

spig news

Newsletter of the AEJMC's Small Programs Interest Group

Spring 2007

Plan to Attend the AEJMC Convention in Washington, D.C., August 9 - 12

By Margo Wilson, SPIG Head

Greetings, Colleagues,
Before you get too buried by this semester's avalanche of student papers, get out your pocket calendars and circle Aug. 9-12 as the dates for a trip to Washington, D.C., to attend the annual AEJMC conference. There also are preconvention workshops planned for Aug. 8.

Because of hotel booking considerations, the conference starts one day later than usual—a Thursday for the first official day—and ends a day later—Sunday.

SPIG's business meeting, during which we elect officers, is at 8:30 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 10, followed by a social gathering at approximately 9:30 p.m., for which we will team up with the Community College Journalism Association (CCJA). We hope as many of you as possible will come to our meeting and then party with us. SPIG Vice Heads Ron Hollander and John Jenks, and I are pleased with the panels and time slots we negotiated at the chip auction in December. As an interest group, SPIG usually can offer a maximum of seven co-sponsored panels, plus one "free" research panel, at the convention.

In order to accommodate some recently formed interest groups, AEJMC has asked one-third of the divisions and interest groups each year, for the last three years, to cut panel offerings by one or two panels. This year, it was SPIG's turn to give up a co-sponsored

panel (one-half chip).

However, our good friends from CCJA loaned us one-half chip at the auction, and we will be able to offer six co-sponsored panels: the "mini-plenary" GIFT poster session, in which we participate with three other groups/divisions, and a Scholar-to-Scholar competitive research paper session.

The Scholar-to-Scholar session is new for us. There's more information about it elsewhere in this issue. This year, AEJMC gave each division/group a "free" Scholar-to-Scholar session. If we had chosen to offer a traditional competitive research paper panel, it would have cost us one-half chip. We decided we could maximize SPIG's panel presence at the conference and still demonstrate our commitment to research by pursuing this "free" session.

Our panels and times include:

Thursday, Aug. 9

1:30 p.m.: "Writing for the New Media: Same as the Old?" John Hanc of New York Institute of Technology is moderating. CCJA is co-sponsoring the panel.

3:15 p.m. GIFT Poster Session. CCJA is the originator of this session and SPIG traditionally has co-sponsored it. Other co-sponsors are the International and Scholastic divisions.

Friday, Aug. 10

11:45 a.m.: "Teaching Students to Recognize the Voices of the Silenced."



Teresa Heinz Housel of Hope College is moderating. The Religion & Media Interest Group (RMIG) is co-sponsoring.

3:15 p.m. "Annual Hot Topics Panel on a Matter of Breaking News." Terry Dalton of McDaniel College is moderating. The Media Ethics Division is co-sponsoring.

5 p.m. "Stretching the Shoestring: Journalism Education on a Budget." John Jenks of Dominion University is moderating. CCJA is co-sponsoring.

8:30 p.m. SPIG business meeting. Election of officers.

9:30 p.m. SPIG social with CCJA. Saturday, Aug. 11, 12:15 p.m. Scholar-to-Scholar Research Paper Session.

1:45 p.m. "Teach-In: The First Journalism Writing Class." Cheryl Bacon of Abilene Christian is moderating. CCJA is co-sponsoring.

3:30 pm. "How to Publish Scholarly Research in Specialized Areas." RMIG will provide the moderator and two panelists and SPIG is providing three panelists. Vivian Martin of Central Connecticut State University proposed a SPIG panel, "Do You Really Have to Write a Book? Innovative Strategies to Turn Your Classroom Into a Research Lab," which has been folded into the RMIG proposal.



Point of View:

ASNE Offers Real World Experience for Journalism Professors

By Ron Hollander
SPIG Co-Vice Head
Montclair State University

Talk about getting out of the journalism classroom, and back into the real world! How about one fatal plane crash, two drownings in floods in the Northeast, a round-up of drug dealers in a gentrifying neighborhood, and the Israel-Lebanon war's impact on children...all in six weeks?

Those were only some of the stories I covered reporting for The Baltimore Sun's metro desk last summer through the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) Institute for Journalism Excellence that placed 20 j-professors at papers around the country. (Regrettably, the program has ended, as the Knight Foundation that funded it wants to put more of its money into high school teaching.)

I had been a reporter for 28 years (Newsday, NY Post, Virginian-Pilot, freelance New York Times, Town & Country, etc.) before coming to Montclair State in northern New Jersey in

1989.

So it was 17 years since I had been on-staff for a daily newspaper. (I introduced myself in the newsroom as "the world's oldest intern," and young reporters barely older than my students would look over at my corner desk, and ask skeptically, "Is that the college professor?")

I couldn't wait to get out on the streets again with the reporter's scepter of nothing more than a notebook and pen, but after I got my first assignment (about the drug dealers in the neighborhood), I also was literally sick to my stomach (it ached), and I walked around the block for an hour getting up my courage to approach an amiable homeless man.

I needn't have worried. The summer was a fantasy come true. Once the editors learned that teaching was not inimical to "doing," they gave me every assignment I could have want-

ed, and I made the front page and had lots of B1 centerpieces.

The summer was a real boost to my teaching. More, it gave me a sense of how privileged we academics are, as many of the older reporters and editors asked wistfully how they, too, could become "respected" professors with all that job security and time off. (The questions had particular pathos, as The Sun's future remains in limbo, pending a resolution from its parent Chicago Tribune company.)

I returned to Montclair State this fall bursting with enthusiasm for our mission of teaching this wondrous craft we call journalism. Many local papers would welcome a professor from their nearby college as an intern, and I urge my colleagues to approach them.

Nothing else that I've done, from traveling to freelancing to teaching in China on a Fulbright, has so energized me in the classroom. But be warned: It brings a teaching challenge.

Because my students—like all today—are so Internet savvy, they immediately went online, and looked up my clips. Then they came to class and threw down the gauntlet with, "But your story didn't start with the 5W's like you taught us!" But that only provided a natural segue into the difference between hard news and news-features (it was a story on an African-American concentration camp liberator), between hard and soft leads.

And let me talk yet again about how much fun reporting is.

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Point of View:

SPIG Offers Support for Faculty at AEJMC

By John Jenks
SPIG Co-Vice Head
Dominican University

All of us face the demands of the 21st century academic squeeze – electrify four classes a semester with dynamic teaching, integrate rapid technological changes into the curriculum, keep the IRB and Assessment Committees off our backs, help students find jobs and – here’s the crunch – produce lots and lots of scholarly research.

While our colleagues at Research I universities insulate themselves from these struggles with large departments of specialists and two-two loads, we in SPIG frequently cover the whole field and do it single-handedly. And it isn’t easy, especially the research requirements.

If we’ve gone through the doctoral process, we can mine our dissertations for a while and explore interesting new angles, but eventually even that plays out. So, how do we fit more research into an already packed schedule?

This is where SPIG comes in. We not only have revived a refereed research panel, but also have developed panels that will help you keep your research agenda fresh and interesting, and wow the curmudgeons on your rank and tenure committee.

For example, this year SPIG is co-sponsoring a panel with Religion and Media Interest Group titled “How to Publish Scholarly Research in Spe-

cialized Areas.” One of the panelists, former SPIG head Jim Simon, will talk about how we can get bona fide research and publishable articles out of our emphasis on top-notch teaching.

“It’s a matter of starting early, viewing every class as a research opportunity, and looking more broadly for topics,” Simon said.

“We sometimes forget that our colleagues are also interested in pedagogical issues, such as the difference between an online class and traditional class. It is not hard to set up a controlled experiment in which you analyze, say, differences in grading patterns between the two delivery systems and look for what contribution you can make to the literature in this area.”

More traditional, communication-oriented projects also can come out of the classroom, such as tracking changes in student attitudes toward the First Amendment that correlate with a class project on the Freedom Of Information Act, he said.

These are just a few angles from one panel. There are plenty of others out there. Maybe you have one, too. Bring it to the Washington, D.C., AEJMC and share the love.

Call for Papers

“Scholarship That Informs Teaching”

Deadline: April 1, 2007

by Mary Carmen Cupito and Vivian Martin

SPIG is doing something different for its research session at the 2007 AEJMC annual meeting: a Scholar-to-Scholar poster session.

Please, consider submitting a research paper to this session – or serving as a paper reviewer. SPIG needs both.

The session topic is broad, “Scholarship That Informs Teaching,” and is open to faculty and students. Research should put special emphasis on teaching in small journalism or communication programs, and qualitative and quantitative research is welcome. Authors do not have to be SPIG members

to qualify for the session.

Papers are accepted on the understanding they have not been previously presented or published and are not under consideration by a scholarly journal or by another scholarly or trade organization. Papers cannot be submitted to more than one AEJMC division or interest group.

Papers must be 25 pages or fewer, excluding tables, figures and references. All entries must follow the guidelines for the 2007 Uniform Call for Online Paper Submissions, published in the AEJMC newsletter and online.

All papers this year must be

submitted electronically. You can upload your paper to the SPIG link via the AEJMC site www.aejmc.org/07convention/index.php no later than 11:59 CST April 1, 2007. More information can be found at http://aejmc.org/_events/convention/papercall/uniform_call.php and http://aejmc.org/_events/convention/papercall/uniform_callspecs_2.php.

If you wish to serve as a reviewer or have other questions, please contact Research Co-Chair Mary Carmen Cupito at cupito@nku.edu [Northern Kentucky University] or Research Co-Chair Vivian Martin at MartinV@ccsu.edu [Central Connecticut State University].

On the title page only, include your e-mail address and summer address, if different from your school address. Only e-mailed papers will be accepted for consideration. Papers sent by regular mail will not be accepted for review.

Become More Involved

Want to be more active in SPIG? Want to be more active in AEJMC? Want a better chance of getting your school to pay your way to the AEJMC convention? Want to learn the ins and outs of the panel selection process? It's not too early to let us know that you are interested in being a SPIG officer.

Although one of the vice heads traditionally has moved up to head the group, we will be looking for a new vice head, as well as: Professional Freedom and Responsibility chairs or co-chairs; Teaching chairs or co-chairs; Research chairs or co-chairs; a Liaison to the Commission on the Status of Women; and a Membership chair.

If you are interested in any of these posts, contact Margo Wilson, SPIG head, at wilson_m@cup.edu.

Call for Entries for GIFT Program Deadline: April 1

SPIG members are among the most creative teachers in AEJMC and we urge you to enter the 2007 GIFT poster competition. Since 2000, SPIG has co-sponsored this event that the Community College Journalism Association coordinates. The International and Scholastic divisions of AEJMC more recently have joined us as co-sponsors. Information about the GIFT program, the call for papers, and other help-ful tips are on the GIFT Web site at: <http://www.geocities.com/aejmgift/GIFTHome.html>.

The contest deadline is April 1. Winners display their papers at a poster session at 3:15 p.m. Aug. 9, at the 2007 AEJMC convention in Washington, D.C. Winning entries also are published in a GIFT journal. It's an official publication of CJA and counts as a refereed article. The GIFT acceptance rate in 2006 was 29 percent, so being selected as a GIFT scholar is an achievement.

Web site at: <http://www.geocities.com/aejmgift/GIFTHome.html>.

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