

LeadTime

THE NEWSLETTER OF AEJMC'S NEWSPAPER DIVISION
NOVEMBER 2005

MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD

Teachers can do, too

By Wilson Lowrey

So, as it turns out, those who teach *can* do.

That's one thing among many that we learned at the 2005 AEJMC convention in San Antonio. Under the guidance of outgoing division head Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez, the division published the AEJMC Reporter, a daily news publication devoted to coverage of the national AEJMC convention. The Reporter was a big success thanks to co-publishers Rivas and Lorraine Branham, and thanks to the hard work of numerous students and volunteering professors.



Wilson Lowrey

And we're planning to do it all again next year in San Francisco, with the help of PF&R co-chairwoman Erna Smith of San Francisco State University, who will serve as the publisher for the 2006 AEJMC Reporter.

Maggie also initiated a "Newspaper Project Award" to honor the hard work that professors and students put into publications that

are part of a course. These awards were presented at the 2005 members meeting. Congratulations to Nancy Benson and Eric Meyer at the University of Illinois for taking first place and Cecile Holmes, Doug Fisher and Scott Farrand of the University of South Carolina for taking second. You can read the list of all division award winners on page 4.

There was more innovation, as the division also embarked on a two-year experiment in electronic paper submission. Research Chair Frank Fee led this effort, and it went amazingly well for a first run. For more information, see the update on page 2. We'll give it another go in 2006. As typically happens to innovators, we're being watched closely. It appears other divisions and perhaps AEJMC as a whole will be embracing electronic submission.

The division's panels at the 2005 convention were very well attended. Attendees were eager and attentive for our session on the partisan news environment, co-sponsored with Magazine, for our panel on reporter privilege under threat, co-sponsored with Law, and for our session on teaching grammar, also co-sponsored with Magazine. An early-morning start

time deterred few as our session on convergence research, co-sponsored with MME, packed the room as well. Even the Saturday lunchtime panel on newspaper ombudsmen filled more than half the chairs, proof of the importance of that issue (who in their right mind would schedule a panel Saturday at 11:15 a.m.? Oh yeah, that would have been me).

Thanks to all the panel leaders for their hard work: Charlyne Berens and David Abrahamson for the partisan press panel; Paul Janensch for the ombudsman panel; Kyu Ho Youm and Mike Farrell for the reporter privilege panel; Vince Filak and Gracie Lawson-Borders for the convergence research panel; and Jan Larson for the panel on teaching grammar.

Our visit to the Spanish language daily newspaper Rumbo, co-sponsored with MAC, was a big hit. Much thanks to Robert Huesca at Trinity University for suggesting and organizing this thoroughly enjoyable and informative trip. And the pre-convention session on teaching court reporting, co-sponsored with Law, was also highly successful, despite the best efforts of a Texas storm to delay arrival of convention attendees and panelists.

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Online paper submission worked well in '05

Bumps to be smoothed in '06

As North Carolina's Frank Fee was winding up his term as Newspaper Division head, Sri Kalyanaraman of the Communication Technology and Policy Division showed Fee the system he was pioneering as research chair for the 2004 convention. Fee was impressed, and the Newspaper Division entered into an arrangement with ConfMaster, a German vendor that Comm Tech has now used twice and plans to use again in the coming year. The cost of the site was \$450. With a few minor bumps that were resolved, Fee was delighted with ConfMaster and says he would recommend it to other divisions and to AEJMC as a whole. The Newspaper Division will use it again next year.

ConfMaster allows scholars to submit papers to a dedicated Web site. From there, the research chair checks to ensure there are no identifying marks on the papers and converts them to pdf files.

From there, the reviewers download the papers to their computers, reading them either on the screen or on a printout if they choose. When judges are ready, they can sign back in to the Web site and, using a template already created in the system, punch in the relevant numbers for closed-end questions, and, cutting and pasting from a pre-arranged document, make overall comments about the paper. It's that simple!

Once the final decision has been made on a paper, the research chair identifies it and, with a keystroke, notifies the researcher. Pre-written scripts for this and other steps give prompt acknowledgement to scholars about the fate of their papers. No need for postcards.

A key-word identifier system asks scholars and judges to list areas of interest or pertinence, and papers were easily matched to the corresponding researchers.

To be sure, not all those who used the system as a judge, scholar or administrator found ConfMaster to be the answer to their prayers. Some judges disliked having to print out copies. A few refused to use the system at all.

But from people submitting papers, Fee says he heard mostly praise for the system. And from Fee's perspective as research chair, the ability to have everything recorded, to know the status of every paper at any time, and to avoid stacks of paper for mailing in his office was a delight.

He also liked the fact that international scholars could be easily involved. This year there was one judge in Ireland, and one of our accepted papers came from Singapore. All told, we had 86 submissions, which was the highest number in recent memory.

According to Fee, the chief drawbacks in this system are that (1) while there is a decent instruction set in the help desk, the system is not intuitive and just finding the help desk comes as an afterthought. Fee says an instruction manual is

The ConfMaster online system allows paper judges to submit both multiple-choice and open-ended responses.

needed. (2) Right now, the division is getting the general-purpose Web site designed to accommodate all manner of research competitions. Until we have the critical mass of AEJMC ordering for the division, very little tailoring of the software to our needs can be expected, and about two-thirds of the system's capabilities go unused.

We also ran into one school where the spam protections would not recognize the URL as legitimate. Once this was discovered, though, a solution was found.

Based on problems reported in other systems used by ICA and NCA, Fee says that he has a high degree of confidence in ConfMaster and in its proprietor, Thomas Pruess. Fee says that Pruess was extremely helpful and promptly solved every problem (usually pilot error on a judge's part) with alacrity and grace.

— *The Editor*

Message from the Head: *Continued from page 1*

As well as things are going in the Newspaper Division, things are not quite so rosy in the newspaper industry, according to a growing number of gloomy accounts, disturbing reports, downward trends and other kicks in the shin. It struck me that the division should weigh in on the trouble, as clearly the trouble affects journalism education.

So the Newspaper Division is launching “What’s Next for Newspapers?”, a yearlong online discussion among division members and selected newspaper

professionals about the numerous challenges facing newspapers and journalism education. Can newspapers stay relevant in the lives of individuals and communities, in the minds of our students and in the maintenance of democracy? If so, how? See details below.

We plan to continue the discussion at a roundtable at the San Francisco convention and to publish results as well. Hope you’ll join in on the discussion!

Wilson Lowrey is an assistant professor at the University of Alabama.

Newspaper Division online discussion: www.tcf.ua.edu/wnfn

What’s Next for Newspapers?

By Wilson Lowrey

Prominent voices in the industry and in the academy are sounding alarm bells – and even death knells – for newspapers. Doomsayers for print journalism are nothing new. But the stature of some of the recent doomsayers has attracted attention, and troubling stats such as plummeting circulation rates for younger readers and an increase in staff layoffs have increased anxiety. It’s time for the division to weigh in on these topics, to brainstorm about new directions for newspapers (or whether new directions are necessary), and to think about how the future of newspapers affects journalism education.

Toward this end, the Newspaper Division will host a year-long online discussion among division members and selected newspaper professionals about the future of newspapers. Can newspapers stay relevant in the lives of individuals, in the lives of our communities, and in the maintenance of democracy? If so, how? And how can we best communicate to our students the importance of newspapers? New professors, senior scholars, doctoral students and industry professionals are all encouraged to speak their minds.

The Newspaper Division will host a year-long online discussion among division members and newspaper professionals about the future of newspapers and journalism education. Can newspapers stay relevant, and if so, how?



So how are we going to do this? Discussions will take place via a chat room and NOT through the division’s e-mail listserv. So no one’s e-mail box gets filled up. The Web site address is: www.tcf.ua.edu/wnfn. Please bookmark that. Occasional e-mails with discussion topics will be sent to members via the division listserv, and these will include a link to the chat room. Two or three discussion-prompting e-mails will be sent in the fall and two or three more will be sent in the spring. These questions will also be posted on the division Web site. In the fall, questions will focus on newspapers and their relationship to society and to readers.

In the spring, questions will focus on students and journalism curricula. But we’ll see where the discussion takes us and be willing to go with the flow (within limits). Discussion will be monitored by the division head, the PF&R chair and the teaching standards chair.

A roundtable discussion will be held at the 2006 AEJMC convention in San Francisco that includes contributors to the online discussion – journalism scholars, industry professionals and possibly students. The division head, the PF&R chair, the teaching standards chair and the vice head will collaborate on selecting these. Comments from the year will be presented and discussed, and an effort will be made to reach some consensus regarding best practices for industry and academia. Results of these discussions will be published via academic and trade publications – participants will NOT be identified.

I hope you can help us brainstorm on what’s next for newspapers. If you know of industry professionals who would be willing to contribute to this discussion, **please contact them and send me their e-mails**, if they’re willing. Questions? Contact me at wlowrey@ua.edu.

2005 Newspaper Division Awards



Edna Negron, 2004-2005 Teaching Standards Chair, presents Randy Miller with the Outstanding Educator Award.



Division Head Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez shows off Cecile Holmes' 2nd place winning Carolina Reporter newspaper.

Awards were presented at the Newspaper Division Members Meeting at the 2005 AEJMC Convention in San Antonio. Thanks to Ginger Carter for the photos.

TOP THREE FACULTY PAPERS (not ranked)

- Ann Auman, University of Hawaii
- Fred Fedler, University of Central Florida
- Duane Stoltzfus, Goshen College

TOP STUDENT PAPER

- Scott Reinardy, University of Missouri

NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY RESEARCH AWARD (presented by Council of Affiliates and Newspaper Division)

- Ann Auman, University of Hawaii

PF&R AWARD

- Rosental Alves, UT-Austin

OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR

- Randy E. Miller, University of South Florida

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

- Guido H. Stempel III, Ohio University

PROFESSOR NEWSPAPER PUBLISHING AWARD

- **First Place:** iElect, Eric Meyer & Nancy Benson, University of Illinois
- **Second Place:** The Carolina Reporter
Cecile Holmes, Doug Fisher & Scott Farrand, University of South Carolina

Stempel wins outstanding service award

By Frank Fee

Guido H. Stempel III, distinguished professor emeritus at Ohio University, has received the division's lifetime achievement award for outstanding service to journalism and journalism education.

Stempel, recovering from hip surgery, was unable to accept the award in person. He expressed his appreciation, however, in a telephone conversation earlier.

During the award ceremony, several members recalled how Stempel's work and guidance helped them in their careers. He often invites graduate students and junior faculty to join him as co-researchers in studies of journalism, law, newspaper readership and reader preference, and media coverage of political campaigns.

In an e-mail note, Stempel's Ohio University colleague Dr. Daniel Riffe, editor of *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, added: "Guido has been a giant in the field in so many ways and shows no sign of letting up. At Wisconsin, his dissertation was one of the first to address a methodological question in a serious way; he edited *Journalism Quarterly* for many years; he ran the Newspaper Division research

competition for a number of years; he served *NRJ*; and he founded *The Web Journal of Mass Communication Research*. And he's still conducting important research on public opinion!"

Stempel was editor of *Journalism Quarterly*, now *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, from 1972 to 1989. He serves as senior research editor of the division's own publication, *Newspaper Research Journal*.

In 1977 he received the Chancellor's Award for Distinguished Service to the Profession of Journalism from the University of Wisconsin, from which he received his Ph.D. in 1954. He also received the Ohio University's Distinguished Professor Award 1982, AEJMC's Eleanor Blum Award for Contributions to the Field of Communication Research in 1989 and the Edward J. Traves Teacher of the Year Award in 1997.

He joined the faculty of the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University in 1965 and at various times was the school's director, graduate chairman, and director of the Bush Research Endowment.

Frank Fee is an assistant professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Covering the Convention

By **Lorraine Branham & Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez**

When we arrived in Room 618 of the Marriott Rivercenter Monday, the small staff of the AEJMC Reporter was facing an intense week of working side-by-side to produce our daily paper. We joked, at the outset, that deodorant was a must: we would be in close quarters.

One week later, after several late nights, technical difficulties, and intense discussions (OK, sometimes arguments!), we are saying goodbye.

Judging from what we saw in San Antonio, the AEJMC Reporter accomplished what it set out to do: let participants read about some of the major issues at the conference and provide training to 16 college journalists. We were gratified to see many attendees drop by to offer to help and tell us how cool our effort was. We want to thank, in particular, Kim Smith and Bryan Murley of the University of South Carolina, Edna Negron of Ramapo College of New Jersey and Carol Wilcox of Virginia State University. They asked if they could help, and we were only too grateful to have them join us. If we've left off anybody, please forgive us.

Of course, the San Antonio Express-News staff was superb: in particular Yvonne Castillo, assistant night production manager, and Ted Edmonson, publishing services manager. We know there were people we didn't meet, who dropped off the paper and worked the printing presses. The Express-News and its editor Robert Rivard have



Photo by David Minton / University of North Texas

established the paper as a stalwart supporter of journalism education and in this case, the paper has gone far beyond the call of duty. It also provided daily coverage of the convention on paper and online.

The Newspaper Division, which deserves much of the credit for initiating this project, is committed to at least one more year of producing this paper with the support and endorsement of the

AEJMC. We've already been taking suggestions from one and all on how to improve our process and perhaps to involve other divisions. More to come on that.

One thing we knew going into this: There were far more schools who wanted to have their ad in our publication. We promise to call on you next year. For now, we sign off and look forward to San Francisco in 2006.

Lorraine Branham is director of the school of journalism at the University of Texas at Austin. Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez is an associate professor at the University of Texas at Austin.



The AEJMC Reporter staff included 16 college journalists and a number of volunteering professors. *Photo by Christina Murrey / University of North Texas*

Newspaper Division officers for 2005-2006

Head

Wilson Lowrey
University of Alabama

Vice Head/Program Chair

Kathleen Wickham
University of Mississippi

Research Chair

Frank Fee
UNC-Chapel Hill

Research Co-chair

Dan Shaver
University of Central Florida

PF&R Chair

Lorraine Branham
UT-Austin

PF&R Co-chair

Erna Smith
San Francisco State University

Teaching Standards Chair

Laura Castaneda
USC Annenberg

Teaching Standards Co-chair

Ann Auman
University of Hawaii

Webmaster

Bob Stepno
UT-Knoxville

Leadtime Editor

Steve Collins
University of Central Florida

Call for papers, judges: 2006 Southeast Colloquium

The 2006 AEJMC Southeast Colloquium will be held in Tuscaloosa, Ala., and is being hosted by the College of Communication and Information Sciences at The University of Alabama. This is a great opportunity for professors and students alike. The colloquium offers both a collegial, helpful environment for budding young scholars and top-notch papers from established researchers.

Postmark deadline for papers is **Monday, Nov. 28**. Papers may be submitted in the categories of History, Law, Magazine, Newspaper, Open and RTVJ. For more information about submitting papers, volunteering for judging, lodging, registration, and for a printable flyer, visit the colloquium Web site at: www.aejmc_sec06.ccom.ua.edu. Questions? Contact Wilson Lowrey at the University of Alabama at wlowrey@ua.edu.

Become a judge for the Newspaper Division!

At least 100 faculty members are needed to read research papers for the 2006 AEJMC competition for San Francisco. Our goal is to limit the number of papers to three per judge. Using the electronic submission system the division pioneered last year, we also expect that research papers will be in the hands of judges promptly and that scholars will know the results sooner than ever before. If you will read for the Newspaper Division competition, please inform Research Chair Frank Fee of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill at ffee@email.unc.edu. In early spring, we will give volunteers detailed instructions on how to log on to the system and how papers will be assigned to them to read.

Call for entries: 2006 Newspaper Project Award

The AEJMC Newspaper Division's Newspaper Project Award recognizes publications produced by students and professors in journalism classes or as special curricular projects connected to courses. The publication must have been produced as part of the curriculum, text reported and written by students, and professors must have been responsible for editing and/or advising. Eligible publications must have been published in either the 2004-2005 or 2005-2006 years. Publications that are only online will not be accepted. For entry forms and more details, please contact Teaching Standards Chair Laura Castaneda at lcastane@usc.edu.