

SPIG NEWS

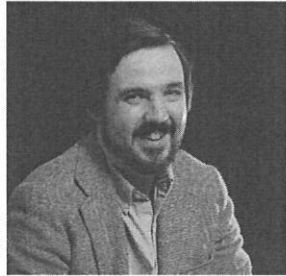
Newsletter of the AEMJC's Small Programs Interest Group

Winter 2006

Free speech isn't a sure thing – even at AEJMC

Other divisions, interest groups at chip auction not eager to co-sponsor panel

By Jack Zibluk
Arkansas State University
SPIG Head



At the winter planning meeting for the AEJMC summer convention in Savannah, my wife, daughter, and I visited some colleagues at Armstrong Atlantic University in town.

Our dinner was convivial until one of our hosts asked me what subject I taught. “Damn liberal journalists,” he harangued at the outset of an overlong and over-tense argument about the nature of the free press and free speech.

It's not the first time this has happened to me. I get this sort of speech more often all the time, from friends and family, members of the community, students and even academic colleagues and administrators outside our discipline. I even hear it sometimes from friends and colleagues within communications.

Free-press-and-free-speech bashing is becoming institutionalized. It underlies some provisions of the federal Patriot Act, and it underscored efforts to limit free speech on campus under The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines. And let's not even begin to get into the whole “if-you're-not-with-us-you're-unpatriotic-so-we-don't-want-to-talk-to-you” screeds of the Ann Coulters, Rush Limbaughs, and the Fox network stable of cranks.

The increasingly pervasive anti free speech attitude has affected and threatened academe. The University of Colorado's Ward Churchill was pushed into resignation because of the outcry over his unpopular statements that American policies contributed to the 9-11 attacks. Whether we agree with people like Churchill or not, the very basis of academe and the tenure system is to foster new and perhaps unpopular ideas and to protect these ideas so we might learn from them. That's the essence of free speech and that's a primary principle on which this nation was founded. And it's a principle for which we are fighting in Iraq. We're fighting to give the Iraqis rights that we ourselves are losing track of.

As journalism educators, we're on the front lines of the right of free speech. We're working with students every day to help them understand the power of the free expression of ideas. At least we should be. To me, it's one of our primary jobs as journalism edu-

cators, and it's certainly among our most noble causes.

So I was very surprised that so few of our colleagues in Savannah supported our SPIG free speech panel. Our own John Hanc of New York State Tech proposed the professional freedom and responsibility panel on free speech in the classroom. Other divisions and groups in AEJ showed mild interest in co-sponsoring the panel, but we could not get any commitments for it.

There was a great deal of interest in convergence, in disaster coverage, and research, methodology, and the many and varied parochial interests of AEJMC members. But nobody wanted to commit to support for our SPIG panel on free speech. And there was nothing else like it among the other proposals.

So vice heads Margo Wilson, Ron Hollander and I were left with the conundrum of whether to abandon this particular panel or to spend a full “chip” to stand behind it. Under the AEJ chip system, it costs a full chip to sponsor a panel solo, and a half chip to co-sponsor one. So we can put our name on more panels if we

Do not confuse dissent with disloyalty.
~ Edward R. Murrow

co-sponsor and fewer panels if we go it alone. SPIG, as an interest group, has three and a half chips. Divisions get seven.

There were many other SPIG panels with a great deal of merit. And we also have commitments to co-sponsor the Great Ideas For Teachers (GIFT) program, and our own research program.

I admit that the freedom of speech panel is something I personally care about deeply, so I pushed hard for the decision to go it alone and sponsor it solo. That may have meant another SPIG co-sponsored panel didn't make the cut. If that's the case – and I am not really sure it is – I apologize to anybody who feels slighted.

I think, though, this is an opportunity for SPIG to again distinguish itself and for our group to make a difference in journalism education nationwide. Believe it or not, in the world of journalism education, free speech is all ours. It's a lower priority for everybody else out there than it is for us. I am not only surprised, I am a little disturbed.

A good turnout will certainly bring attention not only to SPIG but to the importance of teaching and addressing free speech in all we do. I hope to see as many of you as possible there in San Francisco, Thursday, Aug. 3 at 5 p.m.

For a full schedule of SPIG-sponsored and co-sponsored panels, look inside on page 3

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How to have AEJMC love your panel ideas

Top seven tips from one of SPIG's vice heads



By Margo Wilson
California University of Pennsylvania
SPIG co-vice chair

Jack Zibluk, Ron Hollander and I now are veterans of the AEJMC chip auction and I've learned a thing or two.

1. When submitting a proposal, keep your plan short, sweet, and to the point. If you can focus on a topic that's in the current buzz but not something everyone is likely to propose, you may do well.
2. Try to tentatively line up an ally in another division or interest group to co-sponsor the program with you. Your proposal will stand a much better chance than without this sponsorship.
3. Try to find a topic that will appeal to a broad spectrum of AEJMC members, not just SPIGGERS (or just you).
4. Realistically, and this is probably not p.c. to admit, it helps if you are a SPIG officer. Run for an office at our next election.
5. Going to a warm clime right before finals is truly nice. See No. 4, part 2.
6. The prime panel time is the slot right after the opening plenary session on Thursday morning at 10. We learned this too late for SPIG to benefit. Nevertheless, we were pleased with the panels and times we won.
7. Last fall, many members floated good ideas on our listserv, but when it came time for us to submit full-fledged proposals, we had to scramble to put together enough to give us some negotiating power. We need your help. Unless you play, you won't have much of a chance to moderate or serve on a panel.

Another way to get to San Francisco

Do you have a great teaching idea that you want to share with colleagues in San Francisco? If you do, consider submitting it to the Great Ideas for Teachers (GIFT) poster competition. All the details are available at:

<http://www.geocities.com/aejmcgift/GIFTHome.html>

Milestones

Anthony R. Fellow has been elected to a three-year term as chair of the Department of Communications at California State University, Fullerton, which has the largest student population in California. Fellow was elected overwhelmingly by the faculty in the department, which now ranks as one of the largest in the nation. He is author of *American Media History*, *The Copy Editors Handbook for Newspapers*, and *News Writing in a Multimedia World* and teaches courses in History & Philosophy of American Mass Communications, Communications Law, and graduate seminars in Media & Politics and International Communications. He was named one of the university's outstanding professors/scholars in 2005. His term begins in Fall 2006.

John Jenks, associate professor at Dominican University, has written *British Propaganda and News Media in the Cold War*. Edinburgh University Press is releasing it in Britain this March. The book describes how during the early Cold War, Britain supplemented its power in the global media system with a wide-ranging propaganda campaign to expose and attack Communists and their allies around the world. International struggle colored domestic politics as propaganda, censorship and the media's internal purge helped create an anti-Communist Cold War consensus within Britain. *British Propaganda and News Media in the Cold War* makes use of new evidence from unsealed government documents and underused media archives to tell a detailed story of power, manipulation and the operation of the global news system at a time of open-ended crisis. It will be available in the United States this October through Columbia University Press.

Call for Papers

"Challenges and Strategies for Teaching in Small Programs"

Small Programs Interest Group, AEJMC

Deadline: April 1, 2006

The Small Programs Interest Group of AEJMC invites faculty and graduate students to submit research papers regarding the topic, "Challenges and Strategies for Teaching in Small Programs" for presentation in a special invited topic research session to be held at the annual meeting in San Francisco in August 2006.

One special research session will be devoted to theoretically based studies of issues concerning teaching and research at small journalism and mass communication programs. Both qualitative and quantitative research is welcome. Papers may not be longer than 25 pages, excluding tables, figures and references. Authors do not have to be SPIG members to qualify for the session.

San Francisco SPIG Panels

Here's a quick peek at the panels we can look forward to at the San Francisco AEJMC convention.

Wednesday, Aug. 2, 10 a.m.

Research panel

Sole-Sponsored by SPIG

Wednesday, Aug. 2, 1:30 p.m.

Where Does Journalism Belong? Finding a Happy Home in a Liberal Arts Setting

Teaching Panel

Ron Hollander, Moderator, Montclair State University

Co-Sponsored by Community College Journalism Association

Wednesday, 3:15 p.m.

Mini-Plenary Session: Great Ideas for Teachers (GIFT) program

Teaching Panel

Sponsored by Community College Journalism Association and Small Programs Interest Group; Co-sponsored by Scholastic Journalism Division and International Communication Division

Thursday, Aug. 3, 5 p.m.

You Can't Say That!: Freedom of Speech Under Fire; In the Newsroom ... and the Classroom

John Hanc, Moderator, New York Institute of Technology

Sole-Sponsored Professional Freedom and Responsibility Panel

Thursday, Aug. 3, 6:45 p.m.

SPIG Membership Meeting

Friday, Aug. 4, 1:30-3 p.m.

Web-Based Classes: A New Way to Learn or a New Way to Burn?

Teaching Panel

Ann Colbert, Moderator, Indiana Purdue at Fort Wayne

Co-Sponsored by Community College Journalism Association

Friday, 3:15-4:45 p.m.

Hot Topics Panel, Terry Dalton, Moderator, McDaniel College

Professional Freedom and Responsibility Panel

Co-Sponsored by Magazine Division

Small Programs Interest Group
c/o John Jenks, Newsletter Editor
Dominican University 7900 W. Division St.
River Forest, IL 60305

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