

MAGAZINE MATTER

VOL 23 NO 2

ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION IN JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

FALL 2003

LETTER FROM OUR DIVISION HEAD

Challenges for the year ahead

By Carol Zuegner, Creighton University



It's a bit daunting to become head of one of the AEJMC divisions, but the enthusiasm of new and seasoned officers and the generosity and advice from longtime members are fueling

my enthusiasm for the year ahead.

I'm optimistic that we can build on the great job done by Joe Bernt as division head in 2002-2003. We offered varied and well-attended panels at the Kansas City convention, and the research panels showcased quality papers. The student magazine contest remains one of our top programs.

One of the challenges for the year ahead is to keep that quality both at the Southeast Colloquium in Tampa in March and in Toronto next August.

We also are searching for a new editor for the division's *Journal of Magazine and New Media Research*. Leara Rhodes and Kitty

Endres have done terrific jobs as editors of the online journal, along with David Sumner's invaluable contribution as managing editor and Web master.

The AEJMC is looking to boost membership this year, so it's time to get your colleagues and students involved in all that the organization has to offer.

The division officers and I are eager for your comments and suggestions for programs and for ways to continue the division's strong performance. You can help by developing PF&R and teaching panel proposals for the convention in August, as well as by developing research to submit to the paper competition for the Southeast Colloquium and the Toronto convention.

One last note: If you want to get the attention of an officer in the division, try calling out the name Carol. It's the Year of Carol, with research chair Carol Fletcher, newsletter editor Carol Schwalbe, student magazine contest coordinator Carol Holstead and me. ♦

2004 SOUTHEAST COLLOQUIUM

The 2004 Southeast Colloquium will be hosted by the School of Communication at the University of South Florida, Tampa, March 4-6. David Sumner is the research chair for the Magazine Division. The postmark deadline for papers is November 28. Please mail papers to David E. Sumner, Department of Journalism, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306.

Marie Flanagan of USF, the conference coordinator, has created a conference website at <hometown.aol.com/flanagan960/colloquium/index.html>. It has the names and addresses of all the research chairs for the sponsoring divisions: Magazine, Law, History, and Newspapers. If you forget that URL, you can also go to <www.southeastcolloquium.org> and click on the link to Upcoming Conferences.

If you want to do something different that weekend (on Sunday), try the Little Everglades Steeplechase <www.littleevergladessteeplechase.com>, which is held in Dade City, about 25 miles away. Another popular tourist destination about five miles away is Busch Gardens <www.buschgardens.com>. The Florida Aquarium is in downtown Tampa.

Tampa International Airport is about 15 miles from the USF campus, which in turn is 10 miles north of downtown Tampa. You might want to rent a car and enjoy some of the sites that weekend. Sometimes you can get cheaper direct flights on American Trans Air <www.ata.com>, which has hubs in Chicago, Indianapolis, and St. Petersburg. The St. Petersburg Airport is across the bay, about 10 more miles from the USF campus.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

Where magazines took center stage

By Sammie Johnson, Trinity University

The typical U.S. journalism and mass communication conference is freewheeling and frenetic, with as many as 20 back-to-back panels and presentations on myriad topics scheduled at the same time. Depending on the pre- and post-conference activities offered, a week can be spent at an AEJMC or ICA convention dashing between two and sometimes three hotels.

So imagine what a treat it would be to attend an international conference focusing totally on magazines: one topic, a limited number of papers, and one location.

Two international magazine conferences in the past two years have offered scholars the opportunity to share their research in settings as lovely as they were laid-back. The Modeling American Culture: American Magazines in the 20th Century International Conference took place in April 2002 in Middelburg, the Netherlands. More recently, in June 2003, the Mapping the Magazine International Conference occurred in Cardiff, Wales. Both conferences held an international call for papers, selecting only a few for presentation—just 10 papers at Middelburg and 30 at Cardiff.

I was fortunate (Continued on page 2)

INSIDE

- 3 Places for Students To Find Article Ideas
- 5 The Magazine Syllabus
- 6 Back Home on the Range
- 7 Student Magazine Contest 2003
- 9 Cooking the Books
- 13 Abe Peck, Educator of the Year
- 13 Business Meeting Report, Kansas City
- 14 Division Officers and Chairs 2002-2003

WWW.AEJMCMAGAZINE.ORG

CONFERENCES (Continued from page 1)

to have papers accepted at both refereed conferences and to meet scholars from around the world. Three other AEJMC members—two of them members of the Magazine Division—also attended one of these conferences. Here are our observations about presenting research abroad.

Middelburg, the Netherlands

The Modeling American Culture: American Magazines in the 20th Century International Conference was hosted by the prestigious Roosevelt Study Center, a research institute focusing on American history and European-American relations. (The Zeeland Province, about 130 miles southeast of Amsterdam, is the ancestral home of Theodore, Franklin, and Eleanor Roosevelt, and American Roosevelts were instrumental in establishing the center as a place where European scholars could study modern American history.) The two-day conference took place in the medieval Abbey in Middelburg, a town with about 45,000 people.

The setting was a dramatic contrast to the stereotypical (and sterile) hotels where American conferences are held. Just getting there was a pleasant experience. You walked through Middelburg's cobblestone streets and Marketplace (no cars allowed) into the sprawling Abbey grounds. A worn wooden door led to the Roosevelt Study Center inside the main Abbey. You immediately felt the interior chill of ancient stone walls. Although the center's facilities were modern, with all the requisite electronic bells and whistles and a comfortable amphitheater for presentations, you still expected to round a corner and come upon a monk.

Each session consisted of two papers presented in a one-hour time block. There were no breakout options; everyone attended the same program at the same time. Each scholar was given 15 minutes to present his or her research; 30 minutes was devoted to challenging and critical questions from the audience. This was a bit daunting at first, because there usually isn't enough time for probing questions at the end of a typical Magazine Division research session. With at least four papers packed into a 90-minute session, few presenters stay within their time limits, and perhaps one or two mundane comments

may be made before everyone has to leave the room so the next group can set up. In Middelburg, the moderator of each session was not bashful in letting you know you had only a minute left—and cutting you off when your time was up.

Although each session lasted an hour, it was followed by a 30-minute break for coffee/tea/pastries/cookies just outside the amphitheater—and more discussion. Consequently, there wasn't the feeling that you had rushed through your presentation. Only five research sessions took place over the two-day period, with a keynote lecture starting and ending each day. On the last day, closure was provided by participants being asked to respond to the question: "What is the one significant idea that you take away from this conference?"

This approach, which I learned was typical of many international conferences, was a wonderful immersion into the research agendas of scholars from Germany, the Netherlands, Turkey, Great Britain, Canada, and the United States. With 35 graduate students, professors, and scholars in attendance, papers reflected a range of interdisciplinary and historical approaches, including feminist theory, cultural theory, agenda setting, literary studies, and critical perspectives about magazine content and audiences.

Paper titles revealed the scope of research about American magazines occurring in other countries: "Commentary and Norman Podhoretz, 1960-1981" (the Netherlands), "Nothing of a Partisan or Controversial Character: *National Geographic* and the Popularization of the American Empire, 1898-1920" (Germany), and "Ebony and the Construction of the White Housewife in the U.S." (Turkey). I presented "Shaping and Reflecting Culture: Magazines for African-American, Hispanic, and Asian-American Audiences," while Magazine Division member Carol Fletcher (Hofstra University) offered "Older, But No Wiser, Second-Generation Senior Magazines and the Redefinition of Aging in America."

"I found it fascinating," Fletcher said, "to see that some aspects of American magazines that are so ubiquitous as to seem inevitable to us are, when viewed from the perspective of our overseas colleagues, actually very 'American' and idiosyncratic. To give just a small example: I'm interested

in how old age is depicted in magazines. Both American and European magazines tend to be youth-oriented. But in U.S. magazines, when aging is discussed, it is usually presented as an avoidable evil. This assumption is taken for granted. But European colleagues told me that in their magazines, older folks are more likely to look and act old; aging is depicted as more inevitable and acceptable."

Cardiff, Wales

The Mapping the Magazine International Conference was hosted by Cardiff University. The university is one of Britain's major centers of higher education, ranking 15th out of more than 100 British universities. It is the home of the top-ranked School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies. Britain's first university courses in journalism were established there in 1970. Cardiff Castle, on the site of a Roman fort, dominates the landscape of the city, which is the capital of Wales and only a two-hour train ride from London. Cardiff has a population of more than 320,000 people.

The set-up in Cardiff was close to our American conventions, with two sessions running concurrently and three papers scheduled for presentation in a 90-minute period. Although each scholar was given 20 minutes to present, official moderators had not been assigned to introduce and moderate each program. The unfortunate result was that feedback wasn't long or lively.

But that's where the similarity to our U.S. conventions ended. Imagine the Magazine Division being able to offer 30 research papers at AEJMC: What a pleasant situation that would be. Of course, because the focus at Cardiff was exclusively on magazine research, it was hard to decide which session to attend. Papers covered such topics as "New Sexism? Readers' Responses to the Use of Irony in Men's Magazines" (Scotland), "Finnish Women's Magazines and the Sexual Contract" (Finland), and "Towards a Socio-Semiotic Approach to Magazine Research" (Israel). It was intriguing to learn about German women's magazines, British motorcycle magazines, Finnish literary magazines, and Iceland's journals of opinion, as well as *Picture Post*, a magazine much like our *Life* that thrived in the United Kingdom during the 1940s and 1950s.

About 60 (Continued on page 3)

A DOZEN PLACES FOR STUDENTS TO FIND ARTICLE IDEAS

By David E. Sumner, Ball State University

TEACHING TIPS

A few years ago, I traveled 3,000 miles to interview more than a dozen syndicated magazine and newspaper columnists about their work. One of my basic questions was “Where do you get ideas for your columns?” The unanimous answer was “reading.”

For example, Dave Barry told me, “I read the *New York Times* and the *Miami Herald* every day. When I can, I read the *Wall Street Journal*, which I love. It’s different from every other paper. I read *Newsweek*, *Esquire*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Harpers*, and *The Atlantic*. I sometimes read the *New Republic* and balance it off by reading the *National Review*. I just like to read. I like magazines a lot.”

The best way for writers to find an original idea is by reading, reading, and then reading some more. Feature writers must have an insatiable appetite for reading and, if they don’t, they should question whether this is their true calling.

While nothing will substitute for reading many books and magazines, here are a dozen “quick-fix” sources for students to find ideas.

1. Yellow pages of telephone books

In his book *The Freelancer: A Writer’s Guide to Success*, Dennis Hensley suggests finding ideas from the yellow pages. He offers these specific tips:

- Send a postcard to all the associations and organizations listed and ask to be added to their mailing lists for bulletins, newsletters, and press releases.

“These will give you several news tips,” Hensley says.

- Check display ads for businesses ready to celebrate anniversaries and then write profiles of them. Find businesses that offer unusual products or services and write about them.

- Look under the heading “social service organizations” for details on nonprofit organizations that serve the underprivileged.

- You can also browse through the yellow pages for any city in the U.S. through online services such as <www.switchboard.com>. This can be an excellent resource for finding sources for articles in other parts of the country.

2. Newspaper classified ads

The best sections of the classified ads to find ideas are the (Continued on page 4)

CONFERENCES (Continued from page 2)

professors and graduate students attended the two-day conference, where papers were presented by scholars from Israel, Finland, Australia, New Zealand, Scotland, Wales, the Netherlands, Canada, England, and the United States. Three of us had AEJMC connections: I discussed “Magazines as Memory Aids: Remembering History Through *Time*’s Person of the Year Covers,” while Carol Polsgrove (Indiana University) presented “Magazines and the Study of Political Change: George Padmore and the Use of Magazines.” Magazine Division member David Abrahamson (Northwestern University) gave one of the two keynote speeches, talking about “Magazine Exceptionalism: The Concept, The Criteria, The Challenge.”

“I was honored to share the keynoting rostrum with Professor John Hartley of Queensland [Australia] University, the author of *Popular Reality: Journalism, Modernity and Popular Culture*,” Abrahamson said. “His presentation, like many others, approached the study of magazines from a broad historical perspective, with an emphasis on the cultural and social effects of periodical publishing. This wider, perhaps more ecumenical, view informed many of the papers presented at the conference and was quite different from the typical conference fare to be found in America.”

Polsgrove observed, “The idea of bringing together magazine researchers from many countries was wonderful. It was good to meet people who have common interests, even if their research wasn’t similar to mine.”

Back in the U.S.A.

Cost is a significant consideration in attending an international conference. Airfare alone can be more than \$1,000, and there’s usually the additional expense of getting from the airport to the conference site (by train, bus, or rental car). When the conference occurs during the school year, it’s hard to justify spending additional time seeing the countryside. Nevertheless, a quick flight over and back, while more grueling, is still worthwhile.

Lodging and registration fees seem to be about the same as in the United States, and international hosts are good about helping you find a bed and breakfast or smaller, less expensive hotel than the convention one. The registration fee typically includes snacks and one meal.

For Polsgrove, the highlight of the Cardiff conference was the presentation about *Picture Post* by two women who were intimately involved with the magazine during the 1940s. “Their stories—and the photos they showed—made that time come alive. It was worth the trip,” Polsgrove said.

Abrahamson, noting that the Cardiff conference was an inaugural attempt, said, “It was hugely successful in creating an occasion that made possible both a worthwhile scholarly discourse and unique collegiality among students of the magazine form. As a result, the conference proved to be one of the most stimulating and engaging symposia I have ever attended.”

Although she was referring to Middelburg, Fletcher concisely summed up the impact of both international magazine conferences: “What I enjoyed most was sharing with overseas colleagues the pleasure of being at a conference in which magazines were center stage, not relegated to a few sessions.” ♦

STORY IDEAS (Continued from page 3)

“Wanted to buy” and “Personals.” People who advertise in the “Wanted to buy” section are often collectors of unusual items. Once I read an ad looking for “antique Coca-Cola machines and memorabilia.” I called the number, and it turned out to be a man who owned three barns full of Coca-Cola machines, memorabilia, and other items worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. It became a fascinating cover story full of good photos and funny anecdotes.

3. Weekly newspapers

Check local and area newspapers for small news items that you can develop into long feature stories for a magazine. Look for brief articles about people who have received awards. The award itself may simply be the culmination of an interesting series of events or achievements leading up to it. For example, when an 82-year-old great-grandmother earned a college degree (which really happened), you can be sure there’s a story behind it.

4. Bulletin boards on campus or places of employment

Bulletin boards frequently contain notices of upcoming events, celebrity speakers, or meetings of clubs or organizations that pursue unusual activities. Celebrities who speak on college campuses may have more time while on campus than they do in their home surroundings. All you may have to do to obtain an interview is contact the sponsoring organization or department for the celebrity’s telephone or e-mail address.

5. Schedule of meetings and events in newspapers

Local and campus newspapers have a weekly or daily listing of all the self-help groups, support groups, and service clubs, with meeting times and contact numbers. For example, support groups exist for parents and siblings of murder victims, the mentally ill, and drug abusers. Divorced fathers who feel deprived of visitation rights can find a support group, as well as people trying to stop abusing their children, quit smoking, or overcome sex addictions. These groups may allow visitors if you promise to protect individual anonymity.

6. Television, radio, and Internet news broadcasts

Find a national news item you can write about from a local angle. For example, watch the *Oprah Show* to learn about issues on the minds of everyday people and then look for a local angle. Monitor the news and interest groups in online discussion groups on any subject that interests you. For example, go to Google.com, click on “Google groups,” and then type in key words for topics that interest you in order to find an online group discussing that topic. These newsgroups will give you the usernames and e-mail addresses, along with the comments of everyone who participates. I recently used Google groups to find an expert who became the key source for an article on electronic home automation in a national magazine.

7. Faculty biographies on departmental websites

“Colleges are the homes of some of the greatest minds in the country, and the freelance writer who doesn’t tap this source of free information is missing golden opportunities,” says author Dennis Hensley. “Ideas for articles will leap out at you as you read biographical sketches of faculty members. With an idea in mind, you can call upon a professor for information.”

One of the best ways to do this is simply go to the home page for any university. Click on the “academic departments” link and then find a department that interests you. Most departments will list the publications and accomplishments of their faculty members, along with their telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.

8. Websites that specialize in providing “expert” media sources

Many websites offer biographies and contact information for experts on various topics. You can browse through their list of topics to come up with ideas. Two of the best I’ve found are <www.guestfinder.com> and <www.yearbook.com>. I’ve had many students who had good telephone interviews with experts they located at these websites.

9. Old magazines

Magazines have certain perennial or “evergreen” topics that they write about at

least once a year. Look for seasonal articles related to holidays and anniversaries of major events. If you browse through enough issues, you can discover their perennial topics and come up with a fresh angle. Even if you don’t think you have a chance of selling that idea to a prestigious magazine, you can send a query on a similar topic to a competing but lesser-known magazine.

10. Suggestions from friends or colleagues

Ask a friend, teacher, or colleague, “Do you have any friends, relatives, or colleagues who are involved in anything newsworthy that I might be able to write about?” I told one of my magazine writing classes about an article on identity theft I was writing. A student mentioned that her uncle had become a victim of identity theft when a criminal tried to obtain a fraudulent loan using the uncle’s personal data. Her uncle became a source for an interview, and the incident appeared as the lead anecdote in the published article on identity theft.

11. A dictionary of clichés

Clichés can provide a ready-made source for an article idea, catchy title, and angle by changing a word or two. For example, instead of “Absence makes the heart grow fonder,” try doing an article on “Absence makes the heart go wander” describing the difficulty that couples face in maintaining long-distance relationships. Instead of “An accident waiting to happen,” write an article on “An accident waiting to go to court” about staged auto accidents that criminals use to commit insurance fraud. To get more ideas, borrow a dictionary of clichés from the library or buy one in any large bookstore.

12. Write about what you want to know, not what you know

Curiosity may kill cats, but it creates successful writers and journalists.

David E. Sumner is a professor of journalism and head of the magazine sequence at Ball State University. This article is adapted from the textbook *Action, Angle and Anecdotes: Feature and Magazine Writing* that he is currently writing while on leave.

THE MAGAZINE SYLLABUS

By Ted Spiker, Florida

In my Magazine Management class, I think it's important to try to convey that the business is fun and creative, so I've tried to create a syllabus designed like a magazine, using the same philosophies that magazines do. My purpose: Draw the reader into the class and try to set the tone for the semester. These are some of the elements I use. ♦

The back page: No information, just some inspiration.

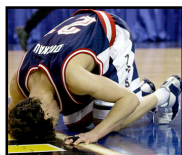
The cover: Quick cover lines—semi-serious and semi-satirical, like “Group Projects: Is there a better way to spend 77 hours in a row?”

The magazine world is **REAL SIMPLE**. For some, it's **GLAMOUR**ous. For the **Lucky**, you'll make a **FORTUNE**.

But the important **MAXIM** to remember is to put in the **TIME** and effort, and always pay attention to the **Details**.

The industry is filled with creative **People** and so much fun **Stuff** that it will make your head **SPIN**.

talk about a great **LIFE**.



Maxim captions:
These pictures appear in my section about ways you can earn and lose points. The caption reads, “Peter (right) came to every class. Sadly, Ron (above) didn’t.”



Fun art: ESPN The Magazine uses this technique of having pictures that digress or support the text.

Surprises: A good magazine has surprises sprinkled throughout. At the end of the syllabus, I bury this information and never mention it in class. Inevitably, some eager student e-mails me the answers about five minutes after we leave the first class.

Extra-Credit Opportunity #1:

The first person to e-mail me with the correct answers to these questions will receive 5 extra-credit points:
 >>>Who was the editor of *Talk* magazine?
 >>>What magazine won a 2003 National Magazine Award for General Excellence for magazines with a circulation of over 2 million?
 >>>Who appeared on the first cover of *Sports Illustrated*?
 >>>How many times do magazine titles appear on the syllabus (in logos and in the text)?

m a g a z i n e

MANAGEMENT

The Syllabus of JOU 4510

Fall 2003

SCORE

7 Ways to Ace the Course

50 REASONS TO COME TO CLASS

EXCLUSIVE:

* The Glossies: Inside the Biz

* Amazing Tricks You Can Do With a Three-Ring Binder

* FREE POINTS! See inside.

*Group Projects: Is there a better way to spend 77 hours in a row?



Latest Magazine News



The purpose of this course is to teach you about what it takes to be a **top editor** at a magazine. For the most part, we will deal with issues involving top editorial management. We will cover the roles of various editors and how they work with everyone from writers to art directors. We will explore the roles of senior editors, managing editors and editors-in-chief. We will also cover the business side of producing a magazine, including marketing, advertising and circulation. Much of the class will consist of discussion on how to solve conflicts common in the magazine industry.



BACK HOME ON THE RANGE

A year of cows, caregiving, and Comstock

By Bev Merrick, *New Mexico State*

FORMER PREZ UPDATE

Editor's note: The author, a former head of the Magazine Division, sent this dispatch about her experiences and adventures during her sabbatical.

I have just returned to New Mexico State University. This last college year, 2002-2003, I served as managing editor of the *Custer County Chief*, a Nebraska weekly with Community Newspaper Holdings Inc. We also published tabloids featuring magazine-type articles, including the award-winning 2003 Progress Edition, a beef tab, a tour guide, and home and gardening tab. I learned a lot!

Among my duties was setting editorial tone through a weekly column I called "Silence Dogood," named after the pseudonym of Ben Franklin, who as a youth slipped anonymous satirical essays of moral indignation under the door of the printing shop of his brother James's *New-England Courant*. I had good fun covering calvings and brandings on ranches in the Sandhills.

I enjoyed covering news events for the *Custer County Chief*, as well as delivering newspapers, serving as a photographer, and writing feature stories for a region that included a goodly portion of rural Nebraska's ranching country. I even interviewed cooks for the weekly "Cook of the Week" column. During blizzards, I stayed overnight in a local motel or slept on the newspaper's couch.

You can go home again.

I graduated from Kearney (Neb.) High School in 1963, and it is only several miles from where I worked for the newspaper.

Meanwhile, I had my hands full in other quarters as well. I am the caretaker of my elderly parents, Vola and Rosario Lamontagne, and I managed to not only save but restore their historical brick building—6,000 square feet of commercial space for business enterprises in the whistle-stop of Miller, Nebraska. The two-story building in the middle of the prairie has held up so well because it was originally constructed as a Model A and Model T showroom in the early 1920s. It has oak flooring and tin ceilings. We had to replace all the plumbing, electricity, heating, and

windows. It is now so very lovely!

My folks live in the back of the building in an efficiency apartment, which I helped them set up. Our business manager is opening a café there, called the Miller Depot, named after the 1890s train that chugged up the line across Nebraska. I managed to find a craftsman to make a wooden train 13 cars and 12 feet long to run across the counter. The day of the grand opening—August 23, 2003—coincided with an antique car show and volunteer firefighters barbecue.

During the summer, I was photographer and writing marketer of the Comstock Windmill Festival (40,000 concert-goers in a cow pasture), Comstock Rocks (45,000 in a cow pasture), and Godstock (Christian Rock Festival). You can find these enterprises at <www.comstockrock.com>.

Comstock is a village in the middle of the prairie. It is Nebraska's version of Woodstock. There were more than 1,000 campers and motor homes at the rock event. Custer Public Power had to set up extra generators for 500 of them to manage all the extra drain in electricity.

At the country and western windmill festival, we had Kenny Rogers, Randy Travis, the Oak

Ridge Boys, and Martina McBride among the 50 bands playing over the four-day weekend. I shot 60 rolls of film for the upcoming marketing of the book.

At the rock festival, which featured bands such as Blue Oyster Cult and Def Leppard, there were so many people packed into the pasture in the 100-degree heat that I thought we would have concert-goers suffering heat prostration. Fortunately, we did not. Most of the rockers watching the aging rockers on stage were between 13 and 25 years old—and scantily clothed.

You might have seen the third concert, Godstock, on CNN. A big wind came in the still night air and destroyed the stage within minutes. I had just finished shooting the performance below the front of the stage and was walking up the back ramp to the huge speakers, where I could get good pictures of the lead singer and drummer for Pillar, a Christian rock group, when all hell broke loose. The stage manager hollered, "Get the f___ off stage." Everyone was so shocked

(Continued on page 7)

TEACHING TIP

By Tracy Lauder, *Emory and Henry College*

When I teach a writing class with many assignments during the semester, I require that my students keep all the graded writing (bearing my comments) to present at a midterm, one-on-one consultation with me. I have found that when a bulk of work is reviewed as a whole, the student and I are able to identify writing concerns and strengths in "themes." Students usually find that fewer problems exist than they thought; those problems just occur frequently. The conferences seem to strengthen confidence in skills and provide a few target concerns to focus on for the remaining half of the semester.

DON'T BE SHY! SEND US A NEWSLETTER ITEM

Please send news, announcements, teaching or grading tips, and articles for *Magazine Matter* to Carol Schwalbe, Assistant Professor, Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Arizona State University, P.O. Box 871305, Tempe, AZ 85287-1305, or (preferably) via e-mail to ccschwalbe@asu.edu.

CALL FOR PAPERS



The Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER) is organizing an international conference on communication and mass media scheduled for May 24-26, 2004.

The registration fee of 150 euro covers admission to all sessions, two lunches, coffee breaks, and conference materials. Special arrangements will be made with local hotels for a limited number of rooms at a special conference rate. In addition, a number of special events will be organized, including a Greek night of entertainment and a special one-day cruise around the Greek islands.

The goal of the conference is to bring together scholars and students of communication, mass media, and related disciplines. Particular attention will be given to submissions that emphasize the impact of European enlargement and globalization on mass media and communication. Selected papers will be published in a special volume of the conference proceedings.

Please send a 300-word abstract by e-mail before December 15, 2003 to Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos, Director, ATINER, 14 Solomou Street, 10683 Athens, Greece; tel. + 30 210 383-4227; fax + 30 210 384-7734; e-mail atiner@otenet.gr. Abstracts should include the title of the paper, full name(s), affiliation, current position, e-mail address, and at least three keywords that best describe the subject of your submission.

MOST SUCCESSFUL STUDENT CONTEST EVER

A record 269 entries netted more than \$1,400 for the Magazine Division

By Carol Holstead, Kansas

STUDENT MAGAZINE CONTEST

This year's Student Magazine Contest was the most successful ever. With a record 269 entries

from universities across the United States and in Canada, the contest grossed \$2,690. After expenses, the contest netted more than \$1,400 for the Magazine Division.

Editors and publishers from 11 consumer and business-to-business magazines, including *Glamour*, *Dwell*, Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, and Slate.com, judged the contest. Categories include consumer magazine articles, business-to-business magazine articles, print and online magazines, and magazine startups.

Scott Fosdick ran the 2003 contest for Carol Holstead, who was teaching in Italy during the spring semester.

The deadline for the 2004 Student Magazine Contest is May 1. Look for the call for entries online after January 1, 2004, on the Magazine Division website <aejmc.magazine.bsu.edu>.

If you have recommendations for magazine pros who'd make good contest judges, please send me <holstead@ukans.edu> their names, addresses and phone numbers by March 1. I'll make every effort to call each person recommended as a judge, but given how hard it is to reach busy people these days, I can't guarantee that all judges recommended will be contacted.

RANGE (Continued from page 6)

by his use of the expletive that they ran for safety.

Several stagehands had been climbing up to release the top canopy to reduce the damage to the \$3 million setup. They jumped down the right way and somehow, miraculously, landed out of harm's way. The remaining part of the roof fell in another direction, toward the power lines. A 50-volt line snapped and wiggled around us, and someone helped me over a barbed wire fence. The speakers where I had planned to snap photos just a few moments before had fallen like dominoes.

It was nearly pitch dark and raining

1. Start-up Magazine Project: Team

First place: *Unique Living*, University of Missouri—Courtney Frank, Sadie Grabill, Erynn Hedrick, Annie Kettenbrink; Danita Allen, adviser

Second place: *Outdoor Kids*, Loyola College, Maryland—Katherine Tiernan, Kristin Haneschlager, Amy Petriello, Danielle Riordan; Andrew Ciofalo, adviser

Third place: *Access*, Boston University—Alison Cashin, Zoie Clift, Vanessa Franko, Kevin Joy, Clair Matheson, Matthew Richenthal, Nia Williams; Caryl Rivers, adviser

Honorable mention: *Handy Ma'am*, Loyola College, Maryland—Emily Moroni, Tamara Deckert, Sean Burns, Anna Koptiuch, Amy Thau; Andrew Ciofalo, adviser

2. Start-up Magazine Project: Individual

First place: *Last Call: The source in the bar business*, University of Kansas—Jegen McDermott; Sharon Bass, adviser

Second place: *Booster seat: Taking small daycares to a higher level*, University of Kansas—Maggie Rose Koerth; Sharon Bass, adviser

Third place: *Down to Earth: A guide to green living*, University of Kansas—Lindsey Hodel; Sharon Bass, adviser

3. Single Issue of an Ongoing Print Magazine: General Excellence

cats and dogs. I was soaked, and I feared for my new Nikon camera. I climbed into a nearby Pepsi truck, where I dried the lens with my undies, then climbed out and began snapping pictures.

The first person I encountered was a strange apparition—actually, a woman soaked to the skin, holding her arms up toward the stage in the dark, speaking in tongues—and invoking the hand of God to undo the work of the devil.

I got 50 interviews (and many pictures) that night—rock stars, rescue workers, stage personnel, event organizers, and many more.

Now I am back to nice, quiet New Mexico State. ♦

First place: *Vox*, November 14, 2002, University of Missouri—Beth Collins, editor; Scott Fosdick, adviser

Second place: *Orange & Blue*, Spring 2003, University of Florida—Dorian Wagner and Jessica Moats, editors; Ted Spiker, adviser

Third place: *Green Banana*, 2002, Humber College—Joel Hoidas, editor; Lynne Thomas, adviser

4. Single Issue of an Ongoing Print Magazine: Design

First place: *Green Banana*, 2002, Humber College—Joel Hoidas, editor; Terry Arnott, adviser

Second place: *Echo*, Winter/Spring 2003, Columbia College Chicago—Lisa Jevens, adviser

Third place: *Drake Magazine*, Drake University—Jenny Timson, art director; Patricia Prijatel and Angela Renkoski, advisers

5. Single Issue of an Ongoing Print Magazine: Editorial

First place: *The Burr*, Spring 2003, Kent State University—Jennifer Kovacs, editor; Ann Schierhorn, adviser

Second place: *Vox*, November 14, 2002, University of Missouri—Beth Collins, editor; Scott Fosdick, adviser

Third place: *515*, Drake University—Ann E. Young, editor; Patricia Prijatel, adviser

Honorable mention: *Orange & Blue*, Spring 2003, University of Florida—Dorian Wagner, editor; Ted Spiker, adviser

6. Online Magazine

First place: *The CyBurr*, <http://www.burr.kent.edu>, Kent State University—Jennifer Kovacs, editor; Ann Schierhorn, adviser

Second place: *Magazine World*, <http://magazines.humberc.on.ca/magworld2002>, Humber College—Clark Kim, editor; Terri Arnott, adviser

Third place: *The Way It Is*, <http://cronkitezone.asu.edu>, Arizona State University—Nancie Dodge, editor; Carol Schwalbe, adviser (Continued on page 8)

CONTEST (Continued from page 7)**7. Consumer Magazine Article: First Person**

First place: "Could We Start Again Please?" by Aislinn Maestas, Northwestern University; David Abrahamson, adviser

Second place: "The Man Who Was Once King," by Jocelyn Beyer, Northwestern University; David Abrahamson, adviser

Third place: "Cancerland," by Marin Heinritz, Boston University; Caryl Rivers, adviser

8. Consumer Magazine Article: People & Places

First place: "Closer to God," by Benjamin Leatherman, Arizona State University; Carol Schwalbe, adviser

Second place: "Silent Strength: A Profile of Nguyen Thi Anh," by Eric Phillips, Arizona State University; Carol Schwalbe, adviser

Third place: "First Year Blues," by Anna Scott, Boston University; Caryl Rivers, adviser

Honorable mention: "Got Lice?" by Nancie Dodge, Arizona State University; Carol Schwalbe, adviser

Honorable mention: "Frank Lloyd Wright Lives Here," by John Mahoney, Northwestern University; Bob McClory, adviser

9. Consumer Magazine Article: Investigation & Analysis

First place: "Surviving a Son," by Patrick Healy, University of Missouri; Jennifer Moeller, adviser

Second place: "Columbia Landfill," by Carolyn Szczepanski, University

of Missouri; Jennifer Moeller, adviser

Third place: "In the Line of Fire," by Karin Saghedjian, Ryerson University; Lynn Cunningham, adviser

10. Consumer Magazine Article: Service & Information

First place: "Cooking the Books," by Califa Suntree, Boston University; adviser: Caryl Rivers (See page 9)

Second place: "Battle of the Beds: Finding the Best Mattress for Guys," by Eugene Tagle, Trinity University; Sammye Johnson, adviser

Third place: "Traveling with Alzheimer's," by Adrienne Kovalsky, Northwestern University; Abe Peck, adviser

Honorable mention: "No Job, No Prob," by Alecia Pennington, Chandni Jhunjhunwala, Katie Meier, Jamie Nelson, and Callie Dunbar, Drake University; Patricia Prijatel and Angela Renkoski, advisers

11. Specialized Business Press Article

First place: "Writers' Block," by Tamara Slomka, Ryerson University; Lynn Cunningham, adviser

Second place: "Journalists and the People They Write About," by Anna Scott, Boston University; Caryl Rivers, adviser

Third place: "The Press and Enron," by Jordan Caleo Evangelist, Boston University; Caryl Rivers, adviser

Honorable mention: "World Domination," by Adria Vasil, Ryerson University; Lynn Cunningham, adviser

Honorable mention: "Riot," by Melanie Nayer, Boston University; Caryl Rivers, adviser

TRAVEL WRITING IN ITALY

Sam G. Riley of Virginia Tech will teach a travel writing course in Italy during spring term 2004. The program is run by the University of Kansas.

Several other universities, including Virginia Tech, also participate. Courses are offered in English. The campus is in the village of Paderno del Grappa, 45 miles north of Venice in the foothills of the Dolomite Alps.

Sam Riley will be there from January 22 until April 27 and would welcome guest speakers who have worked in travel writing or editing, should they be in the area. Riley will also offer a course in communication law and ethics.

Division member Carol Holstead of the University of Kansas taught in this program during spring term last year.

If you have students who might be interested in this international study experience, have them contact Cassie Cooper, Associate Director, Italy Programs, Consortium of Universities for International Studies, Kansas University School of Business, 1300 Sunnyside Avenue, Room 124, Lawrence, KS 66045. Her phone is 785-864-7576, and her e-mail is ccooper@ku.edu. You can reach Sam Riley at 540-231-7165 or at sriley@vt.edu.

CALL FOR ENTRIES

The History Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication is soliciting entries for its award for the best journalism and mass communication history book of 2003. The award is given annually. The winning author will receive a plaque and a cash prize at the August 2004 AEJMC conference in Toronto.

The competition is open to any author of a relevant history book, regardless of whether he/she belongs to AEJMC or the History Division. Authorship is defined as the person or persons who wrote the book, not just edited it. Only those books with a 2003 publication date will be accepted.

Compilations, anthologies, articles, and monographs will be excluded because they qualify for the Covert Award, another AEJMC History Division competition.

Entries must be mailed no later than February 2, 2004. Three copies of each book should be submitted, along with the author's mailing address, telephone number and email address, to Patrick S. Washburn, AEJMC History Book Award Chair, E.W. Scripps School of Journalism, Ohio University, Athens, OH 45701.

TEACHING TIP

By Carol Schwalbe, Arizona State

A former colleague at *National Geographic* magazine always squeezed in a sound and sight check when she was out in the field on assignment. She'd take time out from the whirlwind of reporting and interviewing just to listen and look, then record her observations.

When I cover detail and description in my Magazine Writing class, I have my

students do a sensory check. They have an hour to go somewhere on or near campus and record their sensory experiences (sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste), then come back to the classroom and write a descriptive scene incorporating as many of those elements as possible without going overboard. The students enjoy this exercise, especially since it gets them out of the classroom for a while. It also opens their eyes (and their other senses) to the details around them.

COOKING THE BOOKS

A cookbook publisher's multimedia success story

By Calafia Suntree, Boston

STUDENT CONTEST WINNER

Editor's note: This story won first place in the Consumer Magazine Article: Service & Information category in the division's 2003 Student Magazine Contest. The author's adviser at Boston University was Caryl Rivers.

Though Julia Child has abandoned Boston for the warmer climes of her home state, California, leaving a void in this city's culinary landscape, her position as a trusted guide in our kitchens has not been left vacant. In January of 2001, just across the Charles River from Child's Cambridge home, the Boston Common Press of Brookline, Massachusetts, premiered its television series *America's Test Kitchen* on PBS, which started its second season this year. The show was accessible last year to 76% of the public television market, an impressive debut that testifies to the American home cook's enduring craving for the sort of friendly, teacherly advice we got from Child for so many years.

The show is hosted by Christopher Kimball, the bow-tied, playfully professorial founder and editor-in-chief of the Boston Common Press. It's based on the model of the Press's popular magazine, *Cook's Illustrated*, and cookbooks, which include *The Best Recipe* series. Featuring science segments and equipment testing, "It's different from other TV shows," says Jessica Quirk, production manager for books and the magazine. "It appeals to people because they're learning." This pedagogical approach is a hallmark of the Press, which prides itself on its independence; *Cook's Illustrated* accepts no advertising, and the Press is a privately owned partnership. The Press also sees itself as diligent in pursuit of culinary truth in recipes, equipment, and ingredients. As the front cover of *The Best Recipe: Soups and Stews* (2001) challenges, "Would you test 23 chicken noodle soups, 40 corn chowders and 54 beef Burgundies to find the absolute best method for making over 200 soups and stews?" The editors and staff

chefs of the Boston Common Press would, "so you don't have to." This approach seems to be just what home cooks are looking for: the circulation of *Cook's Illustrated* increased 91.1 percent from 1996 to 2000, according to *The Boston Globe*, and is up from 430,000 in 2000 to over 590,000 today. *The Best Recipe*, the company's most popular volume thus far, has consistently appeared on the *Los Angeles Times's* Cookbook Hotlist since its release in 1999, ranking number nine in January of this year.

Occupying two floors of an anonymous brick former factory, the company has the feel of an Internet start-up that survived 1999, and flourished. Located above a karate school, up three flights of rickety stairs, the offices are sunny and modern, with pale wood floors, walls painted bold colors, and blue iMacs on every desk. Staff members in the various departments are relaxed and talkative, and the place hums with activity and conversation. Like those few 'new economy' ventures that succeeded, the company balances hipness and nerdiness, irreverence and serious business. Behind a life-size cardboard cutout of Austin Powers, a small group of men and women in gray suits sit around a conference table, poring over a stack of papers. On the door of a closet, a pink Post-It note cheerfully declares, "There is no order without chaos," but the editors have devoted themselves to keeping chaos at bay in America's kitchens with their meticulous taste tests and recipe trials, hoping their failures will translate into their readers' success.



At the Boston Common Press, staff chefs and editors such as Becky Hays meticulously test recipes, kitchen equipment, and ingredients.

There is a self-assurance to books with the words "the best" or "how to" or "bible" in them (as almost all B.C. Press books do), an assumed authority that would perhaps come off as gimmicky if the books were by any single author. But because of the team approach to book production, also modeled on the magazine, the Press has a troop of cooks and editors who will

stand behind each recipe, which imparts a certain credibility to those titles. One of the members of this team is Becky Hays, the managing editor for books and web, whose daily juggling of administrative and kitchen work is characteristic of the Press's expectations of its editors.

The day I visited the office, Hays had been working on "an unusual project": conducting a tasting of seven casserole recipes for the *Farmer's Almanac*. "I'm not sure how it came up, but we have a relationship with the *Farmer's Almanac*, and they're having a recipe contest, so they asked us to judge the contest." Hays, a slim young woman dressed for kitchen work in jeans and a ponytail, had never worked in publishing before she came to the Press two years ago. After studying economics in school, Hays worked on a trading floor for five years. "I was kind of at a turning point, where I was either going to really go for it or not, and decided not to." In a career move not unheard of in the '90s, Hays abandoned the world of finance to attend the Natural Gourmet cooking school in New York City, and then interned at *Saveur* magazine. She came to the Press from the Women's Lunch Place, a shelter for homeless women in Boston, and continues to teach cooking classes at a

(Continued on page 10)

COOKING (Continued from page 9)

Brookline community school.

Her fellow editors, whom she characterizes as having “lots of food knowledge,” are all as comfortable in the kitchen as they are at a desk. “I think when Chris [Kimball] is hiring people, he is more interested in their food skills. Certainly people have to have good writing skills, but I think in his eyes that’s almost secondary for most jobs.” The editorial offices are connected to the test kitchens by a narrow hallway, the walls covered floor to ceiling with shelves of baking pans, mixing bowls, dishes, and measuring cups. Bookshelves lining the editors’ cubicles and standing alone like kitchen islands in the colorful, airy office are filled with cookbooks of every variety. From this library, the editors research recipes, conduct tastings, and cobble together an original recipe from the best of the lot.

These tastings, conducted by the editorial team, are the backbone of all articles and recipes that make it to print. For the magazine and television show, they will test not only scores of recipes, but kitchen equipment and ingredients. The day I visited the test kitchen, Hays was participating in a salt tasting. “We’re tasting sea salts and kosher salts, a couple of different types of table salts.”

Their tasting method speaks to the thoroughness and brand-blind approach that has won over so many home cooks. Even salt is approached with the detailed rigor of a science experiment. “We’ll taste the salts in chicken broth, for example, and we’ll bring in the editorial staff, and everyone will have a little tray with maybe ten different chicken stocks each made with different salt. . . . We’ll taste each one and comment on each one, and then rank them in order of preference.”

As part of the tasting, the editors even tasted the salt in plain water to get the most accurate sense of flavor differences. The author of the article will compile the results, unveiling the brands only for publication, and list the editors’ favorites. “All of our tastings happen in the same way,” notes Hays. “They’re silent, we don’t talk to each other; they’re blind, we don’t know which salt is which when we’re tasting them.”

This method, to which the editors stick religiously, indicates the freedom they enjoy from commercial interests, which is key to

the trustworthiness of their findings and the popularity of their product. (After the magazine stopped accepting advertising, subscription rates doubled.) It also indicates the company’s research-driven approach to everything from risotto to business ventures. When you pick up a book or magazine they have produced, you can be assured that nothing in its conception or production has been left to chance. “Everyone in the department always tastes everything,” notes Hays, and it is their cumulative, carefully tallied opinions that make it to print.

And what makes it to the test phase is often determined by surveys of readers, who will be presented with “50 book titles to see which ones are the most appealing to them,” says Hays. What they publish is driven by those results, by what Kimball perceives to be what people will want. “We do Web surveys, we do mail surveys, sometimes we have people come in and do focus groups.” Not just the recipes are foolproof, it would seem, but so is the company’s business plan. Quirk notes that “the company is very healthy financially. They’re making the right decisions. They test everything, they market research everything. They have a good idea if something is going to be lucrative before they do it.”

Though the success of this scientific method as applied to the company’s business plan is, so far, beyond question, its value in the kitchen is open to debate. Journalists have repeatedly described Kimball’s approach to cooking as “obsessive,” which it undoubtedly is. In her 1998 feature on Kimball in *The Boston Globe*, food editor Sheryl Julian noted that Kimball, cooking at home, measured the chopped parsley for his potatoes, the dollop of capers that top the veal. Quirk observes, “The company is kind of thought of as uptight just because of our style, trying to get everything perfect, every little detail.” And their method does have its naysayers. One is Dr. Darra Goldstein, cookbook author and founding editor of *Gastronomica*, an academic journal for food and culture, who questions the benefit of such an unexperimental attitude toward cooking. Goldstein admits that Kimball “has a voice of authority that people really like.” But even though she herself is a professor of Russian literature at Williams College, she finds his recipes and method too didactic.



Boston Common Press books reflect the style, voice, and methods of its popular *Cook's Illustrated* magazine.

“It’s so prescriptive. For certain kinds of people, it ends up being limiting. . . . If people are insecure in the kitchen,” the pursuit of perfection might just inhibit them further. “If they felt as though they could play in the kitchen, they might be more inclined to cook.”

On the other hand, as Julian notes, Kimball’s no-nonsense persona has won him viewers on *America’s Test Kitchen*, and a readership that she describes as “a cult following.” For Julian, the *Globe*’s food editor and author of the forthcoming *New Boston Cookbook*, the bottom line is “you make his meat loaf, and it’s a great meat loaf.” The foodie elite seems to agree, as *The Cook’s Illustrated Complete Book of Poultry* won the prestigious James Beard award in May 2000 for Best Single Subject Cookbook. (Though published by Clarkson Potter, the book was produced by Press editors and contains six years’ worth of poultry testing in their kitchen, most of which never appeared in the magazine.)

Kimball founded the Boston Common Press in 1991 when he moved to South Boston with his wife, Adrienne, and their four children. He came to the city to take the helm of *East West Journal*, which is now *Natural Health* and no longer a holding of the Press. They moved here from Connecticut, where Kimball had founded *Cook’s Illustrated*’s predecessor, *Cook’s Magazine*, in 1980; the magazine was shuffled from corporation to corporation until Kimball left in 1989 and its last owner, S.I. (Continued on page 11)

COOKING

(Continued from page 10)

Newhouse Jr., stopped publication. After founding the Press, Kimball was able to relaunch the magazine in 1993 under its new name.

Eventually, they started releasing bound annuals, and the Press broadened its scope to cookbooks that reflect the magazine's style, voice, and methods. The first cookbook venture, the encyclopedic *The Best Recipe*, was released in 1999 and sold 25,000 copies in its first three months on the market, according to *Publishers Weekly*, even though its availability was initially limited to *Cook's Illustrated* subscribers and customers of Amazon.com. This volume, which still appears on best-seller lists, contains 700 recipes that were published in *Cook's Illustrated* between 1993 and 1999. The Press has since created a *Best Recipe* series, which includes this year's *American Classics* and *Soups & Stews* and last year's *Grilling & Barbecue*.

With expectations and their readership growing, the editorial team no longer looks exclusively to the magazine for content. "There's new research done both for the magazines and for the books," notes Quirk.

"I think it's starting to become an issue with our subscribers. They're starting to ask, 'Well, how much of this will be in what I already have? How much of this is new to me?'" As their production schedule intensifies, going from one book in 1999 to three this year, in addition to the magazine annual and index, so does the importance of having an effective team of food editors. Each year, as the *Cook's Illustrated* name becomes more influential, the editors at the Press work to maintain the trust of old readers and attract new ones.

Though Goldstein, Julian, and most journalists speak of the Press almost exclusively in terms of Kimball as a cook and as a personality, the cookbooks are always



Jessica Quirk does double-duty as unofficial proofreader and production manager of *Cook's Illustrated* magazine.

produced democratically by the editorial team and not individual authors. Kimball's vision and his buttoned-down image determine the company's direction and define its style, but the end products echo the voices of readers, editors, and staff members (who are sometimes invited to tastings to provide "the layman's opinion," says Quirk). Kimball does author cookbooks solo, such as *The Dessert Bible* and *The Cook's Bible*, but

these books are not produced by the Boston Common Press or affiliated with it. His publisher is Little, Brown & Co., also Boston based. Of the recently released *Dessert Bible*, Hays notes, "It wasn't happening in this test kitchen. It's not touted as coming from this kitchen. It's really just his recipes and his testing." Kimball's books are sold on the CooksIllustrated.com website but remain a separate project; in this way, Kimball maintains his position as one of America's most trusted cooks without impinging on the democratic system of his editors at the Press.

"There's an author for each recipe, but we gather everyone's opinion, and majority wins."

"The team approach is really how it works," observes Hays. "There's an author for each recipe, but we always gather everyone's opinion, and majority wins, even if the author may disagree." This system is a departure from the usual cookbook fare, which is often presented as the holy writ of one celebrity chef or another, who is usually taking credit for the labor of his staff of sous-chefs. (Just as the sculptor Rodin signed his name on his students' works if he liked them, such recipe lifting is accepted, even expected, practice.) Though Kimball has the ultimate word on a project, no one can dictate, or even predict, the outcome of hundreds of hours of recipe testing, consultation, and discussion. Notes Hays, "By the time a recipe's finished, the whole group hopefully likes it and is happy with it. Everyone approves. That's really important; that happens with everything that we do."

Outside the editorial department, the staff members of the Boston Common Press are encouraged to work together, contributing skills and opinions across the boundaries of cubicle walls and job titles. Quirk, who acts as the unofficial final proofreader for the magazine as well as the production manager, observes that "people work together interdepartmentally. People pitch in on someone else's work if it's really crucial to the company." She cites an example of a recent trade show, *Boston Cooks*. "Really, that's very much a sales and marketing kind of thing. But they asked for volunteers, and a lot of other people from other departments . . . volunteered their time on the weekend to go in and help sell and market our products. . . . People believe in what we do, and it's a product they can be proud of."

This atmosphere of camaraderie and loyalty to the product, which Quirk describes as a feeling of "ownership," suggests that the team approach doesn't only work in the kitchen but at all levels of production and sales. Because the Press relies on subscriptions and book sales for all its revenue, the readers are also granted that sense of ownership; the company, though privately held, must treat its readers like stockholders of sorts in order to keep its success going. The ever-growing success of the Press suggests that this nontraditional business model, based on consensus and cooperation, may be more pot of gold than pipe dream.

However unconventional its approach to publishing and commerce may be, the stock and trade of the Boston Common Press is traditional American comfort foods. Julian describes the fare on *America's Test Kitchen* and in the magazine and books as "baby boomers' childhood foods," and observes that "there's a nostalgic quality to [Kimball's] cooking." Circulation is about equal on both coasts, reflecting population density more than regional taste, but the recipes are for the most part a far cry from the sort of nouvelle or fusion cuisine commonly associated with the West coast and European-trained New York chefs. Julian warns, "Don't read anything Christopher Kimball is publishing" if you are interested in food "shaped like a tepee with a fried scallion sticking" *(Continued on page 12)*

COOKING (Continued from page 11)

out of it.” Hays admits that they “probably do more sort of New Englandy recipes than a company in California would do.” But, she notes, “the whole style of the magazine is home cooking, American recipes, recipes that everyone’s familiar with, that we take and bring to their highest level.”

Kimball is emphatic about the importance of home cooking as both an activity and a culinary style, a repertoire of recipes and ingredients. As he told *USA Today*, “I’m a great believer in tradition and in making pot roast once a month.” And while he takes aim at fast food, as far as it has undermined home cooking, he is not interested in cooking light either. In an appearance on the *Early Show* in March of this year,

Kimball and Bryant Gumbel made a “fast, easy breakfast” of mushroom omelettes cooked in knobs of butter, oven-fried bacon, and biscuits made with over a cup of heavy cream. Clearly, helping Americans lose weight

is not Kimball’s concern, nor is he interested in leading them to novel or exotic flavors. Rather, Kimball and his team of cooks and editors work at helping American cooks rediscover and improve old favorites, and look for the best in even the most banal ingredients. Kimball is unequivocal about tradition and blames culinary elitism as much as McDonald’s for the decline in our national diet.

He told an interviewer at the *Seattle Times* that, “To a large extent, I think gourmet cooking has been bad for our culture because it has downgraded home cooking.” The entire *Cook’s Illustrated* enterprise is decidedly un-snobbish and for the most part un-gourmet. (On the website recently, they published the results of their peanut butter tasting: Skippy took top honors.) For better or worse, these recipes will generally not ask you to venture beyond your local supermarket to farmers markets or specialty food shops; they focus on is what is known and readily available to most cooks in this country. But in so doing, their aim is to celebrate and refine traditional fare.

It is perhaps surprising, given Kimball’s emphasis on tradition, that the Boston Common Press has embraced multimedia with such gusto, launching a website for the television program and expanding their main site. As with their method of production, their approach to the Web has been unconventional, relying on their readers to keep it going. Like public television, which airs *America’s Test Kitchen*, *CooksIllustrated.com*, the company’s main website, is subscriber based and entirely free of advertising. There are no ubiquitous, irritating banners hawking other websites or dream vacations, and it is refreshingly content heavy.

“Most publishing companies, and in fact most companies, have realized the importance of the Web, and what it can do for their company,” observes Quirk. “So

they’ve developed a website, and sometimes they have it so the website fulfills different functions,” such as PR or sales. “We have these websites that are almost more of an extension of the magazine or the books.

They’re not so much about the company, but more about content. And I think a lot of publishing companies aren’t doing that.” Though the subscription system is unusual, it has been a success; the site has nearly 20,000 subscribers, at \$24.95 per year, and registered one million hits per month last year. “A lot of people scoff at the whole idea of charging for the website,” observes Quirk. But based on the steady increase in subscribers, whose ranks grow every month, Quirk declares, “We’re doing something right.”

Hays, who is also managing editor for the websites, notes that while the sites do emphasize content, they are an important platform for marketing. The main site has an online bookstore, whose sales accounted for half the site’s revenue in 2001, according to *Emarketing* magazine, and it is one of the only places their cookbooks are advertised. Says Hays, “We’ll also push certain cookbooks on the home page of the website, saying, ‘This is our newest one. This is what is appropriate for the season.’” Though it would seem that the plethora of free recipes and information online might

pose a significant threat to cookbook publishers, Hays is unconcerned and has faith in the loyalty of their readers. “People go to the Web because they want something quick, because they’re surfing, or they’re trying to find a recipe. Maybe they want to look up a lot of different sources. But I think people still want the actual book. They want to have it in their library, give it as a gift.” Though the company is increasingly invested in multimedia ventures, it still relies on the enduring charm of old-fashioned bricks-and-mortar publications.

At the end of my visit, Hays brought in two tiny cups of risotto left over from a tasting, and showed me the pages-long packet that tasters are given to complete. I vacuumed every grain of rice out of the paper cups, and scanned the packet, immediately realizing that I had eaten much too quickly to answer even a handful of the subtle qualitative questions (which ask tasters, for instance, to rate the dish’s “mouth feel”). It was hard to drag myself out of the gleaming test kitchen and cozy offices, redolent of sautéed wild mushrooms and butter, and back onto the wintry Boston street. But I felt suddenly better knowing the editors and chefs of the Boston Common Press were there, patiently analyzing each bite, trying and retrying dozens of recipes and ingredients. And all so I don’t have to. ♦

FUTURE MEETING SITES**AEJMC**

The following cities have been selected for future AEJMC conventions:

2004 Toronto August 4-7
2005 San Antonio August 10-14

For more information, visit the AEJMC website at <www.aejmc.org>.

AJHA

The following cities have been selected for future American Journalism Historians Association conventions:

2004 Cleveland October 22-25
2005 San Antonio TBA

For more information, visit the AJHA website at <www.ajha.org>.

ABE PECK RECEIVES AWARD

Honored as Magazine Division's Educator of the Year

By Carol Zuegner, Creighton University

Let the magazine light shine. That's the message from Abe Peck, the Magazine Division's Educator of the Year for 2003. The Sills Professor of Journalism at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, Peck chairs the magazine program. He received the award at the members' meeting during the AEJMC convention in Kansas City in August.

Peck called it ironic that he received the award this year, when he has spent much of his time with a magazine readership project at Northwestern's Media Management Center. He is excited about the project with the Magazine Publishers Association and encouraged Magazine Division members to check www.readership.org later this fall to

see the results of the survey.

At a time when the media industry is being buffeted by significant challenges, Peck said magazine programs are flourishing. "We are coming into our own."

Loren Ghiglione, dean of the Medill School, said Northwestern students and alumni know Peck cares about them. "He has his values right," Ghiglione said. "He's a great human being as well as a great journalism educator."

Peck has written and edited for a number of magazines, including *Rolling Stone* and *Outside*. He has served as a consultant for a number of publications. He has written, edited, or contributed to ten books, including *Uncovering the Sixties: The Life and Times of the Underground Press*. ♦

CALL FOR ARTICLES

Our division's scholarly publication, *The Journal of Magazine and New Media Research*, available online at www.aejmc.magazine.org/journal, is eager to publish your research. Please refer to the Submission Guidelines section of the website for details.

150 MAGAZINES FOR ONLY \$4.95 A MONTH

From David Sumner: Louis Borders, founder of Borders Books, launched www.keepmedia.com, a Web venture that allows users to read content and archives of more than 150 magazines for a \$4.95 monthly fee (there's a free 30-day trial subscription). The site has an intelligent database that tracks what subscribers read and uses that information to steer them to related content. According to *Folio* magazine (August 2003, page 16), "In effect, it creates a second market for magazine stories, not unlike a foreign release for films." David signed up for the trial subscription and so far thinks it's worth the price.

BUSINESS MEETING REPORT FROM KANSAS CITY

Thanks for "a fruitful year"; calls for papers and new members

By Brian Thornton, Northern Illinois

Magazine Division members met for the division's annual business meeting July 30 at 8:30 p.m. in Kansas City.

- Abe Peck received a plaque in honor of his selection as Magazine Educator of the Year.

- Scott Fosdick announced the winners of the Student Magazine Contest and handed out certificates of award. Each award winner's name was announced. Awards were presented to those in attendance. School representatives accepted awards for those unable to attend.

- Steve Thomsen announced the winners of the best student and faculty research papers.

- Outgoing division head Joe Bernt thanked the division for a fruitful year. He gave special thanks to the division officers for their efforts. He asked everyone to help recruit new members in the coming year and urged everyone to participate.

- Carol Zuegner reported that the convention had succeeded in putting together interesting PF&R and teaching panels for the Kansas City convention.

- Steve Thomsen said a total of 30

research papers were judged for the division this year, and 18 papers were accepted. Of those 18 papers, 10 were from faculty. Faculty submissions totaled 19, and 10 of those faculty papers were presented. Students submitted 11 papers, and 8 of those were accepted.

- Scott Fosdick reported 269 entries in the Student Magazine Contest.

- David Sumner called for research papers for the Southeast Colloquium (March 4-6, 2004), which will be hosted by the University of South Florida. David will coordinate the judging of papers for the Magazine Division for the upcoming colloquium (see page 1). He reminded members of the November 28 submission deadline and encouraged all researchers to participate and send entries to him.

- Carol Zuegner called for nominations and the election of officers for the coming year. After nominations, Carol was elected division head, with Brian Thornton vice head and program chair. Other officers include:

Newsletter editor

Carol Schwalbe
Arizona State University

PF & R Committee Co-chairs

Ted Spiker
University of Florida

Lynn Cunningham
Ryerson School of Journalism

Teaching Standards Chair

Dane Claussen
Point Park University

Research Paper Competition Chair

Carol Fletcher
Hofstra University

- David Sumner generously agreed to continue as webmaster for the division website.

- New business: There was a brief discussion of the possible need to raise division membership dues, but this idea was tabled for later discussion. All members were urged to attend next year's convention, which will be held August 4-7 in Toronto.

A motion to adjourn was seconded and unanimously approved. The meeting ended at 10 p.m. ♦

MAGAZINE DIVISION OFFICERS AND CHAIRS 2003-2004

Head

Carol Zuegner
Creighton University
Department of Journalism and Mass
Communication
2500 California Plaza
Omaha, NE 68178
402-280-4059
402-280-1494 (fax)
czuegner@creighton.edu

Vice Head

Brian Thornton
Department of Communication
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, IL 60115
thornton.b@comcast.net

Secretary (and Midyear Program Chair)

Steve Thomsen
Department of Communication
F-366 HFAC
Brigham Young University
Provo, UT 84602
801-422-2078 (work)
801-361-5697 (cell)
srt2@email.byu.edu

Co-chair, Professional Freedom & Responsibility Committee

Ted Spiker
College of Journalism and
Communication
3059 Weimer Hall
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611
352-392-6990
tspiker@jou.ufl.edu

Co-chair, Professional Freedom & Responsibility Committee

Lynn Cunningham
On sabbatical 2003-2004
Director
Magazine Program
Ryerson School of Journalism
350 Victoria Street
Toronto, ON M5B 2K3
416-203-0803 (2003-2004)
lcunning@acs.ryerson.ca

Chair, Teaching Standards

Dane Claussen
Journalism and Mass
Communication
Point Park University
201 Wood Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15222-1984
412-392-3412
412-392-3917 (fax)
dclaussen@ppc.edu (office e-mail)

Chair, Research Committee

Carol Fletcher
Hofstra University
Department of Journalism and
Mass Media Studies
Hempstead, NY 11549-1000
516-463-6464
carol.t.fletcher@hofstra.edu

Assistant Chair, Research Committee (Midyear Research Chair) and Webmaster

David Sumner
Department of Journalism
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306
dsumner@bsu

Newsletter Editor

Carol Schwalbe
Walter Cronkite School of Journalism
and Mass Communication
Arizona State University
P.O. Box 85287-1305
Tempe, AZ 85287
480-965-3614
cschwalbe@asu.edu

Co-Chair, Student Magazine Contest

Carol Holstead
School of Journalism
1435 Jayhawk Boulevard
University of Kansas
Lawrence, KS 66045
785-864-7628
holstead@ku.edu

Co-Chair, Student Magazine Contest

Carolyn Lepre
Department of Journalism
California State University, Chico
343 Tehama Hall
Chico, CA 95929
CLepre@csuchico.edu

Chair, Membership

Cathy Johnson
Communications, Drama and
Journalism
Angelo State University
2601 West Avenue North
San Angelo, Texas 76909
915-942-2125
Cathy.Johnson@angelo.edu



FALL 2003 VOL 23, NO 2

Editor: Carol Schwalbe
Designer: Elizabeth Baldacchino

Copyright The Newsletter of the Magazine Division
of the Association for Education in Journalism and
Mass Communication. All rights reserved.

Published two times during the school year at the
Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass
Communication, Arizona State University.

Articles are welcome. Please send them to Carol
Schwalbe, Cronkite of Journalism and Mass
Communication, Arizona State University, Tempe,
AZ 85287-1305. E-mail is preferred.