

spig news

Newsletter of AEJMC's Small Programs Interest Group

Spring 2011

New blog opens with 4 regulars Others contribute single posts, how you may join them

By Margo Wilson

I don't know about you, but blogging doesn't come naturally to me. Nevertheless, I'm helping coordinate the SPIG blog: <http://mediaminder.wordpress.com> -- an experiment in a new, exciting, and somewhat scary way to share our insights about teaching, journalism, the media, the world, and ourselves. Come join us and contribute your posts and comments.

A note from Ginger

How should SPIG grow?

By Ginger Carter Miller
SPIG Head

Elsewhere in this newsletter, you'll find a schedule of the great things SPIG is going to be doing at the AEJMC National Convention in St. Louis. With our Senior Vice Head Susan Lewis's leadership, we have acquired a great assortment of panels and sessions. By the middle of the month, those sessions will have all taken shape, and we'll be well on our way to another successful SPIG presence at AEJMC.

I was tremendously proud

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Many of us in SPIG feel our members know more about the practical aspects of teaching journalism and media than just

about anyone else. Some of us started talking about ways to share our knowledge and opinions. Consequently, some of us are developing a journal to showcase the best of our scholarship and creative work. Some are developing a wiki as a practical way to share information quickly in a basic, unpretentious manner.

See **BLOG**, page 4



DR. CARTER MILLER

that 2/3 of the matchups we made for sessions this year were with big divisions - GIFT, for instance, will share poster space with History and Newspaper.

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Deadlines for SPIG competition

Teacher of the year
-- March 15

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Scholar-to-scholar
-- April 1

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Creative Scholarship of Application
-- April 1

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Scholar-to-scholar paper deadline April 1

Research is too important to leave to “Research I” institutions.

That’s why SPIG is offering a research (scholar-to-scholar) session at the 2011 AEJMC in St. Louis. We’ve got a time – 1:30-3 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 11 – and now we need the people.

That’s you.

You can submit papers using any number of topics and methodologies – as long as it’s about teaching or other issues vital to SPIG members.

Some examples of successful papers from the 2010 convention include: “I Shot a Prescriptivist in my Pajamas Last Night: A Grammatical Disarmament Proposal for Editors and Educators,” “Analyzing Student Writing Proficiency and Assessment measures in Programs of Journalism and Mass Communication,” and “How Facebook Influences Students’ Motivation to Learn, Affective Learning, Classroom Climate and Engagement.”

Here are the guidelines

See the AEJMC General Paper Call for instructions to upload to the All-Academic Site.

1. The competition is open to faculty and to graduate students; no separate student competition is held

2. The paper must be uploaded to the AEJMC All-Academic server no later than 11:59 p.m. (Central Daylight Time) on Thursday, April 1, 2011

3. Format must be Word or PDF

4. Researchers also must upload an abstract of no more than 75 words

5. Authors must completely fill out the online submission form, including author’s name, affiliation, mailing address, phone numbers (academic, home and cell), and preferred email address

6. The title must be on the first page of the manuscript and on the running heads on every page. However, DO NOT include the author’s name or affiliation within the running heads or any pop-up options that may be contained in PDF submissions

7. Papers are accepted for peer review with the understanding that they are NOT under review (or

being submitted during the AEJMC review period) to a second division or interest group or to a journal or other publication

8. Papers submitted to the 2011 convention should NOT have been presented to another convention and neither should they have been published or be in the publication process BEFORE the date of the 2011 Convention in August

9. **By May 15, 2011**, all authors will be notified as to whether their papers have been accepted; **authors will be notified by e-mail** – therefore, an appropriate email address must be provided by the author(s)

10. Authors will retain the copyright to their paper(s) and are free to submit them for publication during or after the Convention

11. SPIG requests a paper length of NO MORE than 25 pages (excluding references) and the document must be double-spaced and typed in 11-point Arial font or Times Roman font – and follow APA style guidelines

12. **Authors also must heed the AEJMC general paper call regulations.** For example, papers submitted to the wrong division or that do not meet all of the above guidelines will not be reviewed. For example, submission of an abstract by the deadline but a paper AFTER the deadline, will result in the paper NOT being accepted for review. However, SPIG research co-chairs will make every effort to contact authors who do not meet guidelines so that they will be aware as early as possible that their paper has not been accepted and the reasons why.

spig news is edited and paginated using MS Word and InDesign CS5 by **Dr. Richard Hendrickson**, a Los Angeles-based associate professor for Cleveland’s John Carroll University. You may call him at 323-806-1427, or send e-mail to newsprof@mac.com.

SPIG profile

Mitzi Lewis mastered public speaking, ‘space invaders’

What is your current primary job title and employer, and what subjects to do you teach?

I’m an assistant professor in the Mass Communication Department at Midwestern State University. Students majoring in mass communication currently choose from four minors: journalism, broadcast, public relations/advertising, and digital media. I teach digital media courses, a survey course and a public speaking course.

Tell me an interesting fact about you.

I played bassoon in my high school band. I still have my bassoon and recently dusted it off for my nieces and nephews to try out over the holidays. They thought it was great fun, but none of them asked to take it home (to the relief of their parents).

What was your first job?

My first job was working at a candy-making store when I was 14. I was so excited to make \$2.35/hour. My tasks ranged from sorting piñon nuts to marking designs in the wet chocolate on top of candy to indicate what type of filling was inside.

Tell me about your education.

I graduated from St. Pius X High School in Albuquerque, NM, in 1985. I earned a B.U.S. from the University of New Mexico in 1991. I was one course away from a degree in Communication, but I was



DR.LEWIS

terrified of taking Public Speaking, so I changed my degree plan. I share this story with students in Fundamentals of Public Speaking

“I played bassoon in my high school band. I still have my bassoon and recently dusted it off for my nieces and nephews to try out over the holidays.”

classes and point out that I now make my living by speaking in front of people. I want them to know that no matter how apprehensive they may be, they too can survive and thrive. I later earned an M.A. in Communication from University of New Mexico, where I was lucky

enough to study with Everett Rogers, father of the diffusion of innovations theory. I earned a Ph.D. in Educational Research from the University of Texas.

What was your dissertation topic and what is your current research focus?

For my dissertation I analyzed Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project survey data to examine the relationship between people’s blog consumption and their online and offline political behaviors during the 2008 presidential campaign. My current projects include (a) a study of faculty’s perception of students’ assigned literary reading behaviors and a synthesis of how faculty motivate students to read and (b) an analysis of mass communication degree plans. Collaborating with others make the projects better and more fun.

What do you like about your job and your workplace?

I work with a super group of colleagues and a great boss.

Tell me something about your personal life.

I’m married to a straight-razor maker whose business is possible because of the Internet. I enjoy spending time with

him, our two dogs, and family members who live in six different states. Having grown up in a military family, we all got bitten by the travel bug.

See **PROFILE**, page 5

BLOG, from page 1

We bloggers took the middle ground. We are attempting to highlight lessons, techniques, theories, thoughts, and experiences we've created, wrestled with, survived, triumphed over, laughed at, or cried in our beer over. We think of the SPIG blog as a testing ground for scholarly and creative endeavors. It's a place for sparks, insights, conversations, and explorations.

As of this writing, Professor Patricia Miller of Valdosta State, Journalism Program Coordinator Ann Colbert of Indiana Purdue-Fort Wayne, Assistant Professor Carrie Buchanan of John Carroll University, and I have signed up to blog as often as our schedules allow.

Miller's blog posts, "A Walk in Wonderland," have covered a broad range of territory, from the reliability of wikis and collaborative knowledge, to the value of focusing on sound in writing classes or of using Second Life to design a virtual newsroom. Miller says she plans to "chronicle a digital immigrant trying not to get lost."

Colbert, who also will be wrestling with a range of issues, including the transition to the digital world, says she thinks "SPIGsters are already finding that small programs are able

to adapt faster and more effectively to the big changes in technology. And those of us shedding our dinosaur wings are trying, really trying."

Buchanan, who also most likely will cover the waterfront in her posts, vows she is "full of enthusiasm and excitement" about the project.

Other posts so far include information from SPIG Webmaster

We think of the SPIG blog as a testing ground for scholarly and creative endeavors.

and Teaching Committee Co-Chair Mitzi Lewis of Midwestern State about team-building in class, from Past SPIG President Vivian Martin of Central Connecticut State about a new Web tool, Storify, and from Associate Professor Carol Dykers of Salem College on students' enthusiasm when professionals visit the classroom.

For me, a traditional journalist who made the academic leap in 2002, only to learn that much of what I thought I knew suddenly seemed oh, so passé,

blogging is yet another tool that tantalizes and terrorizes. To blog is to create a public diary. Revealing one's opinions is both freeing and fear-inducing. In its early months, we kept the SPIG blog relatively private, but we've recently opened it up to search engines. Now we'll start finding out if there's an audience for what we're doing. It's frightening and fun.

Mostly, though, we're hoping that SPIGsters will be both our audience and our contributors. Come join us as we explore if journalism and media professors, who counsel fairness, balance, and objectivity, can co-exist with a writing genre that encourages personal voice and opinion. If you would like to be a SPIG blogger, contact me at: wilson_m@calu.edu. If you'd like to comment on our posts, please fire away at: <http://mediaminder.wordpress.com>. You can subscribe to an RSS feed from our blog or ask for e-mail updates by visiting our site. Please do so. Bookmark our URL and make us a "favorite." We'd very much like our blog to evolve into a vibrant community for writers and readers.

Margo Wilson is an associate professor of journalism at California University of Pennsylvania.

How did our blog get its cool name?

It was a process of elimination. The blog originally was called, "The Journalism Professor." Then Ginger Carter reminded us that some of the people in SPIG teach PR and other things and she thought that "media" would be more inclusive.

Unfortunately, many of the first blog names with media that popped into my head, "Media professor," "Teaching media," "Media teacher," etc., etc., had

already been taken. I kept plugging more and more obscure things into the sign-up box for Wordpress. Nothing was working.

Finally, "mediaminder" was acceptable to Wordpress. The title hadn't been used yet. I guess it's because we teach, know or work in/with the media, and pay attention -- *mind* it. We also work with our minds. -- **Margo Wilson**

Are you an excellent teacher?

How you can apply to be named SPIG's 'Teacher of the Year'

SPIG's Teacher of the Year honors a member of SPIG who demonstrates excellence in teaching and advising. Those interested can be nominated or can apply. Only members of SPIG are eligible, but the current SPIG chair, vice chair and past winners are not eligible.

Please send electronic submissions only.

By March 15, you may apply for SPIG's Teacher of the Year in three easy steps:

1. Supply ONE letter of recommendation from a former student with the names, email addresses and phone numbers of two other possible former student referees.
2. Supply ONE letter of recommendation from a colleague or former colleague, with the names, e-mail addresses and phone numbers of two other possible referees.
3. Supply evidence of teaching and advising excellence. You MUST include:
 - A 500-word statement of your teaching philosophy;
 - Two course syllabi;
 - Two examples of an assignment, project, test, exercise, etc.;
 - Two formal teaching evaluations by students as

professionally administered by applicant's institution under conditions of student anonymity, and
· A Curriculum Vitae (of no more than eight pages).

These nomination packets must be received by the SPIG Teaching Co-Chair by March 15. Send materials by e-mail to: Pam Parry pam.parry@belmont.edu

Communication Studies Department
Belmont University
Nashville, TN 37212
615-566-9918 (cell) 615-460-6198 (office)

Selection Procedures

By March 20, the nominees will be notified that necessary materials have been received. Judges will rank the applicants, forwarding their rankings by April 30 to teaching co-chair Dr. Mitzi Lewis, Midwestern State University, who will tabulate results. (mitzi.lewis@mwsu.edu)

The winner will be announced at the SPIG business meeting at the annual AEJMC convention, where he or she will receive a plaque and \$100. The winner may then serve as chair or co-chair of SPIG's teaching committee for the coming year.

PROFILE, from page 3

Mention a few of your professional honors.

I received a Dean's Award for outstanding paper at the 2007 Southwest Educational Research Association Conference, a three-year fellowship in graduate study from the Association for Institutional Research/U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences-National Center for Education Statistics, and a National Summer Data Policy Institute on the National Center for Education Statistics and National Science Foundation Databases fellowship. I helped document discussions and recommendations for women's health research during NIH task force proceedings.

I've also enjoyed serving as an officer on several non-profit boards and received a Texas Rising Star Award from the Texas Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs and a Woman on the Move Award from the YWCA.

Any other significant achievements?

I'm a master at Space Invaders and play a mean game of gin rummy.

What are your personal or professional goals now?

I'd like to earn tenure and help students and colleagues achieve their goals.

What leadership roles have you had in the AEJMC and the Small Programs Interest Group?

I've served as SPIG Webmaster and SPIG Teaching Co-Chair. Mostly I try to do my part in keeping the good work of others going.

What goal do you have for SPIG?

I have met brilliant and devoted colleagues through SPIG. I would like to help SPIG continue providing a welcoming environment for new and veteran members where we can all support each other in reaching our goals.

If you had to describe yourself, what words would you use?

Collegial and hard-working.

SPIG profiles are edited by Dr. Richard Hendrickson. To suggest someone, send a message to Dr. Hendrickson at newsprof@mac.com.

GINGER, from page 1

That will add great visibility. Advertising picked up one of our sessions, and Hot Topics will again be sponsored by SPIG and Media Ethics. We also have a tremendous pedagogy session that will draw in members of all the divisions, including GEIG. Earnest Perry, chair of the standing committee on Research, is leading it.

I want to talk about in this column is another of my goals for this year, an increase in SPIG membership. As I look at the rolls of our SPIG faithful, we continue to hover around 100. Over the past six years, this has been pretty close to our average membership. One year we grew to 140, but the economy batted us back down the next year.

But to quote the King of Siam in "The King and I," "Tis a Puzzlement." Here's why. Last fall, I charged two of my senior public relations campaign teams with the task of finding out what our members wanted from SPIG, how we could grow, and most importantly, did we need a new look for SPIG in the coming years.

What they brought back was surprising to me. While both groups (admittedly, new to research and fairly young in PR research tools, so certainly not experts) approached things differently, they both found the same things. Using the official SPIG roster provided to me as head by AEJMC, they found through surveys and true random samples of our membership:

1) Most members of SPIG who answered the surveys want SPIG to get bigger.

2) Bigger, that is, except SEVERAL (maybe 10 percent of the small pool of surveyed members) don't want us to get much bigger because it is too unmanageable to handle more than "about 100 members."

3) Those who want us to grow think person-to-person recruitment is the only way in

"For some, SPIG is like their home school. Scholarship and collegiality abound. ... We want to grow, but we don't want to lose our cocoon."

this economic society to get members to join (it is, as one said, what recruited him/her).

4) BUT, and this is a big one, SPIG members don't feel comfortable about asking someone to join SPIG, and they don't have any suggestions for the way we could approach this.

I also found out two things we all know – SPIG has a dynamic listserv (now aided by the blog and discussions,) and we genuinely, generally, like each other in this group. We don't feel lost in our company like we do at the large division meetings. For some, SPIG is like their

home school. Scholarship and collegiality abounds, and that's why we love SPIG.

This puts us in a precarious position. We want to grow, but we don't want to lose our cocoon. We want to impress the larger divisions and AEJMC, but we don't want to become unmanageable for a small group of very devoted, hard workers. We want to have more money and slot time at conventions, but to do that....

All of this left my head spinning, to say the least.

Between now and the convention, I hope we can begin to engage in a listserv conversation about what all this means. I'm merely reporting data here, but it showed me that a formal membership campaign might not be the way to help us grow. And it showed me that we need to chime in with details, such as how much growth is too much?

I had visions of a flashy new logo and a swag campaign, but back to reality. What we do, we do well. How do we spread it? And how do we grow it?

I'd love to have your ideas, but as this newsletter breaks, I'll be posting this on the listserv for further discussion,

Until then, though I might seem more quiet than usual, I am here, and I am listening.

Ginger Carter Miller is a professor in the Department of Mass Communication at Georgia College and State University, Milledgeville, GA.

J students get their kicks from hyperlocal reporting

By John Jenks

WHEN Berwyn Police Cmdr. James Sasseti sought out Kate Kulpa with news about a robbery in town, the *Berwyn News* reporter got a buzz.

"It was kind of cool that he sent it to me, that he wanted us to write about it and that he thought of us as a credible news source," Kulpa said.

Kulpa and her classmates at Dominican University covered the neighboring Chicagoland suburb through their own on-line news service this fall as part of their advanced journalism class. They found the stories and then reported them. As their teacher, I directed the project.

You can find the *Berwyn News* at <http://berwynnews.wordpress.com/>.

This project had evolved from a previous incarnation, after some trial by error and good advice from the SPIG and COMJIG listservs. We ended up doing a lot more hand-holding and mandatory visits to Berwyn at the very beginning of the semester. And a lot more freedom at the end.

I even required attending – gasp -- meetings where officials couldn't dodge them. And neighborhood beats.

Why Berwyn?

Berwyn was a logical pick for the advanced class – it's nearby, it's changing in interesting ways and with a population of 50,000. It's just the right size for community

SERVICE LEARNING

journalism. (Older Czechs and Italians were moving out and younger Hispanic families, yuppies and gay couples were moving in.) And that kind of tightly focused local reporting is one of the bright spots in today's media business

We used a free WordPress blog to set up the *Berwyn News* with plenty of links and tags to get the news out. The students used the Web and social media like Twitter and Facebook to gather news, but despite all their tech savvy they soon found that nothing beat face-to-face contact.

Getting prepared

None of the students knew much about Berwyn, so they had plenty of homework even before the semester started. They read

"It was uncomfortable to put myself out there, but it was always worth it."

-- Student Angela Romano

the city's history, checked census reports, and followed developments in the *Berwyn Life* weekly and the *Berwyn Talk* community forum.

They spent the first two weeks of class meeting newsmakers in Berwyn – starting in city hall – and passing out their new business cards like confetti. The students covered meetings, shot photos and video at festivals, and rode along with police patrols. They had a great response from people they met.

"They didn't talk to us like we were just students" said Samantha Sanchez. "I think they took the opportunity to talk to us like we were any other member of the press."

Covering the city

In late September they started serious reporting, and soon started posting their stories on the *Chicago Tribune's* on-line zoned edition, *TribLocal*, as well. The work wasn't always easy.

"It was uncomfortable to put myself out there, but it was always worth it," said student Angela Romano. "I learned that being creative and thinking outside of the box is the key to good journalism. My best story ideas came from talking with community members and going on a police ride-along."

They covered success stories of redevelopment and rehabilitation, but also the grim news of foreclosures and drug abuse. They learned the good reporting created its own momentum.

"After a couple of stories we had the contacts that were once so difficult to get in touch with e-mailing us with info and story ideas," said student Stacy Portilla.

Overall, it was a good experience. And another group will probably do it again next fall.

"I didn't expect it to be as interesting as it was," Kulpa said. "There was a lot going on in Berwyn."

John Jenks is a professor of journalism at Dominican University in River Forest, Ill.



DR. JENKS

Call for Competition in Creative Scholarship of Application

The Small Programs Interest Group is giving faculty members a chance to win recognition for their "scholarship of application" at the 2011 AEJMC conference.

Full-time faculty members can submit professional or creative work that was published, broadcast or posted in 2010. The work needs to relate and contribute to their area of teaching expertise. (Essentially, scholarship of application is linking academic skills and interests to a broader audience. For example, journalism professor John Hanc won in 2008 for an article he wrote for a special section of *The New York Times*. He then used the reporting experiences to enrich his classes.)

Work can be journalism, advertising or public relations. The media can be print (magazine, newspaper or PR releases/brochures), electronic (TV or radio) or a web-based combination of text, audio or visual. (Only one submission per author, please.) The submission deadline is **April 1**.

SPIG research chairs will select judges for a blind peer review and notify winners by **May 10**.

The top authors/creators will present their work and receive their awards at a SPIG pre-conference

workshop scheduled for 1-5 p.m., **Aug. 9** at the St. Louis AEJMC conference

The entry packet must include:

1) A cover letter with the project's title and the authors' position(s), institutional affiliation(s), phone number(s) and e-mail and postal addresses. (PDF)

2) Electronic versions of the completed project (PDFs, jpegs and video files) with bylines or other obvious author identifications obscured. (For social media elements, a screen shot is recommended.) For a public relations or advertising campaign submissions, please include planning documents as well as news releases or other published work.

3) A 400-500-word statement relating the product to the authors' area of teaching expertise. This letter should include the project's title, but not the authors' name(s) or affiliation(s). (PDF)

Entries should be sent by e-mail **by midnight April 1, 2011** to: John Jenks – jjenks@dom.edu

For more information, contact the SPIG Research Co-Chairs: John Jenks, jjenks@dom.edu 708-524-6932 or Kay Colley, kcolley@txwes.edu 817-531-6525.

SPIG programming in St. Louis - Aug. 9-13, 2011

TUESDAY, AUGUST 9

1-5 Preconference training

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10

8:15-9:45 Blogs, Wikis, and Blackboard: A look at the options of online delivery with Community College Journalism Association (CCJA)

10-11:30 Navigating the Sea of Faces: Teaching Large Sections with CCJA

1:30-3 Hot Topics with Media Ethics Division

3:15-4:45 GIFT with CCJA

THURSDAY, AUGUST 11

8:15-9:45 Collaborating across disciplines with Magazine Division

11:45-1:15 Recruiting Journalism students in the

Post-Journalism Age with CCJA

1:30-3 Scholar-to-Scholar sessions

5-6:30 Assessment with Advertising Division

6:45 SPIG business meeting

8:30 SPIG social off site

FRIDAY, AUGUST 12

7 SPIG Executive Board meeting, including past heads

8:15-9:45 Diversity and Mentoring with Minorities and Communication Division

12:15 SPIG luncheon

1:45 SPIG off-site

SATURDAY, AUGUST 13

8:15-9:45 New leaders training