

spig news

Newsletter of AEJMC's Small Programs Interest Group

Summer 2012

SPIG honors 2012 'Teacher of the Year'

Kathy Brittain Richardson inspires students in Georgia

KATHY Brittain Richardson, professor of communication at Berry College in Rome, Ga., has been named the SPIG Teacher of the Year for 2012. She will be honored Aug. 11 during a SPIG luncheon held in conjunction with the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication annual meeting in Chicago.



RICHARDSON

In selecting Dr. Richardson, the judges reviewed a portfolio of materials, including a letter of nomination from a former student. The student wrote: "There are certain mentors in life whose presence does not fade. As time passes, their voices instead resonate, continuing to influence and inspire long after daily conversations and weekly classes cease.

Dr. Kathy Richardson is one of those mentors for me, and thousands of others.

"She helped me balance my priorities as a college athlete, aspiring writer, and campus leader," the student continued. "She pushed me to gain practical newsroom experience as a college junior, which I still draw upon. She counseled me to earn a minor in finance, perhaps her most prescient recommendation. And as I prepared to graduate, she offered her best advice: she counseled patience and courage as doubts crept into my mind about my career path as a journalist..."

"I can state unequivocally that without her assistance and guidance I would not be where I am today... You may search the nation, but you won't find a better [Teacher of the Year]."

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SPIG panels draw teachers to Chicago Aug. 8-11

CHICAGO beckons journalism teachers from across the land Aug. 8-11 for the annual conference of the Association for Journalism and Mass Communication. The Small Programs Interest Group and its partners have a busy schedule of panels and activities lined up, starting with a pre-conference panel on Advising Student Media. Here is the updated schedule:

Pre-conference -- Wednesday, Aug 8

1-5 p.m.

Best Practices in Advising Student Media

Veteran and new advisers, come join the Small Programs Interest Group as we explore current best practices in advising student media. What are current HR opinions on compensation? How far is too far in your role as an adviser? Can you advocate for good journalism and avoid the wrath of administrators? What are the current states of newspapers, television stations, yearbooks, radio stations, magazines and online media?

Are new models working? How have social media and mobile media impacted student media? Where and how

do student public relations or advertising firms fit into the mix?

Some of the best student media advisers in the country will help us explore these and other issues.

Panelists:

Lillian Kopenhaver, Florida International

Vince Filak, University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh

Kenneth Pybus, Abilene Christian

Kay Colley, Texas Wesleyan

Moderator: Susan Lewis, Abilene Christian

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Thursday, Aug. 9

8:15 a.m.

Entering the Workforce as an Entrepreneurial Journalist -- co-sponsored by the Internships and Careers Interest Group

10 a.m.

Curating the News (from our friends at Community College Journalism Association) -- co-sponsored by SPIG

3:15 p.m.

GIFT (Great Ideas for Teaching) Poster Session -- co-sponsored by CCJA and Scholastic Journalism

5 p.m.

Teaching the Advertising and Public Relations Campaigns Course -- co-sponsored by the Public Relations Division

Friday, Aug. 10

8:15 a.m.

Newsroom to Classroom: Meeting the Challenges of the First Three Years -- co-sponsored by CCJA

In Chicago, don't miss a visit to *The Billy Goat Tavern*

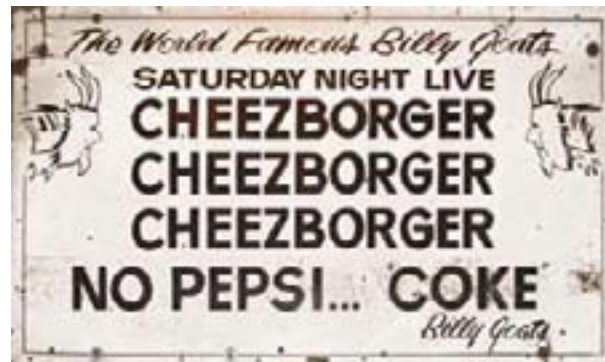
By John McClelland

While you are in Chicago for the AEJMC conference, you shouldn't miss the opportunity to visit the quintessential journalists' watering-hole-with-food, the famous, infamous, unique Billy Goat Tavern.

The address is 430 N. Michigan Ave., but it's really on a cross street -- under Michigan, down some stairs off a courtyard right across from Tribune Tower.

A Goat motto is "Enter at your own risk." Sam Sianis and his staff yell at the slow-acting: "Hamburger, Cheezburger, chips, no fries, Pepsi no Coke, you wanna beer or what? C'mon, make up yer mind!"

That's for real, from long before the 1970s Saturday Night Live TV skit. But they are really nice folks under the gruff. They even tolerated George Bush (Sr.) when he deigned to visit and found no linen tablecloth, no



1:30-3 p.m.

Scholar-to-Scholar Session

3:15 p.m.

Hot Topics: Coverage of the Trayvon Martin Case -- co-sponsored by Communication Theory and Methodology Division

5 p.m.

Social Media and the Ethnic Press in Chicago -- co-sponsored by the Community Journalism Interest Group

6:45 p.m. SPIG Members Meeting

8:30 p.m. SPIG Social

Saturday, Aug. 11

8:15 a.m.

Equal Opportunity for All: Tips for Teaching Communications Students with Disabilities, -- co-sponsored by CCJA

12:15 p.m.

Offsite Luncheon to honor our Teacher of the Year, Dr. Kathy Brittain Richardson

7 p.m.

Pub Crawl with Cultural and Critical Studies and History Divisions

Sterling and no obsequious, tuxedo-clad waitstaff. It's informal. The state law (except for cigar clubs) is no-smoking inside public places, but the Goat still has some of the patina on the walls, newspaper clippings and autographed photos.

This is the family whose ancestor put the infamous curse or jinx of the goat on the Chicago Cubs because they kicked his goat out of Wrigley Field. They lost the 1945 World Series to the Detroit Tigers and haven't been back; they haven't won one in more than a century. They are hapless again this year, and still fill the old ivy ballpark. Go figger.

Billy Goat branches elsewhere in the city just ain't the same -- OK, but corporate-bland and dull by comparison. For more on the history, menus and more, go to:

<http://www.billygoattavern.com/home.html>

Brian Steffen: Dedicated to what's best for students

SPIG PROFILE



STEFFEN

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

I'm professor and chair of Communication and Media Studies at Simpson College in Iowa, where I teach a variety of courses, including Newswriting, Media Law & Ethics and our Senior Seminar in Multimedia Journalism.

Tell me an interesting fact about you.

I decided I wanted to work in media when I was a DJ on my high school's radio station and went off to the university to get a degree in radio. But I made the transition into newspapers and worked in daily journalism for eight years before going into teaching.

What was your first job?

My first job was frying chicken at KFC. It wasn't good for my complexion.

Tell me about your education.

I graduated from high school in 1977 and earned a B.A. in journalism from Iowa State in 1987. I also have an M.S. in journalism from Iowa State (1987) and a Ph.D. in mass communication from Iowa (1995).

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

My dissertation topic was "Public and Private in Libel Law: A Critical Legal Approach." Research focus? Having been chair since 2002, I haven't had time to do any research. I spend my time teaching, administrating and putting out fires.

What do you like about your job and your workplace?

Simpson is a great school to teach at when, as I do, you love working

"Simpson is a great school to teach at when, as I do, you love working with great kids with bright futures."

with great kids with bright futures. Plus my colleagues are a joy to work with. We really all are dedicated to doing the best we can by our students.

Tell me something about your personal life.

I'm married to my college sweetheart, Sharon, and we just celebrated our 31st anniversary. We have two sons, Andy (24) and Alex (22), and just marked our youngest son's graduation from university.

What other significant achievements have you had?

I was named winner of Simpson's Distinguished Teaching Award in 2002 and 2008 and the SPIG Teacher of the Year award in 2010. Both were tremendous honors.

What are your personal or professional goals now?

Having been chair of my program for 10 years, I'd really like to get back to teaching full-time and worrying less about administrative issues. That would also permit me to get back to research and writing. I am excited to have been selected to lead Simpson's "Semester in London" program in Fall 2013, during which I will take about 20 students to study at the University of Roehampton in England and will serve as a visiting faculty member.

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

I've served in a variety of roles within SPIG, including a year as interest group head.

What goal do you have for SPIG?

I've been pleased to see SPIG grow into a mature group that represents the interests of those journalism

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Richardson holds a doctor of philosophy and a master of arts from the University of Georgia and a bachelor of arts from Shorter College. She has taught a wide range of courses and has held multiple positions, including professor, coordinator, chair, acting dean, associate provost, interim provost, and director of institutional research. She is the current adviser for the Public Relations Student Society of America Berry College chapter, prior editor of *Journalism & Communication Monographs*, and on the editorial boards of *Mass Communication and Society* and *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*. As an AEJMC member, Richardson has served on the Bylaws and Constitution Committee and as head of the Mass Communication & Society Division.

Her research interests include student press regulation, communication pedagogy, media ethics, and visual imagery. She has co-authored two books and has written book chapters and journal articles on these topics. Richardson brings this vast knowledge into the classroom.

“It was evident to me that Dr. Richardson was very good at putting theory into practice in the classroom,” said one of the judges. Another judge said, “I believe this year’s

TOY recipient personifies the award, because she is an exemplary teacher who clearly demonstrates a commitment to and a heart for her students. Through creative pedagogy and hard work, she has made a difference in countless lives, and SPIG should be proud of this year’s winner.”

A colleague said this in nominating Richardson, “Throughout her tenure at Berry, Kathy’s teaching and advising have been extraordinary. She has earned every teaching award our college offers – Vulcan Teaching Award, Carden Teaching Award and Garrett Teaching Award – and a national advising award...Students invariably comment on how much they learned from her courses, how they valued the ways in which she challenged them, and how they wanted to take more courses from her.”

He added, “Kathy has been a consummate adviser. She regularly carries one of the highest advising loads in the college (not just our department). Despite the numbers, all of her advisees I have ever spoken with admire the respect with which they were treated, her ongoing concern for their personal development, and her vast knowledge of college procedures. If SPIG should ever elect to offer a ‘Teacher of the Century’ award, I’ll be recommending Kathy for that, too.”

“Through creative pedagogy and hard work, she has made a difference in countless lives...”

RSVP for the Teacher of the Year luncheon

Please make plans to join us in Chicago to honor Kathy Brittain Richardson of Berry College as our SPIG Teacher of the Year.

Our luncheon is scheduled for 12:15 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 11 at Buca di Beppo Italian Restaurant, 521 N. Rush St., Chicago.

We’ve had the TOY luncheon at this restaurant before. It’s just a short walk from the conference, and the food was fantastic. We’ve gotten a great deal -- \$20 each -- and the sales rep is giving us free dessert because she honors teachers so highly.

Here’s the menu, served family style. (If you have dietary needs, they are very accommodating, so just let me know!)

INSALATE

Apple Gorgonzola Salad
Mixed Green Salad

Served with House Bread

PASTA / BAKED PASTA

Penne San Remo

Spaghetti with Meat Sauce

DESSERT

Cannoli

BEVERAGES

Unlimited soft drinks, coffee & tea

If you plan to join us, please email me off list to RSVP, and then send a check for \$20 made out to Abilene Christian University to :

Susan Lewis

1317 Edgewater Road

Abilene, Texas 79602

spig news is created by **Richard Hendrickson**, a Los Angeles-based associate professor for Cleveland’s John Carroll University, and **Sandra L. Combs**, assistant professor in the Department of Journalism of the College of Communications at Arkansas State University. The editors offer special thanks this edition for the contributions of **Michael Longinow** of Biola University.

You may call Dr. Hendrickson at 323-806-1427, or send email to newsprof@mac.com. You may reach Ms. Combs at 870-972-2704 or send email to scombs@astate.edu

Advisers engage students in key conversations

By **Michael A. Longinow**

I’m sitting in an airport in Costa Mesa, Calif., waiting for a flight to Minneapolis where a group of media advisers will gather for a weekend retreat. I’m leading it, as national executive director of Advisers of Christian College Media (ACCM).

We’ll have a lot to talk about — for the same reasons the SPIG pre-conference on media advising is so crucial. Media advisers are a group of largely invisible people on most college and university campuses. At the smallest campuses, advisers advise while teaching — full-time or part-time. At larger universities, advisers sometimes don’t have faculty status (and either really like that arrangement or really don’t.) These advisers sometimes oversee multiple media in a set-up that looks like an in-house media company, complete with advertising and marketing teams.

Media advising can be simple or complex. It can be a pen stroke across paperwork every week or two with occasional email exchanges, or it can be more: hours of meetings, late-night hang-out sessions in a campus newsroom discussing placement of photos (horizontal? vertical?) or cartoons (is it funny enough to stake the paper’s reputation on — for decades?) Even front page news can come up, if it dropped into the editor’s in-box two minutes before deadline and hasn’t been fact-checked or sounds fishy. (Some advisers opt to just hang out on-site rather than get awakened at home with questions at midnight.)

Campus media advising, done intentionally as part of a regimen of experiential learning, is nearly

COMMENTARY

without peer as a tool for teaching practical lessons about deadline reporting, writing, editing, photojournalism, video storytelling — even the role of news or opinion in a marketplace of ideas.

The reason it’s such a potent place for learning is that it’s real — jokes aside about one’s campus being a bubble. A campus newspaper photographer shot the classic Kent State photo in the 1970s. More

“OK, it’s accurate, but is it right? Yes, we can run it, but should we? And if not, why not? Yes, that photo or news brief will pull readership, but is it actually a story? And for who?”

recently, the first visual images we have of the Virginia Tech campus after gunfire had subsided there were student work — captured on cell phones and picked up by the Virginia Tech newspaper.

There are U.S. Supreme Court cases about decisions made in campus newsrooms, and that legal literature is in no way complete.

Media advisers can engage students in the really important conversations — ones we wish came up all the time in our classrooms. OK, it’s accurate, but is it right? Yes, we can run that, but should we? And if not, why not? Yes that photo or news brief will pull readership, but

is it actually a story? And for who?

Then there are the harder, but nonetheless practical, conversations. If we (decide to) run that, let’s take out a piece of paper (better yet, write it on the white board in the office) and list who we’ll be offending and what the ramifications are for those in the community who could become collateral damage. Is this a story (or photo, or column, or cartoon) that is worth having those meetings with student government or the vice-president over funding for the paper? Is it worth losing ad revenue over?

What makes these conversations important — and long lasting — is that there’s no easy answer to them. In some cases, any campus media decision that can be made over a given story has negative ramifications. But the best media advisers love that kind of discussion anyway. And they love advising — especially when they’ve got student editors and staff hungry to do real-world, professional-level journalism. (When they

don’t, in a given year, you’ll see them looking up recruitment lists for next year.)

Come to the SPIG pre-conference on media advising. If you advise media, you have some stories you’ll want to share. If you’re not advising media, you might someday, or you might have colleagues who advise media and can’t be there. Take some notes for them. It could be worth the extra hotel night’s stay.

Dr. Longinow is a professor and chair of the Department of Journalism & Integrated Media at Biola University, a private Christian university in LaMirada in Southern California.

Here's what's in the spring/summer online journal

The Spring/Summer 2012 issue of the SPIG online journal, *Teaching Journalism and Mass Communication*, is posted.

Follow this link to view it:

<http://aejmc.net/spig/journal/current-issue/>

Thanks to each of the contributors and the founding [editorial staff](#) -- especially Vivian Martin, Mitzi Lewis, Mitzi Adams and Margo Wilson -- for their tremendous accomplishments this year.

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Online journal seeks 2 editors: Apply by July 10

Executive officers of the Small Programs Interest Group (SPIG) of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication are accepting applications for the **co-editor** and **managing editor** positions of *Teaching Journalism and Mass Communication (TJMC)*. Each of the positions is a two-year, renewable term. **The deadline for applications has been extended to July 10, 2012. For details, including job duties, go to the SPIG web site:**

<http://aejmc.net/spig/journal/call-for-tjmc-editors/>

The co-editor and managing editor appointments will begin during the fall semester of 2012, following the publication of the Fall 2012 issue. The selected editors will work peripherally with the current editors for one issue of the journal to aid with continuity. This term will end in December 2014, to perpetuate the simultaneous work of new and current editors.

TJMC is an online, peer-refereed journal devoted to highlighting peer-reviewed research, essays, articles and multimedia presentations that focus on teaching journalism, public relations, advertising and related mass communication curricula from a perspective that blends theory and practice. *TJMC* is published twice yearly by SPIG.

Applicants should be able to write and edit clearly and concisely, have an understanding and

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faculty members that must fill a variety of roles within their institutions. Our growth has been significant over the years, and it's become a place of welcome for those of us who have heavy teaching and advising loads. I'd like to see that continue in the years to come.

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

I consider myself first and foremost an undergraduate teacher. The professors I had during my undergraduate experience were critical in my development, and I've never forgotten them. I want to play that same role in the lives and careers of the students with whom I work.

Only the strong survived, but oh, the successes! Workshop helped Biola students learn documentary storytelling

By Michael A. Longinow

We all have students who want to go longer and deeper with media storytelling.

They get that from their high school English and social studies classes, where they were rewarded for word count rather than really having something to say.

But occasionally we get those students who want to go long with a piece and -- gasp! -- have something worth talking about.

Students in video classes wonder where that fits in the smallish curricula we are forced to work with because of our limited staffing and budgets. They want to do documentaries.

In the past semester we tried a new approach to helping these adventurous ones.

We offered a 1-unit workshop called Documentary Journalism. We flew in a guest documentary lecturer from a school in Kentucky (one who "gets" journalism).

We front-loaded it with sessions with him on how to pace the work and envision the finished product. There were lectures — yes, he showed a Ken Burns clip to inspire the troops — but there were just as many hours of one-on-one chats between instructor and students on crafting ideas for pursuing the puzzle pieces.

Then the lecturer headed home and the course became independent project time for the students with touch-base sessions by WebEx session in a computer lab.

TEACHING

The course was aimed at broadcast students, but we ended up enrolling students with no experience with videography — though they did have some experience with digital photojournalism. We pulled in an adjunct faculty member who had 20 years of photo experience at the *Orange County Register* and he took aside the non-video students into projects that were doable as sound-slides storytelling.

The course turned into a crucible of intense experiential learning. Only the strong survived.

“Workshops like this fill an important niche in small programs... and they put innovative stuff in the senior portfolios...”

(Self-directed project work has a way of working like that.) Of 13 students enrolled, we ended up with 11. And of those 11, only four had projects by the end that could be called successful. Looks easier than it is, this documentary storytelling.

But oh, the successes! One video student came into the workshop set to go deep about a freshman golfer whose father died suddenly of cancer in the middle of the student's season, a record-breaker, at our university. It was a heart-rending tale of loss, perseverance,

and of the bond between a father and son that death could not break.

Another video student told the story of her own mother whose dementia from Alzheimer's had transformed her family and deepened the bond they felt for each other as they cared for her and made sure she felt loved even in the hard moments when she seemed not to be there with them.

Then there was the non-video student who pulled together images from more than a dozen contributors — combined with her own — to tell the story of her boyfriend, a deployed Army specialist in Afghanistan. Weeks before he was to arrive on campus

to begin college with her, he had jumped in front of a gun being fired by an Afghan interpreter inside a military base. The story was a dialogue between this student and the boy's mom, whose last words to her son had been to "come home safe."

Workshops like this can fill an important niche in small programs. They slake the thirst our students have for specialty coursework that we can't offer in the regular curriculum, and they put innovative stuff in the senior portfolios of students whose taste for innovation will likely put them into media work that we — and even they — haven't yet imagined.

Dr. Longinow is a professor and chair of the Department of Journalism & Integrated Media at Biola University, a private Christian university in LaMirada in Southern California.

Don't shred that course (yet)

There are limits to the power of creativity in course design

By Michael Longinow

You remember the feeling. You were tired. It was 11 p.m., you were nearing the end of that stack of dead, dull projects from students who were mostly bored and tuned out. You suddenly got the urge.

You wanted to push aside that stack of papers and jump on the keyboard to re-think not just the course you were teaching -- you wanted to tear apart the entire curriculum that housed it.

The sound of ripping, shredding curriculum would be like therapy for you. "We'll fix this problem," you'd say as you cut and pasted and set up new templates. This goes here, so this can go over here. Then we put this over here. "She could cover this class, but we'd have to give this other one to him. Then we'd need an adjunct for that other one..." Do we have enough cameras? Lab space? Will that new workshop course make the minimum enrollment? We definitely need to re-shuffle the core.

I was in a curriculum committee meeting this year and was clearly under the influence — of curriculum revision fever. I'd been dreaming in my office, with fingers flying, and had some fresh ideas in Word files. After the meeting, I began whispering those ideas to my friend the registrar (who,

CURRICULUM

you should know, has a graduate degree in educational law and knows curriculum theory and practice like he knows baseball stats -- quite thoroughly.) Would they work? Could I make the curriculum review deadline?

He looked me in the eye, and very quietly said, "New things take time to grow." He wasn't smiling, but there was a twinkle in his eye. "Give it time," he said, speaking of the curriculum changes I'd just put through the curriculum sausage machine the previous year. The pages were barely dry in the new catalog.

And like somebody had turned the lights on, I knew he was right. As he said it, I was seeing the faces of my students. There, in my office, they'd look at me in near panic and ask if they were going to graduate on time with the major sheet they came in under. Courses were changing names. What used to be a requirement was now an elective. That other elective was now a requirement — but was it for them too?

There are limits to the power of creativity one can do in a course, or a curriculum, when measured merely

in months or semesters. There's a sense in which we don't really know if a course, or sequence of courses, really works -- horrific examples aside -- until we've seen it run a year, maybe two. And change can begin in a course internally without throwing the course out or gutting it completely. We forget that there's a certain peace that comes when we can let the course run while tweaking it.

Some of us work in a bureaucratic structure where change in courses and curriculum is nearly impossible -- bound by ironclad bands of red tape and hierarchies of permission that won't be granted. For those, dreaming is a nice idea, one that makes them tired just thinking about, because they've fought so long and gained so little. Perhaps these faculty members can find solace in the thought that -- at least -- they won't be tormented by the winds of spasmodic change.

But for those of us who do have the opportunity, nearly as often as we like, to tear things up and start over, perhaps we can learn the patience of letting the dough rise a bit before we take things out of the oven.

Dr. Longinow is a professor and chair of the Department of Journalism & Integrated Media at Biola University, a private Christian university in LaMirada in Southern California.

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appreciation of a broad range of research methods, have knowledge of the literature of mass communication and have an interest in the scholarship of teaching and learning in journalism and mass communication programs in colleges and universities where the emphasis is on teaching.

Applicants must be AEJMC and SPIG members in good standing and must remain so throughout the duration of their roles with *TJMC*.

Please submit via email to SPIG Head Susan Lewis, at lewiss@acu.edu, a 1) letter of application, 2) a complete curriculum vita, 3) a two-page explanation of your

philosophy of scholarship and the role of scholarship in teaching, 4) a piece of your research, and 5) a list of three references.

Interviews will be scheduled on Aug. 8 and 9, 2012, during the annual AEJMC meeting in Chicago. Alternate arrangements will be made if an applicant is not able to attend the convention.

The SPIG executive committee will recommend appointments following the interviews. The SPIG head will distribute the executive committee's recommendation at the Aug. 10 business meeting, and the membership will vote on whether to accept the recommendation during that meeting.