss. The class met once weekly for the 15-week semester, which, of course, is from mid-January to early May. Or, on the ethics calendar, from Larry Flynt's paid-for revelations about Congressman Bob Barr to the

gas by the U.S. military on American troops.

And all of that was before the semester even started. We were all set to discuss the events of 1998 many times, but often the events of that day or the preceding week would intervene. That's nothing unusual, according to my Newhouse colleagues who've taught the class before. Professors Joan Deppa and

"I learned that many of our students react to the stumbles of journalists by becoming all-too-comfortable with the idea of limiting their freedom and access to information."

Columbine High School shootings.

Many parts of that period of time were not bright shining moments for journalism, and it followed a year in which excess was the name of the game. It was all Monica, all the time in 1998, and the students in my class were keenly aware of the self-inflicted beating the news media in this country were taking for it.

If my students got bored with the daily desperately-seeking-Monica drumbeat, there were certainly other examples of news media indiscretions to focus on. There was Cincinnati Inquirer reporter Michael Gallagher's theft of voice-mail messages from Chiquita Brands Corporation. The Inquirer paid the corporation \$10 million and fired Gallagher after the theft was revealed. There was the Boston Globe, saddled with the plagiarism and fabrication of Mike Barnicle and Patricia Smith. There was CNN, first charging ahead, then in full retreat, over the Tailwind story that had alleged the use of nerve

Lois Bianchi (now at Queens College) designed the course. Deppa says, "When we designed this course, we recognized that the key to its success was in making it highly participatory." That has meant the use of hypothetical situations and the Socratic method of classroom interaction, and it's meant an eye on the headlines.

When a major event broke in the days before class, student participation was not a problem at all. When Larry Flynt made headlines with his hunt for "dirt" on the personal lives of the Republican Congressional leadership, my students were able to discuss whether it was right to run Flynt's paid-for allegations when the networks or newspapers involved would never pay for the information themselves. When Yugoslav soldiers captured three American servicemen, I

see *Ethics*, page 4

Head Notes

by JIM UPSHAW
RTVJ Head

As my term as RTVJ head winds down, I'm faced with the customary three-way Hobson's choice: To crow at length about accomplishments and risk embarrassing or annoying everyone; to come down hard on shortcomings, a la what our friends in rhetoric might call "the Jimmy Carter 'national malaise' model," or to throw down a sweeping challenge to the division, with a flourish.

Mmmmm, I don't think so.

Certainly there have been accomplishments. The greatest of these probably was the total effort of a fine leadership team in crafting a convention lineup that looks solid from start to finish. Yes, there have been shortcomings; we strove hard this year to bring about a big jump in the number and range of research papers submitted but managed only a small increase. And sure, we could all use a challenge—but we already have several unclimbed mountains in front of us.

So let me point out some opportunities that lie before us in the coming year, which launches the coming millennium (gee, that was fun to write):

First is the opportunity to attend our pre-convention broadcast writing workshop to be held from 1 to 5 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 3. The workshop will be led by Bob Dotson, a veteran NBC correspondent, writer, producer and coach. Don't miss it; admission is free.

The second opportunity worth noting also is at the convention, but should point us much farther ahead. Please try to attend "The Status of Broadcast Research," a session set for 8:30 a.m. Friday, Aug. 6. Some fine researchers will bring to the table their best ideas as to what sorts of inquiry the field most needs. Don't let your ideas get left out. This is a subject on which RTVJ should not only follow but lead.

Finally, long-term opportunity abounds in a fledgling partnership with Belo, one of broadcasting's most highly respected companies. Belo's foundation has funded our pre-convention workshop and is seeking other ways to bring journalism educators (and their students) into closer contact with broadcast practices and professionals. Again, it's up to RTVJ members to follow up creatively on this welcome initiative.

Oh...what?...some of that sounded like a challenge?

Oops. Sorry. Well, one last thing: Thanks so much for the goodwill, good ideas and cooperation all year long. And please join us for the business meeting and social on Friday night of convention week. This event, harrumph, may actually be heavier on New Orleans jazz and celebration than on business.

What if I just give incoming head Chris Allen the business?

Or at least the gavel?

See you in New Orleans!

Division Social Heads For Bourbon Street

by BILL KNOWLES
University of Montana

Because it's New Orleans, we weren't about to have our business meeting, social and Distinguished Broadcast Journalism Educator Award ceremony just anywhere. Continuing our tradition that takes that annual event away from the convention hotel, this year we'll meet at the Storyville District Jazz Club at 125 Bourbon Street. It's about a four-block walk from the Sheraton. The event begins at 6:15 p.m. Friday, August 6.

Jambalaya and other local culinary delights are on the hors d'oeuvres menu. And of course there will be the usual cash bar (for those of you so inclined, the brew of choice for many locals is Dixie Beer).

But a major event, as scheduled at press time, will be an appearance by one of the hot bands of New Orleans, Banu Gibson's New Orleans Hot Jazz. Banu, a longtime friend of this reporter, has helped us set up the meeting and at last report will be able to perform with her band or with a quartet. She is the area's leading jazz singer and she and her band are a popular music attraction wherever they play, and they've played about everywhere in the U.S.

Our social was originally scheduled for LeVon Helm's Classic American Café, of which Banu was part owner. But that club folded in May, leaving everybody with bookings, including us, to scramble for alternate locations.

Much of the division's on-site planning legwork was done by Steve Steinberg, former writer/editor for ABC's *Nightline*, now retired and living in the French Quarter. The division is indebted to Gibson, Steinberg and Storyville club manager Shannon Connolly for getting us a solid off-site location.

Storyville, by the way, was the name of New Orleans' notorious red-light district, closed down by the U.S. Navy during World War I. A housing project and part of Louis Armstrong Park sits on the original site, but the name was reclaimed by a

Student Newscasts Across the Country

by C. A. TUGGLE
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

Many of us are involved, to one degree or another, with student newscasts. Others are just starting the process or are thinking about incorporating a lab newscast into the curriculum. Regardless of just how far along any one of us might be, it's certain that we can all learn from the successes and failures of others. To help us all stay in contact with one another and get ideas about how to do things or how to do them better, we have put together the beginnings of a database, which lists the schools doing newscasts, how often they air and

whether the programs are on cable or are delivered in some other way, how frequently the newscast "airs," the name of the faculty member who heads up the program, and that person's e-mail address.

What works at one school might not work at another, but knowing how a colleague handles certain situations can give others of us ideas for working out similar problems. For example, just how are the duties divided between broadcast journalism students and production students? Do you team-teach with a production profes-

see *Newscasts*, page 4

see *Social*, page 4

Vice Head Says It's Time to Start Thinking About Phoenix

by CHRIS ALLEN

RTVJ Vice Head & Program Chair

Some of you planning to attend the AEJMC Convention in New Orleans are putting together the presentations you will make in research sessions. Some of you will be on panels. Others are making airline reservations, trying to decide which restaurants you want to visit, or figuring out what clothes to take that won't make you bake in the New Orleans heat and humidity.

In other words, you're focused on the upcoming convention.

I'd like to ask you, when your preparations are done, to start thinking about next year's convention.

This is really the time to do it. The plans for New Orleans are done. As you can see elsewhere in *Static*, a lot of people have worked hard to make this a good meeting for members of RTVJ and others who drop in. But we have a lot of work to do for next year, and it should begin now.

Once again, paper submissions were low for our division. So we have a session to talk about the research agenda for radio and television news. I hope you pack the session (even though it's Friday's early morning session) and talk about what we're doing, and what new things each of us might consider for next year and the years to come.

There is no doubt radio and TV are going to change. We in this division can do some ground breaking research in process, effect, delivery method, presentation style, psychological effect, agenda setting, and areas I'm certainly not capable of dreaming up. The session "The Right questions" is really designed as a brain-storming session, and from it, I hope to increase paper submissions by at least half for next year.

But that's not all. We need your suggestions as to topics for Professional Freedom and Responsibility sessions next year, and for Teaching sessions as well. Some excellent ideas for panels

this year came from our members, and were developed by the committee chairs or panel moderators.

Take away from the AEJMC Convention some ideas to develop over the next year. Urge your colleagues and students to submit papers, ideas and comments to the leadership of the division.

Most important, I think this year, attend the business meeting Friday night. If you're planning to go out on the town Friday night, the business meeting is the best way to start. You can find out more details on page 3 of this issue — we'll have appetizers, music and conversation, and we'll honor Elmer Lower as Distinguished Broadcast Journalism Educator.

And we'll elect officers and discuss things important to the operation of the division. It's important you be there, to express your ideas and concerns. We can begin building an agenda that starts next year and takes us three, four or five years into the future.

I tell students in my Introduction to Mass Communication class that this is a tremendously exciting time to be a journalist. We may not like what's happening in radio and TV news (and what better topic for discussion and research), and some of us are still amazed at the ever-changing technology of the delivery systems (which seems to get all the ink and air time), but no matter what the bells and whistles are, there has to be content. That's what we do: content.

How does that affect our classrooms? Our students? Our relationship with other departments on campus? The administration? The professional world? Our research projects? Our membership?

So if I may be so bold as to give you an assignment for next month, think about these questions, and come ready to discuss them in the sessions and the business meeting.

Television, Politics, Gender Bias Among Paper Topics

by DAVID KURPIUS

RTVJ Research Chair

Someone really should have warned me about what a research chair is expected to endure. How is that for a lead? Now that I have your attention, let me say that April and May were grueling months. The pay-off is in the quality of the papers accepted for presentation this year. The judges did a fantastic job. We did not increase the number of paper submissions to the division in any substantial way, as we had hoped to do, but the end result is still favorable. Here is the line-up for this year on the research track.

The first RTVJ research session is Wednesday, August 4 at 9:45 a.m. The session, "Television & Politics: Public, Commercial and International Broadcasters," highlights the top student and the top faculty papers. It is a session that provides

fodder for future research projects and should draw a good crowd.

The second broadcast research grouping is the 8:15 Thursday morning "Scholar-to-Scholar Poster Session." The papers here are strong enough to warrant having very short results presentations at the beginning of the session and an equally short response by a discussant to tie elements together. The focus of these papers centers on content and coverage issues and is well worth a visit, either during the informal presentations and discussion or individually at each poster station.

The third research session is "A Spotlight on TV News: Where It Came From, Where It's Going and the Costs Along the Way." This session focuses on outside influences on television journalism as well as structural issues within the industry. From the effects of affiliate changes to the

gender salary gap, this is a session worth catching.

The final research session is late in the program but worth the wait. "The Power of Television: From City Hall to the Military and What the Public Learns" promises to be a good closing research discussion. The effects of city hall television coverage, gender bias in television magazine shows and a new operationalization for media reliance research fill out a solid research slate.

The future for improving research quality and numbers in RTVJ remains promising. An RTVJ panel on the status of television research called "The Right Questions" will help refocus broadcast research in general. Now is the time to begin preparing for the 2000 paper competition. Show

see *Topics*, page 4

Ethics, from page 1

showed the class the picture of the three—from the Yugoslavian government website. With the image projected on a large screen, we then discussed the access we—and the Yugoslavians—had to an enormous amount of personal information about the families of the three soldiers through the Internet. And when the shootings took place at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, we watched the story develop in front of us.

Columbine High School was not even officially secure when our class began at 7:00PM Eastern time on April 20. We started the class by watching the coverage of the still-developing story. Many of my students were outraged that distraught high schoolers were being interviewed right after they emerged from the school building. Others saw those interviews as the core of the story, and if the students in question

were in control, an on-camera interview was fair. Most thought it unwise for one Denver station to air a student's phone call from inside the building. But all students got a lesson in the ethical challenges of trying to cover a developing story live. Most had criticisms of individual tactics, but gave both local Denver media and national networks generally positive marks for their coverage, that day and in the days following. My students were concerned most of all about the rights of the students and parents in Littleton to have some space to react to the cataclysm in their lives. I was happy about that—it's a concern we all should have.

But I learned a lot from my semester-long conversation with 50 students about ethics. I learned that many of our students react to the stumbles of journalists by becoming all-too-comfortable with the idea of limiting their freedom and access to information. While we present the ethical

decision-making process as a balancing act, too many of our students are too anxious to tilt the balance in favor of news sources, even when those sources are government officials who themselves are way too media-savvy to be given any favor. I found that far too many students came into the class confusing being ethical with being passive. By the end of the semester, we had talked often and extensively about the dangers of that confusion.

Perhaps we journalism educators have not been as diligent as we should be in showing students examples where journalistic independence and aggressive, probing reporting has resulted in stories that helped people, stories that educated them and made their lives safer. In all kinds of classes, not just those that focus on ethics, we should impress more strongly upon students that a passive media that can't or won't find the truth is perhaps the biggest ethical danger of all.

Topics, from page 2

up and gather ideas at the research sessions and the panel

A few closing thoughts as I end my tenure as research chair. Life would be easier if submissions came with all of the required supporting documentation. I know my students lose points for having an abstract twice the stated limit. Lots of papers (about half) came without disks, permission forms or both. I humbly suggest that we tighten the rules for RTVJ and reject any incomplete submissions in the future. I also suggest that we print a checklist in *Static* next year to remind all of us to pay attention to the details.

Editor's note: A complete list of authors and their research papers to be presented during the RTVJ sessions in New Orleans can be found on page 6.

Newscasts, from page 3

or? Is the newscast a class in itself, or do the students volunteer their time and receive no class credit for their work? Being able to drop a quick e-mail to the group to find out how someone else has worked out a problem could keep us from having to reinvent the wheel each time someone starts or expands a newscast and might provide ideas for sprucing up what we are already doing.

Regarding the database, we can add categories as we go along and include anything that the members of RTVJ think would be helpful. Our division head has already suggested adding a category indicating the school terms during which the newscast is active. Some schools do a newscast year-round, others program the news only one semester per year. Take a look at the beginnings of the list on the RTVJ website and submit any changes or additions necessary. We are particularly interested in coming up with contact names at all universities or colleges doing newscasts. Send additions/corrections to Charlie Tuggle at catuggle@email.unc.edu.

Also, don't forget to mention RTVJ to a colleague who might be attending the AEJMC conference in New Orleans but who is not yet a member of our division. Now is a perfect time to talk up the benefits of division membership, which include the website, the listserv, and other attempts at service to the members.

Social, from page 3

group of clubs and restaurants at the foot of Bourbon Street. The division urges members and guests seeking dinner out after the social to patronize one of the Storyville District restaurants, including the place we'll be in for the meeting. That would be our way of saying, "Thank you for the good deal on the hall."

So as the locals say, *laissez le bon temps roulez*, which loosely translated means, "let the good times roll."

F Y I

Future Convention Dates:

2000 AEJMC Convention
August 9-12
Hyatt Regency
Phoenix, Arizona

2001 AEJMC Convention
August 5-8
Grand Hyatt
Washington, DC

RTVJ 1999 Convention Schedule

TUESDAY, AUG. 3:

1:00-5:00 p.m.

PRE-CONVENTION WRITING WORKSHOP

Credibility And Accountability:
It Starts With Reporting And Writing

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 4:

8:15-9:30 a.m.

TEACHING PANEL

Survey Courses: Challenges of Introduction
to Journalism/Mass Communication Teaching
Co-sponsor: Mass Communication and Society Division
Contact: Bill Knowles, knowles@selway.umt.edu

9:45-11:15 a.m.

REFEREED RESEARCH SESSION

1:00-2:30 p.m.

PF&R PANEL

Women In Sports Broadcasting:
Still The "Old-boy Network"?
Co-sponsor: Commission on the Status of Women
Contact: Hubert Brown, hwbrown@mailbox.syr.edu

4:15-5:45 p.m.

TEACHING PANEL

Tips Of The Trade:
Master Teachers Reveal Their Secrets
Co-sponsor: Community College Journalism Association
Contact: Matt Ehrlich, mehrlich@uxl.cso.uiuc.edu

6:00-7:30 p.m.

PF&R PANEL

Talking The Talk...or Walking The Walk?
The Truth About Diversity
Co-sponsor: Media Management & Economics Division
Contact: Jeanne Rollberg, jnrollberg@ualr.edu

THURSDAY, AUG. 5:

1:00-2:30 p.m.

REFEREED RESEARCH

(All-division Poster Session)

2:45-4:15 p.m.

PF&R PANEL

The Effects Of Foreign Television
On Domestic Viewers
Lead co-sponsor: International Communication Division
Contact: Michael Elasmr, elasmr@bu.edu

4:30-6:00 p.m.

REFEREED RESEARCH

(Three-division Poster Session)

6:15-7:45 p.m.

PF&R PANEL

Refereed Creative Projects Presentation
Co-sponsor: Visual Communication Division

FRIDAY, AUG. 6:

8:30-10:00 a.m.

PF&R PANEL

The Status Of Broadcast Research
Co-sponsor: Communication Technology
and Policy Division
Contact: Chris Allen, cwallen@cwis.unomaha.edu

2:45-4:15 p.m.

TEACHING PANEL

A Study In White:The Disappearance
Of Minority Broadcasting Outlets
Co-sponsor: Minorities and Communication Division
Contact: Hubert Brown, hwbrown@mailbox.syr.edu

6:15-7:45 p.m.

RTVJ Division Business Meeting, Social,
And Presentation Of Distinguished Broadcast
Journalism Educator Award

SATURDAY, AUG. 7:

8:45-10:15 a.m.

TEACHING PANEL

Crossing The Great Divide:
Combining Print And Broadcast In The Classroom
Contact: Matt Ehrlich, mehrlich@uxl.cso.uiuc.edu

10:30 a.m.-Noon

TEACHING PANEL

Distance Learning:
New Opportunities For Journalism Educators
Co-sponsor: Visual Communication Division
Contact: Matt Ehrlich, mehrlich@uxl.cso.uiuc.edu

1:00-2:30 p.m.

**RTVJ Division 1999-2000 Executive
Committee Meeting**

2:45-4:15 p.m.

REFEREED RESEARCH SESSION

RTVJ 1999 Convention Research Papers

Wednesday, August 4
9:45 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.

Television & Politics: Public, Commercial and International Broadcasters

Moderating/Presiding: **Chris Allen**, Nebraska-Omaha

“The State, Market and TV Relationship in China: A Managerial Perspective of Decentralization and Depoliticization”

Tsan-Kuo Chang, Minnesota-Twin Cities &

Yanru Chen, Nanyang Technological

“Winner by a Sound Bite: Fairness and Balance in the 1998 Michigan Governor’s Race”

Sue Carter, Frederick Fico & Jocelyn A. McCabe,

Michigan State

“Editorial Rights of Public Broadcasting Stations vs. Access for Minor Political Candidates to TV Debates”

Kyu Ho Yuom, Arizona State**

“Public Broadcasting in Transition: News, Elections and the New Marketplace”

Clawes de Vreese, Amsterdam*

Discussant: **Folu Ogundimu**, Michigan State

**Top Faculty Paper

*Top Student Paper

Thursday, August 5
8:15 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.

Scholar-to-Scholar Poster Session

“‘Sesame Street’ and Children Learning English in Hungary: Measuring Appeal”

Rita Csapo-Sweet, Missouri-St. Louis

“Prime Time News: Effects Associated with the Rise of the Television News Magazine Format”

Jennie Rupertus, Texas-Austin

“A Comparative Study of Local and National Television News Coverage of a Natural Disaster”

Aaron Quanback & Marwan Kraidy, North Dakota

“Media Use, Knowledge of and Support for Megan’s Law”

Michelle Johnson, Marist & **Diane Badzinski**, Westfield State

“The 1996 Presidential Nomination Contests: Network News Coverage”

Karon Speckman, Truman State

Discussant: **Keisha Hoerrner**, Louisiana State

Thursday, August 5
1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

A Spotlight on TV News: Where It Came From, Where It’s Going, and the Costs Along the Way

Moderating/Presiding: **David Kurpius**, Louisiana State

“A Quarter Century of Television Network News: Fewer, Longer (?) and Softer News Items”

Daniel Riffe & Lori Spiczka Holm, Ohio

“Student and Professional Attitudes Regarding Advertising Influence on Broadcast News Content: A Comparative Study”

Hubert Brown & Beth E. Barnes, Syracuse

“Television Network Affiliation Changes in a Major Market and the Effect on News Viewing”

Samuel J. Sauls & Marilyn L. Boemer, North Texas

“Has the Salary Gap Closed? A Survey of Men and Women Managers at U.S. Television Stations”

Jennifer Greer, Nevada-Reno & **Keisha Williams**, WFAA-TV

Discussant: **Ann Hollifield**, Georgia

Saturday, August 7
2:45 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.

The Power of Television: From City Hall to the Military and What the Public Learns

Moderating/Presiding: **Craig Allen**, Arizona State

“The Effects of Television Coverage of City Hall”

Stephen R. Lacy & Charles St. Cyr, Michigan State

“GI Jane Trapped in Stereotype: How Television Magazine Shows Bolster Gender Bias While Purporting to Fight It in Their Coverage of Military Women”

Christopher Hanson, North Carolina

“Media Reliance and Political Knowledge: Have Researchers Underestimated the Effects of Radio and Television News Because of An Operationalization Artifact?”

Raymond Ankney, North Carolina

Discussant: **Betsi Grabe**, Indiana



Teaching Sessions To Focus on Survey, Broadcast Journalism, Distance Learning & Convergence Courses

by MATT EHRLICH
RTVJ Teaching Chair

The RTVJ Division has five quality teaching sessions planned for August's convention in New Orleans.

We begin Tuesday afternoon with a workshop designed especially for those who teach broadcast news writing. NBC's Bob Dotson will conduct the workshop from 1 to 5 p.m. Dotson's writing and reporting tips have been frequently included in broadcast news textbooks, and he's an exceptional speaker. (He's also a Kansas alum, but Missouri folks shouldn't hold that against him.) If you haven't yet heard, this workshop is FREE; the division was able to obtain outside funding to cover the costs. If you plan to attend, e-mail Jim Upshaw at <jupshaw@ballmer.uoregon.edu>. (If you already paid the \$25, AEJMC will refund the money, although you will need to contact their office and request the refund.)

First thing the following morning (Wednesday, Aug. 4th), the division is co-sponsoring a session with the Mass Communication & Society division on teaching the intro to mass communication course. The session will run from 8:15 to 9:30 a.m. Since most of our schools have such a course and many of us have taught it, there should be a lot of interest. Our former division head, Bill Knowles of Montana, will moderate the session, and another former head, Don Heider of Texas-Austin, will participate. Other panelists include Joe Russomanno of Arizona State and no fewer than FOUR authors of mass comm textbooks: Shirley Biagi of Cal St.-Sacramento, John Vivian of Winona State, John Bittner of North Carolina, and Joseph Dominick of Georgia (who also happens to be a past winner of our Distinguished Broadcast Journalism Educator award).

That afternoon from 4:15 to 5:45, we'll focus again specifically on teaching broadcast journalism in a session co-sponsored by the Community College Journalism Association. We'll reflect on what makes good teachers and how they cope with the frustrations of the craft. (You didn't know teaching broadcast news could be frustrating, did you?) Angela Powers of Northern Illinois suggested this panel, and she'll participate along with Missouri's Lillian Dunlap, Nevada-Reno's Travis Linn (another past DBJE winner), and El Paso's Carroll Ferguson Nardone. We're hoping for plenty of audience input in this one and that people will bring syllabi, class handouts, and other material that fellow teachers might benefit from.

Thursday and Friday are off days teaching-wise. (Go easy on those hurricanes; they give you a headache and dye your tongue red.) We return Saturday morning, Aug. 7th with back-to-back sessions. First up from 8:45-10:15 a.m. is a panel co-sponsored by the Newspaper division looking at media convergence. In a previous column for this newsletter, (see October 1998 *Static*) I mused about the desirability of consorting with our print brethren (not that there's anything WRONG with them) in redesigning the journalism curriculum and doing away with traditional print and broadcast sequences. This panel will feature those who have done just that or at least are considering doing so. Laurie Wilson of Brigham Young will talk about her school's newly-

divergent program; in her words, "we have a great story to tell." We'll also hear from David Gordon of Wisconsin Eau-Claire, which is preparing to embark down the same road. Roger Gafke of Missouri will discuss how they have made the Internet an integral part of their broadcast program while maintaining separate print and broadcast sequences, and John Herbert of Staffordshire University in the United Kingdom will provide an international perspective.

Immediately following, from 10:30 a.m. to noon, is a session on distance learning, into which more and more schools are investing resources. We'll look into the implications of this, good and bad, for traditional classroom learning. The Visual Communication division is co-sponsoring and Jean Trumbo of Wisconsin-Madison will moderate. Panelists include Debashis Aikat of North Carolina, Ken Loomis of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Steve Masiat of Syracuse, Jacque Ewing-Taylor of Nevada-Reno, and RTVJ research chair Dave Kurpius of Louisiana State.

I have always thought that our division's commitment to teaching the craft of journalism has set us apart from many other AEJMC divisions. These sessions will help us hone that craft. I look forward to seeing you there!

Don't Miss the **RTVJ Annual Business Meeting and Social**

beginning at 6:15 p.m., Friday, August 6
Storyville District Jazz Club

125 Bourbon Street

(about a 4-block walk from the Sheraton)

Presentation of the Distinguished Broadcast Journalism Educator Award

Appetizers & Cash Bar

Music by Banu Gibson's New Orleans Hot Jazz



Lower Named 1999 Distinguished Broadcast Journalism Educator

by ROB WICKS
DBJE Committee Chair

Elmer Lower has been named the 1999 Distinguished Broadcast Journalism Educator. As the 17th recipient of the highest honor presented by the RTVJ division, Lower will be recognized during a presentation ceremony August 6th at the annual AEJMC convention in New Orleans.

Lower encapsulates the best of what journalism and education have to offer. As an electronic media professional, he spent 11 years with American Broadcasting Company as President of the ABC News and four years as Corporate Vice President. During his stint at ABC, Lower hired talented journalists like Ted Koppel, Sam Donaldson, and a young Canadian reporter named Peter Jennings. William R. Davie, Broadcasting Coordinator for the University of Southwestern Louisiana, explains: "One measure of Mr. Lower's success was the fact that the network news budget increased ninefold, and as a result of his leadership, ABC could boast with pride that it was the 'fastest growing news organization in America.'"

Lower also worked for the National Broadcasting Company for two years as Washington Bureau Chief and producer of election coverage, moving on to New York for an additional two years as Vice President and General Manager for political and space coverage. Between 1953 and 1959, Lower worked for the Columbia Broadcasting System as Washington Bureau Chief, followed by an appointment to Director of Special Projects and Director of News Operations in New York.

Among his other professional accomplishments, Lower spent six years with LIFE Magazine serving as Paris Bureau Chief for four years, as Los Angeles Bureau Chief for two years and as roving correspondent in the Far East for one year. Lower has also worked for the United States Office of War Information, the Associated Press, the Newspaper Enterprise Association and for the United Press International (UPI). His career began in 1933 as a reporter with the Trenton, Missouri, Republican-Times.

Upon his retirement in 1978 from ABC, Lower spent many years as a visiting professor at some of the most noted journalism schools in the country including Missouri, Syracuse, Columbia, Ohio, Brigham Young, James Madison, Hunter, San Diego State, Alabama and Kansas. University of Kansas Professor Max Utlser, then a student at Missouri, recalls his first encounter with Lower: "I first met Elmer Lower in 1974 when he was President of ABC News. He had returned to visit the University of Missouri. I had been assigned to interview him about some current 1st Amendment issues. I was terrified. I shouldn't have been. I recall I gathered enough information for the story and secured the obligatory sound bite. I also recall we spent most of our time together talking about the school. Elmer asked me numerous questions about the TV station, the faculty, the students, and the equipment. I could tell he genuinely interested in the education of the young Mizzou journalists. Mistakenly, I assumed he was only interested in Missouri because he was an alum. He later proved me wrong."

Lower is remembered by his students and colleagues for his diligence in preparation and patience as a teacher. Professor Bill Knowles, University of Montana, worked under Lower for 15 at ABC News as a writer, producer and bureau chief. "I always respected the direction in which Elmer took ABC News in those days. But it's as an educator that I revere Elmer. He always promoted journalism education, and then demonstrated that during his career at Missouri and the other schools that were lucky enough to attract him."

WCVB Vice President and News Director Candy Altman writes of her former teacher: "Elmer Lower is a wonderful human being. As I have tried to chart my own course in television news management, I use him as a role model: a person of character, with a sense of mission and a love of news."

WUOT - FM General Manager Regina Dean recalls the emphasis that Lower placed on strong writing. "I remember the simple sign Professor Lower displayed in his office to remind broadcast journalism students that, regardless of the 'pictures,' good writing is critical. In bold block letters the word WRITING constantly reminded students that 'white balancing' and 'great video' were secondary."

University of Kansas Dean, Jimmy Gentry, said that "I was fortunate to take his course in elections and media as a student at Missouri. He sparked our imaginations, dazzled us with his knowledge and engaged us with his humor."

Colleagues and students uniformly characterize him as a life-long mentor. WBZ (Boston) investigative reporter, Joe Bergantino, says "His teaching extended far beyond the classroom setting. He was a mentor to many of us. Elmer was always there to offer advice and guide us in ways no one else could. He continued as my mentor for years after my graduation from Missouri."

University of Utah graduate student Dale Cressman believes that Lower's greatest contributions are the most difficult to measure: "I am referring to the countless number of lives that he has touched. From the famous (Peter Jennings) to the aspiring college teacher (like myself) I believe this man will never be able to comprehend how very much he has (and continues) to teach and inspire us." Concurring with Cressman, Jeanne Rollberg, Chair of the Department of Journalism at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock notes, "Students in his classes may have failed to grasp how lucky we were then, but time has given us the perspective to appreciate Professor Lower's many gifts to us."

Lower joins previous recipients of the DBJE including Jack Shelly, Iowa State (1983); Ed Bliss, American University (1984); Dick Yoakam, Indiana (1985); Henry Lippold, Wisconsin-Eau Claire (1986); Rod Gelatt, Missouri (1987); Mitchell Charnley, Minnesota (1988); Don Brown, Arizona State (1989); Irving Fang, Minnesota (1990); Ernest F. Andrews, Syracuse (1991); Al Anderson, Texas-Austin (1992); Michael Murray, Missouri-St. Louis (1993); Joseph R. Dominick, Georgia (1994); Joan Konner, Columbia (1995); Gordon Greb, San Jose State (1996); Travis Linn, Nevada-Reno (1997); and Vernon Stone (1998).

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