

SPIG NEWS

Newsletter of the AEMJC's Small Programs Interest Group

Summer 2006

SPIG covers all the bases at San Francisco AEJMC

By Margo Wilson
SPIG Vice Co-Head

I've booked my airline ticket and hotel room. Looks like I'm going to San Francisco! I can't wait.

I hope many of you are planning to attend the AEJMC conference, Aug. 2-5, at the Marriott



San Francisco. There are preconvention panels on Aug. 1, as well. For a preview of the convention program, follow this link to see a rough draft: http://www.aejmc.org/convention/06convention/program_copy/index.htm

Terry Dalton has worked hard to put together a panel of Pulitzer-Prize-winning journalists. John Hanc has recruited Roy Peter Clark of the Poynter Institute, among others, to speak at his panel on freedom of speech in the newsroom and classroom. Ron Hollander has pulled together a panel that will take up some of the issues recently discussed on the listserv about where journalism thrives best -- an English department, a communications department, or?

There also should be a lively discussion from panelists discussing the pleasures and pitfalls of Web-based teaching and learning. For the second year in a row, SPIG is sponsoring a refereed research paper session. And, once again we are participating in the Great Ideas for Teachers poster session.

Make sure to pencil in the SPIG business meeting at 6:45 p.m. Thursday, followed by a trip to a San Francisco restaurant. Yum. Hope to see you there.

The SPIG panels include:

- * Wednesday, 10 a.m. A Refereed Research Paper panel, moderated by Mary Carmen Cupito of Northern Kentucky University, with Jack Zibluk of Arkansas State serving as the discussant. Those presenting papers are:
 - Ann Auman of the University of Hawaii on Team Teaching in a Converged Curriculum;
 - Ken Rosenauer, Bob Bergland and Ann Thorne of Missouri Western State on Grading Students in the Small Program Journalism Workshop Course;
 - Kimberly Wilmot Voss and Lance Speere of Southern Illinois-Edwardsville on Plagiarism Policies in a Post-Blair World: What Did J-Schools Learn?

* Wednesday, 1:30 p.m. SPIG and the Community College Journalism Association co-sponsor: "Where Does Journalism Belong? Finding a Happy Home in a Liberal Arts Setting." Ron Hollander of Montclair State will moderate. Panelists are:

- John Neal, Brookhaven
- James Sernoe, Midwestern
- James Simon, Fairfield
- Sally Turner, Eastern Illinois

* Wednesday, 3:15 p.m. Great Ideas for Teachers Poster Session, Mini-Plenary sponsored with the Community College Journalism Association, Scholastic Journalism, and International Communication Division.

* Thursday, 5 p.m. "You Can't Say That! Freedom of Speech Under Fire in the Newsroom and the Classroom." John Hanc of New York Institute of Technology will moderate. Panelists are:

- G. Stuart Adam, Carleton
- Roy Peter Clark, Poynter Institute
- Brian Steffen, Simpson
- Patricia Swann, Utica

* Thursday, 6:45 p.m. SPIG Business Meeting, with President Jack Zibluk, Arkansas State, presiding.

* Thursday, 8:30 p.m. SPIG Off-Site Social. We will join the Community College Journalism Association at a San Francisco restaurant.

* Friday, 1:30 p.m. SPIG and the Community College Journalism Association co-sponsor "Web-Based Classes: A New Way to Learn or a New Way to Burn?" Margo Wilson of California of Pennsylvania will moderate. Panelists are:

- Karie Hollerbach, Southeast Missouri State
- Ann Colbert, Indiana, Purdue
- Beverly Bailey, Tulsa
- James Simon, Fairfield

* Friday, 3:15 p.m. SPIG and the Magazine Division co-sponsor "Hot Topics" Panel of Pulitzer-Prize-Winning Journalists. Terry Dalton of McDaniel will moderate. (For a full description of this panel, see Terry Dalton's article on page 3.)

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SPIG Milestones

New York Institute of Technology's John Hanc was selected first recipient of the Mentor Award, from the Public Relations Professionals of Long Island. (Many of their members took his writing class at NYIT). John reports that in his acceptance speech, he "ticked off" a few of those in attendance by saying...

"There's a certain degree of irony here. The fact that I'm getting an award from PRPLI, when in actuality I spend a good part of my working day ignoring P.R. people: deleting their e-mail pitches, not returning their phone calls... In fact, the class that I teach at NYIT that may have precipitated this award includes – every semester – a planned rant in which I go through badly written or way-off-target press releases that I've received and rip them to shreds in front of the students."

Ron Hollander, SPIG co-vice chair, of Montclair State University in New Jersey, has been reporting for *The Baltimore Sun* this summer under an American Society of Newspaper Editors Excellence in Journalism fellowship funded by the Knight Foundation. Ron has been working for both the metro and state desks doing reporting ranging from breaking news in the inner city to regional trend pieces.

The Student Newspaper Survival Guide by Rachele Kanigel will be published by Blackwell Publishing in August. The book is a handbook/textbook on all aspects of publishing a student newspaper for students working on college papers and the advisers and business managers who work with them. You can find out more about the book at <http://collegenewspaper.org>. Kanigel is an assistant professor of journalism at San Francisco State University, where she advises *Golden Gate [X]press* publications.

Former SPIG Head James Simon has been promoted to full professor at Fairfield University.

Denny Wilkins, an associate professor of journalism at St. Bonaventure University, received the annual university award for professional excellence in teaching at this year's commencement.



'Hot Topics' Panel to highlight Pulitzer Prize winners

By Terry Dalton
McDaniel College

The Pulitzer Prize. It even sounds prestigious, doesn't it? Indeed, all the letters in Prize can be found in the word Pulitzer. And on Friday afternoon of convention week, six 2006 Pulitzer Prize winners may be found in room Pacific J of the Marriott.

There, they will talk about their stories or, in one case, their photographs that captured journalism's highest award back in early April. They will also comment on the impact that their articles or pictures had once they were published. And without a doubt, all six of them will answer questions near the end of this "hot topic" panel sponsored by SPIG and co-sponsored by the Magazine division.

The six journalists who said "yes" when they were asked by me or my colleague, Scott Fosdick, if they would fly to San Francisco in August and share their stories with us represent newspapers or news services from coast to coast. In 2005, they wrote about or photographed a member of Congress who took bribes and later resigned in disgrace, a high-powered Washington lobbyist named Abramoff and the public officials who could not resist him, an obscure mental hospital in Oregon that was rife with abuses, and, of course, Hurricane Katrina and the myriad lessons we have learned from that epic natural disaster.

Two of the panelists, Jerry Kammer and Marc Stern, work for the same news outlet – Copley News Service – and did much of the reporting that eventually did in California Congressman Randy (Duke) Cunningham, now a prisoner following his conviction for accepting a string of bribes from those who sought his influence. When we explained to Jerry and Marc that we could not afford to reimburse both of them for their travel costs, they said that was OK, one of them would pay his own way in order to be on the panel.

In fact, Scott and I worried a lot about losing prospective panelists who needed more than their travel expenses covered. And it did happen, more than once. There's no need to identify the paper, but

two of its Pulitzer winners expressed a strong interest in being on the panel, only to find out that their employer was unwilling to pay any of their expenses.

Scott and I joked that we needed more papers like the Portland *Oregonian*, which volunteered to pay all of editorial writer Doug Bates' expenses. Other papers, like the *Dallas Morning News* and New Orleans *Times-Picayune*, offered to pick up the non-travel expenses of photographer Barbara Davidson and reporter Brian Thevenot, respectively, if we would agree to cover their round-trip airfare.

Other Pulitzer winners headed for San Francisco, such as Susan Schmidt at *The Washington Post* – one of three Post reporters who uncovered the Jack Abramoff scandal – wanted to attend the convention so badly that she is paying a portion of her expenses out of her own pocket.

I think Scott would agree that the vast majority of Pulitzer winners that we contacted over a period of six weeks were a pleasure to deal with. Even those who turned us down almost unflinchingly praised the idea of bringing professional journalists and journalism educators into the same room. At the *Rocky Mountain News* in Colorado – which won two Pulitzers -- feature writing winner Jim Sheeler told me he would have loved the opportunity to be on our panel but a summer vacation commitment made it impossible for him to accept our invitation.

We regret that Jim Sheeler can't be with us in San Francisco, but we're delighted that six other 2006 Pulitzer winners will be there. Imagine how much work must have gone into their combined efforts. Think about how much we can learn from them. Consider the number of ways we can use their stories and their photographs to inspire our students.

The Pulitzer session is titled, "A Gathering of 2006 Pulitzer Prize Winners: How They Did It, What It All Means." It will take place on Friday, Aug. 4, from 3:15 to 4:45. See you there.

Head says: SPIG is the model for journalism education

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These issues matter, and they matter much more than audience perceptions of media portrayals of socially constructed gender roles of British Columbian curling champions, circa 1908. Or the hegemony of macrofauna in nature magazine coverage (protozoan activists unite!). You get the point.

That's not what we talk about, and it seems AEJMC is listening. Maybe once upon a time, we members of non-marquee programs bonded together in a sort-of support group for those who weren't members of the esteemed research 1 crowd. Maybe there was a little inferiority there. Maybe there still is among some of us.

Well, there's no reason for it. I find our group is the least BS of any academic organization with which I have been associated. We care about our students, and we care about our profession. And that profession is journalism education more than it is producing arcane,

esoteric and obscure works in dusty journals nobody reads.

Many of us, me included, continue journalism careers. That fuels our classes and keeps them relevant. And sometimes, we even get paid for it.

There is a lot of value to our professional activities and our classroom activities. And our research, when we have time to do it, supports our professional and teaching activities. It doesn't distract us. Not much anyway.

The bottom line is that the people I have talked to about SPIG and SPIG issues in the last year are models of what journalism education should be. As a group, we are becoming leaders in education, not followers. Our activities at the convention will showcase that role, and they should continue to do so.

It's a pleasure to be associated with this organization.

SPIG News

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SPIG a bulwark against B.S.

By Jack Zibluk
SPIG head

Let's face it, there's a lot of male bovine excrement in academe.

Last fall, I met Yale Philosophy Professor Harry G. Frankfurt, author of "On Bull****," at a media ethics conference. Frankfurt's medium-size essay cum best seller, defines BS as speech in which truth or falsehood doesn't matter. The whole purpose is to impress someone, or sell a product, to hide behind a wall of blather.

I expect to hear a lot of it at academic get-togethers. BS usually hides under such titles as jargon, methodology or theory. Of course, these things don't have to be BS. Indeed, they are important underpinnings to producing new ideas and new knowledge. Precise words produce precise and accurate communication; good methodology produces accurate, reliable research; good theories produce good analysis and context.

But they can, and often do, hide BS.

I don't worry about that in our SPIG membership. We have had some honest and frank discussions of substantive issues over the past year. These non-mealy-mouthed issues include free speech in academe, the politics of where journalism fits in an academic structure, and the question of whether or not having a Ph.D. makes you an effective teacher. The first two are topics of SPIG panels in San Francisco, and I hope the last will be next year in Washington D.C.

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