

spig news

Newsletter of the AEJMC's Small Programs Interest Group

Spring 2008

Chicago offers convention goers lively, diverse media



Jenks

By John Jenks
SPIG, co vice-head

Chicago news has changed a little bit from the “Front Page” days of colorful characters, cut-throat competition, and dubious ethics – but not too much.

SPIGers will still find a lively media scene when they land in Chicago this August for the AEJMC convention.

The *Chicago Tribune* and *Sun-Times* may be hemorrhaging money, circulation and reporters, but they still put out good daily journalism – the *Sun-Times* rules city news and crime, while the *Tribune* leads in long national and international pieces and has dominated the suburbs for generations. The *Sun-Times* has a reputation for fun and, well, sensationalism – it is a tabloid, after all. The *Tribune*'s reputation is the mirror opposite – thorough but stodgy. That came out in *Sun-Times* columnist Neil Steinberg's memorable 2005 piece, which was mainly about the case of Terri Schiavo, the Florida woman in a persistent vegetative state:

The whole Terri Schiavo mess has left me brooding -- what would I want to hap-

pen if I found myself in a vegetative state, no longer able to communicate as I once had, unable to write, reduced to a warm body marking time until death, the days running on, sunk into a meaningless existence, a limbo, stuck in a room somewhere and forgotten, ignored by the world . . .

And then I tell myself: Nah, the Tribune would never hire me anyway . . .

The *Sun-Times* previous owner, Baron Black of Crossharbour, is now inmate No. 18330-424 in a federal prison until sometime in 2013. Something to do with fraud and obstruction of justice. The *Tribune*'s current owner – motorcycle riding, photographer cursing, real estate kingpin Sam Zell is, well, interesting and the source of more fireworks in the rivalry.

When he talked about selling the naming rights to the *Tribune*-owned Wrigley Field, the *Sun-Times* hyped a contest for the best song and music video about selling the name. The reward? \$1,000. The winner? College student Katie Hamilton. Who happened to be an intern at – the *Chicago Tribune*. The *Trib* actually set up the entire thing, with reporters, editors and multi-media people doing the song-writing, recording and video. Touché.

The *Tribune* also owns WGN television and radio and 24-hour cable news

outlet CLTV – once derisively known as Children Learning Television. (Actually, it's Chicagoland Television.) It also runs the youth-oriented *RedEye*, a colorful tabloid with abridged *Tribune* stories plus an extra dollop of celebrity news, 20-something lifestyle pieces and sex columnists. The *Sun-Times* briefly published a rival, *Red Streak*, to foul up the *RedEye* launch, which it did.

A full range of network TV outlets, community access cable shows, and scores of suburban and neighborhood newspapers cover the metro area. Chicago also has very strong ethnic media. The legendary *Chicago Defender* comes out weekly and covers news important to the Black community. Plenty of other publications, radio stations and TV programs cover the Polish, Korean, Arab, Chinese, Indian and Hispanic communities, among others. Spanish-language broadcasters are particularly strong. (A good resource for these media is the Community Media Workshop, run out of Columbia College -- <http://www.newstips.org/>)

So, don't limit yourself to the sparkling SPIG sessions and socials, but take in vibrant media scene the city has to offer.

Jenks teaches at Dominican University in the Chicago suburbs.

Itza spicy Italian luncheon for SPIGers

SPIG's first ever awards lunch, Friday, Aug. 8 at 12:15 p.m., is set for Buca di Beppo, a down-to-earth Italian restaurant just around the corner from the convention hotel at 521 N. Rush.

Dr. Susan Lewis of Abilene Christian University will be named SPIG's Teacher of the Year, and Dr. John Hanc will be awarded SPIG's new Scholarship of Application prize.

Chicagoan-in-residence John Jenks

describes Buca di Beppo as a “funky chain restaurant with hearty, reasonably priced food and wine.”

Salads, sandwiches and pastas run from \$7.99 for Caesar salad or fettuccine alfredo to \$12.99 for linguine frutti di mare; chicken and seafood entrees run from \$9.99 to \$14.99. If you just want to sip an iced tea, that's OK too.

The relaxed atmosphere is a good fit for the loud and proud SPIGers



to celebrate our colleagues and their accomplishments.

E-mail Jenks at jjenks@dom.edu by 5 p.m. Aug. 5 if you're planning to attend.

SPIGers earn promotions, receive teaching honors

Dr. Brian Steffen, professor of communication studies at Simpson College, was selected by 2008 Simpson graduates as recipient of the Distinguished Teaching Award.



Steffen has received the award twice in the past six years. He serves as president of the Iowa College Media Association, an organization he established, and advises the Society for Collegiate Journalists chapter.

Pam Parry won the 2008 Presidential Faculty Achievement Award at Belmont University in Nashville, Tenn. The award, one of the top two teaching awards presented annually, is for teaching and service to students outside the classroom.

Elizabeth Birge has been promoted to associate professor of journalism at William Paterson University in Wayne, NJ.

Rachele Kanigel, San Francisco State University, was granted tenure and promoted to associate professor of journalism.



She will be a panelist at the AEJMC meeting in Chicago on "College Papers' Mission: Confronting Issues of Responsibility, Diversity and Press Freedom," co-sponsored by the Civic and Community Journalism Interest Group and the Minorities and Communication Division.

Ron Hollander, SPIG head, had a travel piece in *The Washington Post*, Oct. 19, "Children Come to Dig for Roots," chronicling his trip to China and Tibet with his 13-year-old daughter who was born in China. A similar piece, "Digging for Roots," ran Sept. 14 in China's national English language paper, *China Daily*, for which Hollander wrote frequently during his two-year Fulbright teaching journalism in China.

Student kudos

SPIG programs' students earn regional, national honors

Students from two SPIG programs fared well in Texas Intercollegiate Press Association contests.

Midwestern State University reports that MSU students earned first in TV Sweepstakes, and second in Division 3 Newspaper Sweepstakes. Students also won 20 awards in canned and 12 in live contests including 10 first-place awards. TIPA is the largest and oldest regional student media organization in the U.S.

Abilene Christian University students earned 42 TIPA awards, including 11 in live competition.

Three ACU students also earned first place honors in feature writing, sports writing and breaking news photography from Society of Professional Journalists Region 8. Jared Fields, 2008-09 *Optimist* editor, is a Mark of Excellence national finalist in the feature category and will be honored at the SPJ national convention in Atlanta.

A 2008 **Simpson College** graduate

from Sibley, Iowa, was named one of the top 100 college journalists by UWIRE.

Andrea Kemp was selected from a pool of approximately 500 undergraduate and graduate students. During her senior year, Kemp served as the editor-in-chief of the *Simpsonian*. She has freelanced for C-SPAN, The Associated Press and *The Des Moines Register* and has interned at *Okoboji Magazine* and the *Northwest Iowa Review*, and *Roll Call* and *Congress Now* in Washington, D.C.

Two **Cabrini College** student newspaper editors won the Catholic Relief Services Egan Award for Journalistic Excellence in the category for Series with Regional/Local Circulation. Their prize will be an all-expense-paid trip this fall to the Middle East to do reporting about the Iraqi Refugee Crisis.

Meghan Hurley and Amanda Finnegan wrote articles and editorials in 2006-2007 concerning the introduction of Fair Trade coffee on campus.

Position Announcements

Seton Hall University, a Catholic university in South Orange, N.J., has a one-year visiting professor position open for 2008-09 to teach some combination of these areas: broadcast news, communication research methods (quantitative and qualitative), journalism history and/or writing for the media. ABDs welcome to apply.

Interested individuals should send a query/application letter/CV to Peter Reader, chairman of the Department of Communication, at readerpe@shu.edu. Include "visiting professor/journalism" in the subject line.

For more information about the university, the department or the position contact SPIG member Amy Nyberg at nybergam@shu.edu.

Fairfield University invites applications for its opening for an assistant professor, digital journalism. The Department of English seeks a tenure-track assistant professor to join its journalism program in Fall 2009; Ph.D. must be in hand by August 2009.

Candidates should have significant experience with digital storytelling and web-based journalism in a professional or academic setting. Secondary interests in

professional writing, technical editing, and advising college media are welcome, as is interest in connecting with any of our 19 interdisciplinary programs.

The successful candidate will teach introductory and advanced reporting courses, design and teach specialized digital writing and editing courses, and teach in the first-year core sequence.

A demonstrated commitment to undergraduate teaching, advanced technological skills, and a promising research agenda are expected.

Review of applications will begin on a rolling basis Sept. 15. To apply, send a letter of application, CV, confidential letters from three references, evidence of teaching effectiveness, and sample publications (including both academic and professional work) to:

Dr. James Simon, Chair,
Department of English,
Fairfield University
Fairfield CT 06824.

Informational interviews will be conducted at AEJMC. Supplemental information about the position, the journalism program, and Fairfield University can be found at http://www.fairfield.edu/Digital_Journalism

Winners to be recognized at luncheon

Scholarship of Application honor goes to John Hanc; Susan Lewis receives Teacher of the Year Award

Two SPIG members will be honored at the group's first awards luncheon during AEJMC's national meeting in Chicago.

Dr. John Hanc, associate professor of communication arts at the New York Institute of Technology in Old Westbury, N.Y., is the first winner of SPIG's Scholarship of Application prize.



Hanc

Dr. Susan Lewis, assistant professor of journalism and mass communication at Abilene Christian University was selected as Teacher of the Year.

Lewis and Hanc each will receive a \$100 award and a plaque.

Hanc, who writes regularly for *Newsday* and who is the author of eight books, received the first-time award for a story he wrote for *The New York Times* special section on retirement last October. The piece, on a week-long nature camp for seniors run by the Appalachian Mountain Club in New Hampshire, in turn was used by Hanc in his Writing for Publication workshop at NYIT.

"I walked them through both my reporting and editing process," Hanc said. "My students were able to see for themselves that I practice what I preach."

Hanc's entry was cited by Carol Dykers and Pam Parry, co-research chairs of SPIG, not only for its excellence as a work of journalism, but also because of how it was used to enrich students' learning.

"The entry package also described precisely how the project was used in an NYIT classroom to help young journalists understand the editing process," Dykers said.

The Scholarship of Application competition was created this year by SPIG because many of its 110 members not only teach, but also work as freelance journalists and public relations specialists.

"We wanted to recognize the top-flight professional work that in many cases enables our members to teach so effectively," said SPIG head Ron Hollander. "Scholarship has an activist component to it, too, in addition to the more traditional definition of furthering knowledge."

Hanc, has taught at NYIT since 1990. He also will moderate a panel on election coverage.

Lewis served in the spring of 2007 as acting chair of ACU's Department of Journalism and Mass Communication and led the planning for the university's new multi-media news facility that opened in January.



Lewis

She was cited for the "up-to-date quality of her teaching topics and class exercises, and her superior teaching evaluations" by the co-chairs of SPIG's Teaching Committee, Ann Colbert and Patrick Sutherland.

"Dr. Lewis brings superb preparation

to every class...integrating cutting edge technology with innovative teaching," said her department chair, Dr. Cheryl Bacon, in her nominating letter. "She is liked, admired and on occasion feared by her students who know that her classes will be intriguing and demanding."

Lewis, who has been at ACU for nine years, specializes in teaching writing for electronic media, and created the university's first such course in 2002. She said it exemplifies her teaching philosophy.

"Whether we are in a computer lab in Abilene, or in the lobby of a European media outlet during a study abroad trip, my responsibility is to incite a curiosity and a thoughtful regard for the task at hand," Lewis said.

Her students appreciate that approach. A former student, Jessica Smith, now at the University of North Carolina, wrote in support of Lewis.

"Her assignments are not classroom exercises, only, but help to develop useful skills that students can continue to build on their own," Smith said.

The Teacher of the Year award was instituted by SPIG to honor its 110 members who place special emphasis on teaching, and on working closely with their journalism and mass communication students.

"Of all the interest groups and divisions in AEJMC, I think it's safe to say that SPIG puts teaching at the top of its priorities," said SPIG head Ron Hollander. "Susan embodies that dedication to putting her students first."

Lewis also administers the web site for SPIG.

Come SPIG with Us

We don't mean cut a funky rug, but join the AEJMC group that...

- Gives you hands-on advice for the classroom.
- Offers down-to-earth support to face wayward students and feckless administrators.
- Provides an educator's sounding board for everything from blogging to back-pack journalism.

That's SPIG—the Small Programs Interest Group

Our members may come from intimate, private colleges or sprawling, public universities, but all share one thing: **An intense dedication to teaching.**

SPIG news

SPIG NEWS

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Send your news for **the next SPIG news to baconc@acu.edu, or for the SPIG website to lewiss@acu.edu**

Dues, leadership, newsletter and contests on agenda for annual SPIG business meeting

SPIG Head Ron Hollander has given notice by email in accordance with AEJMC by-laws that SPIG will discuss a dues change at the annual business meeting Aug. 8 at 7 p.m. A proposal that annual dues be raised from \$7.50 to \$10 will be considered. Hollander says the increase would bring SPIG in line with most of the other interest groups.

A proposal to constitute an executive

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Abilene, TX 79699

Upcoming Conferences

AEJMC 2008 Convention, Chicago, Ill., August 6-9, Chicago Marriott Downtown, Magnificent Mile. For more information go to <http://www.aejmc.org>

FUTURE AEJMC SITES

2009 – Sheraton Boston, August 5-8

2010 – Denver, Adam’s Mark, August 4-7

2008 AEJMC Winter Meeting

The Brown Hotel, Louisville, Ky., Dec.5-7

American Journalism Historians Associa-

tion Annual Convention, Seattle, Wash., Oct. 2-4, 2008, Calls/Convention Details: <http://ajhaonline.org/convention.html>

Southwest Education Council for Journalism & Mass Communication 2008 Southwest Symposium, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, N.M., Oct. 24 -25.

Society of Professional Journalists Annual Convention and National Journalism Conference, Sept. 4-7, 2008, Hyatt Regency Atlanta, <http://www.spj.org/convention.asp>

board composed of the head and co-vice heads also will be considered. Other items to be discussed include:

- Incoming head informally assuming duties upon election (term begins Oct. 1).
- Encouraging more applicants to SPIG competitions, especially the PF&R Committee’s “Best Practices” contest;
- Increasing membership

- Discussing whether three competitions are too many for SPIG to manage
- Publishing the newsletter only in an electronic format
- Putting the “syllabus exchange” on a more formal footing, perhaps with its own website or some other device;
- SPIG relationship to the standing committees on Women, and Minorities.