

Static

The Newsletter of the Radio-Television Journalism Division of AEJMC

Vol. 39, Nos. 1 & 2 March 2000

Upshaw to Chair RTNDA Education Task Force

Head Notes

Good news: RTVJ's relationship with the Radio-Television News Directors Association has grown much tighter this year. We now have a double opportunity to improve both teaching and broadcast journalism, to our students' and graduates' benefit.

The big change came at RTNDA's convention last October in Charlotte, N.C., when incoming chair Robert Garcia restructured his organization's Education Task Force—and announced that from now on it will be led by RTVJ's liaison officer.

What this means is that past RTVJ head Jim Upshaw is both liaison to RTNDA and chair of its ETF this year. Current division head Chris Allen will slide into the twin positions next year.

The Education Task Force was formed in 1996 to bring forward issues of joint concern. Among topics it's undertaking now are possible regional activities that will put educators and news managers face-to-face more often, and the question of whether a common national standard could and should be used in evaluating broadcast graduates.

Another issue—paid internships—has been on RTVJ's hot plate for years, and Upshaw is working to advance the progress made by past head Don Heider in getting news directors to discuss the issue. A major article on the subject is expected to appear in RTNDA's *Communicator* magazine before summer, triggering conversa-

tions at the grass roots about how to get better rewards for hard-pressed interns.

At Garcia's urging, the Education Task Force has been streamlined to include four members from the industry "side" and six from education. The new roster: From the RTNDA board: David Baer, WMTW-TV, Portland, Maine; Bob Salsberg, Associated Press, Boston; Patty Talahongva, White Spider Communications, Tempe, Arizona; and Jim Turpin, KAKE-TV, Wichita, Kansas. From education: Bill Davie, Southwest Louisiana; Paul Davis, Foundation for American Communications (FACS); Linda Fleisher, CNN Newsource; Mike McKean, Missouri; Bob Papper, Ball State, and Jim Upshaw, Oregon.

In addition, a number of others form the Advisory Council who will help execute the Education Task Force's programs, and former chair David Guerra, Arkansas, has stayed on as chief adviser to the chair.

They task force members have been pooling and screening proposals for this year's RTNDA convention in Minneapolis in September. They also will work to make the Educators' Breakfast, a big hit last year, even better in Minneapolis. Meanwhile, the enhanced conversation between the pros and the profs is expected to enrich our division's work at the AEJMC convention in Phoenix in August.

by CHRIS ALLEN
RTVJ Head

I've realized over the past few years the problems of planning a convention like ours. We ask for program proposals in October, assemble a list by November first, go to the planning meeting in December, and then wait eight months before the convention actually comes off.

That's a long lag time. Things that seemed important in October sometimes lose their luster. I don't think any of ours are like that this year. Worse, media issues arise in the interim that need to be addressed, but the panels by then are set and recasting them would be bureaucratically difficult.

That's how I feel now. Things are happening in our world that should be addressed. For example, I don't like the idea of AOL owning CNN – or any of *Time*, for that matter – and I want to talk about it. I want to explore it from a student's perspective (jobs), a teacher's (preparation, the job market), a professional's (ethics, pay, opportunity, pressure), an audience's (variety, coverage, number of voices), and a researcher's (take your pick!).

Another example: CBS admits it's been using the same electronics that help us illustrate stories and better inform people to cover up NBC's logo, and to make it appear that CBS's logo

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RTVJ 2000 Convention Schedule

(contact names are listed when RTVJ is the lead sponsor of the session)

Tuesday, August 8

1:00-5:00 p.m.
Pre-Convention Workshop:
Producing 2000

As TV news continues to evolve, as audience demands change, as competitive pressures increase, and as new technologies develop, the role of the television news producer is also changing. Students must be prepared to handle a variety of problems and opportunities as they shape the competitive look of TV news while keeping a sense of substance and ethics at the forefront of their considerations.

contact: Chris Allen, University of Nebraska-Omaha

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Wednesday, August 9

9:45-11:15 a.m.
[at off-site location]
"The Conversion to
Digital TV in Phoenix"

(co-sponsor: Comm Tech, Media Management and Economics)

The American television industry is in the midst of a national conversion from analog to digital technology. Affiliates from the big three networks in the top 30 markets (including #17, Phoenix) were required to transmit their digital signals by Nov. 1, 1999. This panel will discuss DTV conversion and issues of implementation at the local level, including production of local DTV programming, pass-through national programming, and conversion costs. The panel session will include a tour of a Phoenix TV station, with transportation pre-arranged.

11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m.
RTVJ Research Paper Session

1:00-2:30 p.m.
"Local News in the New Century"

(co-sponsor: Media Management and Economics)

This panel discussion will feature decision-makers who are rarely heard from but who make many of the most important decisions regarding local TV news. Speakers will discuss the impact of increased competition, decreasing market share, and the role that education should play in training broadcast journalists in the first part of for the 21st century.

contact: Don Heider, University of Texas at Austin

4:15-5:45 p.m.
"Taking the Stand: Journalism
Professors as Expert Witnesses"

Some Journalism professors find themselves called to be expert witnesses. Should they accept this role, and what are the ethics involved if they do? Should academics stick with plaintiffs or defendants when First Amendment issues are at stake? Should they take compensation, and if so, how much? This session will answer these questions and offer guidelines, principles and tips from those who have experience taking the witness stand.

contact: Craig Allen, Arizona State

6:00-7:45 p.m.
RTVJ Research Paper Session

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Thursday, August 10

1:00-2:30 p.m.
"What a Tangled Web We Weave:
What Students Should Learn about
the Internet for Y2K"

(co-sponsor: VisCom)

As we discuss broadcast news for Y2K, it's valuable to mark the progress the In-

ternet is making in the journalism mix, and what lessons we need to incorporate in our classrooms. What are stations doing with web sites other than streaming audio; how will video be added? This panel will chart the knowledge level that professors and faculty need to have to teach this technology.

contact: Jerry Renaud, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

6:15-7:45 p.m.
"Corporate Ownership:
Its Impact on Local News"

(co-sponsor: Media Management and Economics)

Conglomerates have now expanded their station ownership to between 35%-50% of the country. Is the public losing out in the ongoing battle for "freedom of the press"? Are major media companies cross-promoting programming to raise profits but giving short shrift to local news? Speakers on this panel recommend the proper response to broadcast news by media oligarchy.

contact: Ed Freedman, Frances Marion University

8:00-9:30 p.m.
"Is Radio News Dead?"

(co-sponsor: Media Management and Economics)

Radio news at commercial stations has changed radically in recent years with fewer stations producing local news. At the same time, more public radio stations/networks are producing local news. Are colleges and universities placing less emphasis on radio news and more on TV? This session considers the future for radio news in the professional and academic worlds.

contact: Sandy Ellis, University of Wisconsin-River Falls

see *Schedule*, page 3

Schedule, from page 2

9:45-11:00 p.m.
“Minorities and Media
Ownership in the 21st Century”

(co-sponsored with Media Management and Economics and Council of Affiliates)

The panel will evaluate the status of minority-owned media outlets in the United States as they compete with marketplace mergers. Emphasis is given to minority-owned newspapers, radio stations, and the alternative press.

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Friday, August 11

8:30-10:00 a.m.
RTVJ Research Session

1:00-4:15 p.m.
Mini-Plenary:
“Coaching and Critiquing:
Fostering Student Talent”

(co-sponsored with Civic Journalism, Small Programs Interest Group, and Community College Journalism)

How to give students the honest feedback they need and deserve about assignments while not discouraging them has challenged professors for years. This is especially the case for radio-television faculty who typically review student reports in class without the convenience of anonymity. Speakers will offer tips on how to remediate bad writing habits and coach students on the skills they need to compete while building their confidence.

4:30-6:00 p.m.
“Radio News in the
Merger Mania Age”

(co-sponsored with Internships and Careers Interest Group)

Radio news and news-talk program directors examine the radio newsroom, and how it has changed over the past decade, the current need for talent, and the forecast for the next several years.

6:15-7:45 p.m.
Off-Site RTVJ Business
Session/DBJE presentation

Saturday, August 12

8:45-10:15 a.m.
AEJMC training sessions for Incoming Heads,
Vice Heads, Teaching, PF&R, and Research Chairs

8:45-10:15 a.m.
“Bridging the Gap: Connecting Researchers
and TV News Professionals”

(co-sponsor: Internships and Careers Interest Group)

The panel will release and discuss new research comparing viewers’ reactions to a variety of television news structures and reporting styles. Discussants will show how research findings can be made more useful to TV news professionals. Panelists will also consider what newsroom leaders may want to learn from the academy, offering suggestions for research with guaranteed relevance to the profession.

contact: Deborah Potter, executive director, NewsLab

1:00-2:30 p.m.
“Should RTNDA's Code of Ethics be
Re-Written? What Do the
Professionals and Professors Say?”

The danger of violence in American schools last year reverberated in Congressional hearings, and one of the targets for public concern became television news coverage at such times. Radio-Television News Directors Association President Barbara Cochran warns TV news managers, “We can't bury our heads in the sand like ostriches. The public is telling us something important about what they do and do not want to see and hear from television and radio.” The RTNDA Code of Ethics recommends that sensationalism be avoided by broadcast journalists, but that is left for news directors to define. Are codes of ethics the cure or to they pose a threat worse than the problem--given the fear that lawyers can make any statement of principles fodder for lawsuits. Speakers in this session will consider broadcast journalism ethics and the codes to which professionals subscribe.

contact: Bill Davie, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

2:45-4:15 p.m.
RTVJ Executive Committee Meeting

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is all over the place. Not only does CBS refuse to apologize for doctoring the pictures, it says it will continue to do so.

Closer to home, one company now owns eight radio stations in Omaha, and at only one of those is there a news presence. There is no independently owned station in town. And of the two dozen stations that claim to be Omaha, only three are actually providing news. Four if you count the NPR affiliate, but that station has no local news reporters. We only get what the network feeds.

The economics of this business continue to evolve, and that causes dominoes to fall all over the place. Unfortunately, that discussion won't take place this year. The only possibility might be in the pre-conference workshop called Producing 2000. We'll talk about producing newscasts – in various guises – and no doubt some of the current mergers, changes and transfers will spark new questions about the pressures on producers in the newsroom.

But these changes mean we as teachers must also talk. I know I continue to search for my proper role in the business. As a teacher, the biggest influence I have is to try to impart certain standards to the students, and help them develop their abilities. What ever sense of ethics they get in class are put under immediate pressure as they enter the job market. Is that where our influence ends?

I don't want to suggest that all newsrooms are unethical. I know there are excellent radio and TV stations with high standards for their reporters, editors, photographers and anchors. They aren't the ones the worry me.

With some of the best suggestions I've seen, Jeanne Rollberg and the committee chairs are putting together an outstanding program for Phoenix. It's such a full schedule, I hope we'll be able to get out of the hotel and into some other areas of interest. I want to thank those who made proposals for programs, and who have agreed to arrange and chair the sessions.

Let me also remind you that we need judges for papers.

At the Winter meeting in Memphis, a proposal was made for yet another interest group with hopes of becoming a full division. It would be called the Popular Culture Interest Group, I believe, and would include non-news entertainment communication. This might be of particular interest to some of our members who want to explore broadcasting beyond news. Several years ago the RTVJ division reaffirmed its mission as strictly news-oriented. This shut out those who wanted to explore entertainment television, advertising on TV, public relations and TV or other matters affecting the broadcast industry exclusive of news.

No action was taken in Memphis, and there was a lot of discussion about adding yet another interest group and eventually division, and how that would affect what many feel is already a conference that is over-programmed. And yet I feel there well might be a place for such a group. I know researchers interested in that area can go to BEA, and I also know there are other divisions within AEJMC to which papers can be submitted. But some of those are already chock full, and the competition is stiff. That's the reason the proposal is being made, and will probably be voted on at the AEJMC business meeting in Phoenix.

Call for Distinguished Broadcast Journalism Educator Nominations

The Distinguished Broadcast Journalism Educator Award is presented annually to an electronic media educator who has made a significant and lasting contribution to the field. Criteria for nomination and selection:

Teaching: Evidence of excellent teaching may come from a nominee's dean, director, or department chairperson, current or former students, faculty colleagues, etc. Letters should contain specific examples of teaching quality.

Service: Service may include major responsibilities or leadership in professional or educational organizations such as AEJMC, RTNDA, SPJ, state broadcast news organization, etc.

Research: The nominee should exhibit enhancement of teaching and service through professional and/or academic writing and research. Examples include journal articles, articles in professional trade publications, and creative works for broadcast.

The award will be presented at the RTVJ's business meeting in August. The recipient will receive a personal plaque and registration fees for attendance at the AEJMC convention. The recipient's name will also be added to a plaque that is permanently housed in the Poynter Institute for Media Studies in St. Petersburg, FL.

Nominations are solicited from the broadcast media, professional organizations and associations, and broadcast educators or students. Send nominations by April 1, 2000 to:

William L. (Bill) Knowles
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University of Montana
Missoula, MT 59812
Office Phone: (406) 243-4747
E-mail: knowles@selway.umt.edu

Call for Research Papers for the 2000 AEJMC Convention

The Radio-Television Division of AEJMC invites submissions of original research papers on radio and/or television journalism for the 2000 convention, August 9-12, in Phoenix, AZ.

All research methodologies are welcome.

Rules and Guidelines

1. Papers submitted to the Radio-Television Division may not be simultaneously submitted to any other AEJMC division, interest group or commission. Your paper, excluding notes, should be approximately 6,250 words or about 25 pages of double-spaced 11-12 point pica type.

2. Send the paper by first class or priority mail, postmarked no later than April 1, 2000. Acceptance by an overnight delivery service by the deadline is acceptable. Incomplete submissions will be returned. E-mail and fax submissions are not acceptable.

3. Include an abstract of no more than 75 words.

4. Identify the paper's author(s) on the title page only and include the mailing address, telephone number and, if available, e-mail address of the author to whom inquiries about the submission should be addressed. The title should be printed on the first page of the text and on running heads on each page of text, as well as on the title page.

5. Send six typed or computer-printed copies of the paper. If you prepare your paper on a personal computer, you are also required to include a Macintosh or IBM-compatible computer disk (3-1/2 inch preferred) containing the paper in digital form. Preferably the disk file will be in low-level ASCII, in a non-proportional font such as Courier with a line length of 65 characters or less. The complete paper should be in one file containing the title page, body, tables, references, etc. If this is not possible, the paper should be submitted in a standard word-processing format such as: Word, WordPerfect, MacWrite, or RTF. All the components of the paper should be in one file.

6. Papers are accepted for peer review on the understanding that they are not already under review for other conventions and that they have been submitted to only one AEJMC group for evaluation. Papers accepted for the AEJMC convention should not have been presented to other conventions or published in scholarly or trade journals prior to presentation at the convention.

7. Student papers compete on an equal footing in open paper competitions. Undergraduate and graduate students enrolled during the 1999-2000 academic year may submit papers and the RTVJ Division awards \$100 to the best student paper. The top three student papers are selected for presentation at the convention. Students should identify themselves on the title page only of their submission.

8. At least one author of an accepted faculty paper must attend the convention to present the paper. If student authors cannot be present, they must make arrangements for the paper to be presented.

9. By May 15 authors will be advised whether their paper has been accepted and will receive a copy of the reviewer's comments.

Papers will be evaluated on their relevance to radio-television journalism, purpose, literature review, appropriateness and effectiveness of the research method chosen, relationship of evidence presented and the claims made in the paper, clarity of conclusions, relationship of conclusions to stated purpose of the paper, contribution of paper to knowledge and understanding of electronic media journalism and quality of writing.

Send papers to:

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RTVJ Division 1999-2000

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