



clio

Newsletter of the History Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication

History Division releases AEJMC convention details

This year the Division marks an important milestone with “The Covert Award Anniversary: Celebrating 20 Years of Excellence in Media History Scholarship,” scheduled for 3:15 p.m., Thursday, August 5.

Co-sponsored by the Graduate Education Interest Group, this panel will offer graduate students and other media scholars a chance to meet and learn from some of the winners of the Covert Award, presented each year to the best published journalism history article.

The award is named for Cathy Covert, who was the first woman to head the History Division and, in fact, was the first woman to head any AEJMC division. She was a professor for many years at Syracuse University. This panel will include former award winners, major scholars in media history who will talk about the future of the field. Karen List, who runs the annual competition, will moderate.

Historical documentaries

“Referencing the Past in Documentaries” is co-sponsored by the Radio-Television Journalism

Division. Moderated by documentarian Denise Matthews of Eastern Connecticut State University, this session is scheduled for 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, August 4.

The dynamic qualities of visual media for conveying historical narrative notwithstanding, are they too superficial to communicate history’s depth, detail and ambiguities? This panel of communication historians and documentarians will explore this question. Some experts argue that it is impossible to put history into the moving image format, because the scale is too small and the tools are too blunt and imprecise. Thus ambiguities and complexities are omitted because audiences can’t follow abstract twists and turns on screen.

Others warn of the visual challenge to realizing historical documentary on the screen and sternly steer students away from reliance on the narrator and talking head. The story must be visual. However, some historians disagree that film is an inferior medium for history, and contend that the nonlinear storytelling strengths of

See Details, page 2



*notes
from the head*

Set sail for Toronto

By Janice Hume
University of Georgia

Plans for the 2004 convention in Toronto are falling quickly into place. I’d like to take this opportunity to fill you in on what has already happened, and what will happen in the coming months.

History Division Vice Head Patricia McNeely (University of South Carolina) and I attended the AEJMC mid-winter meeting held December 6 and 7 in Atlanta. The trip for me was easy -- just a quick 90 minutes from home to hotel, unlike last year’s cross-country trek to Palo Alto -- but I was still nervous about what would happen at the infamous “chip auction.”

This was particularly true because the responsibility this year for getting good time slots for panels and refereed paper sessions fell to me. Pat’s job was to learn the ropes for next year.

See Notes, page 6

Winter '04 **clio 1**

Details, from page 1

visual documentary may contribute dimensions of understanding that are impossible to achieve with written history alone.

This session will bring together scholars from a variety of mass communication disciplines and will address important aspects of this controversy including: Do the visual media omit historical depth and detail to the point of distortion? When do the strengths of the visual media outweigh its deficiencies in conveying historical narrative? What criteria should be considered in making the choice between print and visual media to convey history? How are audiences differently served by print and visual historical narrative?

Book publishing

The session "How to Get Your Book Published" is co-sponsored by the Public Relations Division and scheduled for 5 p.m., Friday, August 6. Patricia McNeely of the University of South Carolina will moderate.

The session will cover the ins and outs of academic book publishing. Included will be an author who actually is making hefty royalties, another who has worked in conjunction with the History Channel, and another who has published multiple books in one genre. Topics will include tips for finding publishers, surviving the publication process, self-marketing, and ensuring your book helps (and doesn't hurt) the tenure process.

Web logs

David Abrahamson of

Winter '04 *clio* 2

Northwestern University will moderate the session scheduled for 3:15, Saturday, August 7, "From the Many to the Many: The Evolution of Web Logs and their Journalistic Promise." This panel is co-sponsored by the Magazine Division.

With all the current emphasis on media "convergence" and erosion of the traditional boundaries of media forms, this may be the appropriate time to examine the Web Log (or "Blog") phenomenon: its historical antecedents and the ways it mirrors similar forms from the past; its controversial status as a journalistic genre; its power as both a political and social (read: pop cultural) force; and its future prospects. The panel will foster a conversation from a variety of perspectives, about how and why this phenomenon has occurred, as well as how such personal long-form journalism has shaped both the past and perhaps the future of journalism.

Media myths

A session called "Myth and Media History," co-sponsored by the Cultural and Critical Studies Division, will begin at 10 a.m., Saturday, August 7, with Joseph Campbell of American University as moderator.

The understanding of at least some periods of U.S. media history has been blighted by myth. The examples are many and include: News coverage and Vietnam (it didn't hasten the end of the U.S. military presence there), the yellow press and the Spanish-American War (Hearst and Pulitzer's newspapers didn't foment that conflict), and the effects of the penny press in the 1830s (they weren't so decisive, as some histo-

rians have claimed). And bra-burning at the Miss America pageant in the mid-1960s was a media "event" that never happened -- but which nonetheless has left an indelible mark.

This panel will discuss those and other examples of myth and media history and assess: (1) why such myths are so enduring, (2) what explains their continuing appeal, even though many of them have been seriously challenged or debunked, and (3) what obligations do media historians have in actively seeking to making sure that understanding of U.S. media history is not distorted by myth?

Women and work

Karla Gower of the University of Alabama will moderate the session "Women's Work: The Influences of Ideas in Women's Movements," co-sponsored by the Commission on the Status of Women. The panel will begin at 10 a.m., Wednesday, August 4. The Paris Exposition of 1900 is said to have sparked the spread of American social reform ideas in Europe. However, in *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in the Progressive Era*, Daniel T. Rodgers argues quite the opposite, that American reformers were inspired by continental reform efforts. It is clear that social movements initiated by and for American women not only have encompassed a range of issues over time, including temperance, suffrage, labor, education, immigration, poverty, birth control, abortion rights, family leave, human rights, and crime, but that many of these efforts have had resounding effects on American

See Details, page 15

Far away and personal

Generating enthusiasm for history proves ‘relative’

By Colleen Callahan
University of Wisconsin
— River Falls

If you want students to get excited about historical research, try personalizing it by bringing their relatives into the picture.

For the past five years, I’ve assigned a comparative analysis called “18th Birthdays” to students in my undergraduate History of Mass Communication class. They analyze a newspaper published on the 18th birthday of a great grandparent, grandparent, parent, and their own. The response has been overwhelmingly positive. Making it personal seems to be the key to get them excited about media history.

“This project of researching older newspapers and media was presented with an interesting side other than just doing research on old papers,” wrote Allison. “I really liked being able to see what the times were like when they were turning 18 and entering adulthood.”

Students select an area of study: front pages, advertising, business news, sports, features, or layout and design. They are to find differences and similarities throughout the decades and provide rationales based on text readings, lectures, and their own logical suppositions.

An interview with one of the relatives whose birthday was chosen is also required. The objective is to compare media use between

generations. Although the interview is not graded, assignments without one are downgraded. So far, every student has turned in an interview. But that’s probably because it’s the “fun” part—having a serious conversation with a parent, grandparent, or in some cases, a great grandparent.

‘This project of researching older newspapers and media was presented with an interesting side other than just doing research on old papers.’
— Allison

“I had a lot of fun doing this project because my great grandmother is really funny,” wrote Katie. “This reunion could be the last time I see her and I am glad that I got to sit down, one-on-one with her and talk about how things used to be.”

Appreciation, respect, understanding, connections (all those elusive results we teachers work toward) are some of the words students use to describe the assignment’s impact.

“After looking back at the past 80 years, I have a little more appreciation for the resources I have at my disposal,” wrote Eric.

Christine enjoyed linking four generations of women in her fami-

ly: “It gave me a special connection with them that I previously never had, seeing what the world was going through on our 18th birthdays.”

We always take time in class to go over the findings, and this is the “fun” part for me because we end up digging deeper.

One student discovered a huge jump in classified ads seeking child care in the early 1940s, launching a discussion about women in the workforce during World War II, as well as the wealth of information available in classifieds for social research. Another noted the sexist language pre-1980s and we ended up talking about the power of words and the media’s reflection of society. We’ve delved into the reasons for front pages being filled with AP copy, the varying length of stories, the inclusion of first person in earlier news stories, the lack of coverage on minorities, the influence of new technologies on content and design, and countless other observations.

The interview segment adds another layer of insight for students.

Debra wrote that “mass media is something that created unity with people across the world and amazingly enough, it united my mother and I [sic] through talking
See Enthusiasm, page 4

Mid-Atlantic ASA to focus on mass media

Historical perspectives on North American media and communications will be the focus of the Middle Atlantic American Studies Association annual conference to be held April 2-3 at and near Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pa.

Conference organizers called for papers, panels and other presentations on journalism, literature, and print culture; film, radio, Hollywood, television, and video culture; new media, the internet, and cyberspace. Specific suggestions included: war and nation-

alism; the Lehigh Valley—from the German press to images of industrialization & deindustrialization; globalization; reality TV; electoral politics and the news; sex, pornography, and gender; privacy and censorship; visual culture of New York City; spectatorship; marketing and the creation of target audiences; media and historical consciousness; underground press and internet; youth culture; and social movements and political activism in and through media.

The keynote address will given

by Mark Crispin Miller, Professor of Culture and Communication at New York University and author of *Boxed In: The Culture of TV* (1988) and *The Bush Dyslexicon: Observations on a National Disorder* (2002).

More information is available from John Pettegrew, American Studies Program; Lehigh University, 9 W. Packer Avenue; Bethlehem, PA 18015-3081; jcp5@lehigh.edu.

Journal solicits book reviews on narrative journalism

Points of Entry, a journal dedicated to publishing critical examinations on and original pieces of narrative literary journalism, is seeking book reviews on examples of the genre for its third issue, due out in Fall 2004.

The reviews should be between 1,000 and 1,500 words in length. The deadline for the next issue is May 1, 2004, but reviews will be accepted on a continuing basis for future issues. The journal encourages narrative writing in journalism by serving as an arena for exchange between journalists, teachers, students and storytellers.

The reviews may be on either contemporary or historical examples of the genre. If historical, reviews should reflect at least a passing familiarity with the critical perspectives on a work, as well as contribute new insights. In addition, thoughtful reviews of existing published scholarship or other critical perspectives on the form will also be

considered.

Essays may be informal or formal, but should bear in mind in tone and style the journal's purpose as a meeting ground for different perspectives.

Hardcopy submissions should be sent to: John C. Hartsock, Book Review Editor, *Points of Entry*, Department of Communication Studies, SUNY Cortland, P.O. Box 2000, Cortland, NY 13045-0900.

E-mail queries should be directed to: hartsockj@cortland.edu. If a review is accepted it must be submitted electronically in Word format. General queries about the publication should be addressed to: Terry Lee, Editor, *Points of Entry*, Department of English, 1 University Place, Christopher Newport University, Newport News, VA 23606. General e-mail inquiries may also be directed to: tlee@cnu.edu.

Enthusiasm, from page 3

about our uses of it in our own generations." Amanda was struck by how much she and her mother are alike. "It's weird to see how similar we were at the same age with two decades difference between us," she wrote.

Students may select a daily or weekly newspaper—from a major city or small town—and must use the same paper through out the generations, if possible.

A number of students in our area choose their weekly hometown paper. Because the archives tend to be sporadic, students may not find an issue dating back to great grandparents in their hometown papers. In that case, I allow them to use a different paper comparable in size (daily or

weekly) to use for the great grandparent.

The only suggestion for improvement I've received is to advise students to carry lots of nickels for the microfilm copy machines.

The assignment is 15 percent of the final grade. It's not meant to be an in-depth term paper; its purpose is to introduce them to some of the threads that connect the past to the present, and get them excited about "doing research on old papers."

This assignment clearly achieves both. Each time I give this assignment, I think about the key ingredient — making it personal — and wonder what other projects I can unlock for my students.

Callahan is chair of the Department of Journalism at University of Wisconsin — River Falls, colleen.a.callahan@uwrf.edu

Call for judges

AEJMC History Division
Toronto, Canada Convention
August 4-7, 2004

The AEJMC History Division needs judges to review papers submitted for presentation at the 2004 AEJMC convention in Kansas City. Papers will be sent to judges shortly after the April 1, 2004, submission deadline. Judges will have two weeks to evaluate them.

The Division's judging form has been simplified, allowing more room for written comments. Judges may not submit papers to the History Division but may submit to other AEJMC divisions. If you are willing to serve as a judge, please contact

the research chair by February 25, 2004:

Pat McNeely
AEJMC History Division Research Chair
School of Journalism
and Mass Communications
University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC 29208
803-777-3303
mcneely2000@yahoo.com

You may return this form by mail or email your reply.

Please provide the following information:

Name: _____

Title: _____

School: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Areas of expertise (please choose and number your top four areas from this list):

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> Biography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural/Intellectual | <input type="checkbox"/> Government/Politics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Minority | <input type="checkbox"/> Quantitative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> Broadcasting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economics | <input type="checkbox"/> Historiography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Multicultural | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> Content (coverage) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ethics | <input type="checkbox"/> Institutional |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newspapers | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> Content (style/method) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Film | <input type="checkbox"/> International |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Progressive | <input type="checkbox"/> Visual Communication |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative Media | <input type="checkbox"/> Media Criticism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frontier | <input type="checkbox"/> Journalism Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations | |

Notes, from page 1

She has her hands full now running the refereed paper competition.

Those of you who haven't paid attention to how the August convention is programmed might be amazed to see your division heads or program chairs sitting around a large square of tables, throwing poker chips into the center of the room.

But that's exactly how it's done, and believe it or not, the system works pretty well. Each division is allotted a certain number of chips, and each time you call for a time slot you give up one chip. The tricky part is not scheduling two History Division events at the same time, and for your panel and research session co-sponsors to do the same.

To make things fair, each division takes turns, with the first bidder picked by random drawing. That way, every division or interest group gets some prime spots, and everyone gets some of those awful crack-of-dawn or evening sessions.

To be honest, it's the pre-planning that keeps the whole thing from falling into utter chaos. Ideas for panels have to be nailed by September or October and co-sponsorships should be agreed upon before the meeting.

Immediately upon arrival at the mid-winter meeting, all the players in this game start negotiating the best days and times for panels already agreed-upon by phone or e-mail during the fall semester.

Most of this wheeling and dealing is done at a dessert reception that goes late on Saturday evening. By the time the actual auction starts early Sunday morning, most of the hard work is done. The trick is to strategize and not waste a bid by picking one slot too early, or lose a good time slot because you waited too late.

This year, the History Division will take the lead in co-sponsoring six panels, and will sponsor or co-sponsor eight competitive research sessions at the conference scheduled for August 4 to 7.

Unfortunately if you have a great panel idea, it's too late for this year's conference, but be sure to propose it early for the 2005 convention in San Antonio. Of course, the deadline for submitting research papers is always April 1.

There's a longer article in this edition of *Clio* detailing this year's panels, but let me here encourage you to mark your calendars and try to attend each of them. We will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Covert Award, which is given annually for the best published history article.

This session will not only celebrate Cathy Covert's legacy, and years of great historical scholarship, but it will give graduate students a chance to meet and learn from top media historians.

Other sessions will explore the ethical considerations of writing and producing historical documentaries, and will offer tips on getting your media history book published. Still others will foster discussions on Web logs ("blogs"), myths in journalism and

the influence of ideas in women's movements. Panel sessions are meant to be interactive, so plan to come and participate!

If you aren't going to send refereed paper this year, but would like to get involved, please consider serving as a reviewer for the paper competition. Pat McNeely will call for volunteers, and she'll need as many as possible. Last year we were fortunate enough to have a tremendous submission rate, and it took more than 40 judges to get the job done. Reviewing takes time and effort, but is so important to ensure the success and quality of our history sessions in August. If you'd like to volunteer, e-mail Pat at <mcneely2000@yahoo.com>. Thank you in advance for your hard work.

The next few months will be busy ones. With the help of those who proposed our six accepted panels, we'll be inviting speakers and making final plans for those sessions. Those of you who plan to submit your research for the competitive paper session will be busy pulling those papers together to make the April 1 deadline. Research chair Pat McNeely and her volunteer reviewers will then move into high gear to determine what papers are accepted for the conference. Check the AEJMC bulletin and Web site for information about travel and accommodations in Toronto. August is just around the corner!

Billings AJHA Convention featured new format

**By James McPherson
Whitworth College**

A new convention format greeted the more than 100 members of the American Journalism Historians Association who participated in the organization's 2003 national convention in Billings, Mont.

Under the new convention format, paper and panel sessions were cut from 75 minutes to 60 minutes. Even though the number of participants per paper session was reduced from four to three, the change allowed for 12 more participants overall, and two more sessions per day.

In all, 36 papers were presented (of 73 submitted), and nine panels were held. A survey con-

ducted after the convention found overwhelming approval for the change.

One of the annual highlights of the AJHA convention is a Friday afternoon historical tour. The most recent tour took conventioners to the Little Horn Battlefield National Monument and to Pompey's Pillar (where inscriptions are left from the Lewis and Clark expedition). Other activities included the annual auction, which raised \$1,585 for grad student travel expenses.

Ford Risley (Penn State University) was elected new second vice president, and will become AJHA president in two years. Four new board members (one completing a partial term)

also were elected.

Michael Murray (University of Missouri-St. Louis) won the organization's highest recognition, the Sidney Kobre Award.

The board voted to name its annual dissertation award for Margaret Blanchard (University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill) – especially appropriate this year, as one of her students won the award.

The 2004 convention will be in Cleveland, Ohio (with the convention hotel next door to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame), Oct. 20-23, and the 2005 convention will be in San Antonio, Texas.

For more information about AJHA or its activities, see www.berry.edu/ajha.



clio

AMONG THE MEDIA

Editor: Dane S. Claussen (Point Park University)

Layout & Design: Michael J. Burke (Point Park University)

Webmaster: Kittrell Rushing (Tennessee- Chattanooga)

Clio Among the Media is published quarterly by the History Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

During the 2003-2004 year, it was produced in the Journalism and Mass Communication Department at Point Park University, Pittsburgh, PA.

Articles for Clio are welcome. Send them to Dane S. Claussen, graduate program director, Point Park University, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, 607 Academic Hall, 201 Wood Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15222. Electronic copy, via either disk or e-mail, is preferred. For information, call Claussen at 412-3923412, or e-mail him at dclaussen@ppc.edu

Papers in the History Division of the 2004 AEJMC Southeast Colloquium (Tampa, Florida, March 3-6, 2004)

Sessions

Moderator and Discussant: **Mary Lamonica**,
Bridgewater State College

Rob Hardin, Univ. of Tennessee, Knoxville —
“Crowning the King: Grantland Rice and Bobby
Jones” Top Faculty Paper

Catherine Crawley, Univ. of Tennessee, Knoxville
— “The Portrayal of a People in a Post Diluvian
Age: Newspaper Coverage of the TVA's Flooding to
Build
Norris Dam” Co-Winner, Top Graduate Student Paper

Christie Kleinmann, Univ. of Tennessee, Knoxville
— “Examination of Historical Memory on TVA and
Butler, Tennessee” Co-Winner, Top Graduate Student
Paper

Moderator: **Rob Hardin**, Univ. Of Tennessee,
Knoxville

Discussant: **Fred Blevens**, Univ. Of Oklahoma
Cathy Johnson, Angelo State University —
“Houston Harte: The Untold Story of a Native Show-
Me State Journalist Who Became a West Texas
Newspaper Giant”

Linda Lumsden, Western Kentucky University —
“Irene Corbally Kuhn: Moving Beyond Gender in
Evaluating the Career of One of Journalism's ‘First
Ladies ’ ”

Darrell Mottley Newton, Salisbury University —
“Cooper, Benson, Williams: Black Fluidity on the
American Airwaves”

Moderator: **Fred Blevens**, University of Oklahoma
Discussant: **Darrell Newton**, Salisbury University
Joseph P. McKerns, Ohio State — “Scenes Inside
the Citadel: A Press Insider Reports from Washington,

1861-65”

Shannon E. Martin, University of Maine — “Media
Message Framing and the Media's Coverage of
Military Interventions During the 1980s and 1990s:
An Examination of Media Pools as a Variable within
an Agenda-Setting Paradigm”

Gregory Alan Borchard, University of Nevada, Las
Vegas — “NY's Republican Press and the 1860
Campaign: Greeley's Estimate of Lincoln Revisited”

Mark R. Arbuckle, Pittsburg State University —
“ The Payne Fund Studies and Carl Hovland's Why
We Fight Film Study: The Lingering Impact of Mass
Society Theory on Early Media Effects Research”

Kris Boyle, Brigham Young University — “An
Examination of Objectivity and Its Effects on News
Content in *The New York Times* and *The Deseret
Evening News* in 1892 and 1904”

Moderator: **Darrell Newton**, Salisbury University
Discussant: **Joe Bernt**, Ohio University

Guy Reel, Winthrop University — “This Wicked
World: Masculinities and the Portrayal of Sex, Crime,
and Sports in the National Police Gazette, 1879-1906”

Denise E. DeLorme and **Fred Fedler**, University of
Central Florida — “Early Reporters and the Evolution
of Publicists' Stunts from Circus Ballyhoo to
Professionalism”

Carolyn Kitch, Temple University — “ ‘The Maiden
All in Lawn:’ Cultural Purity and Insecurity in Early
Twentieth-Century Advertising”

Edward J. Friedlander, University of South Florida
— “Winning the Pulitzer Prize for Feature Writing: A
Preliminary History of 25 Years of Prize-Winning
Stories and Authors”

**Thanks to Mary M. Lamonica, Bridgewater State
College, Bridgewater, Mass., for submitting this
information to CLIO. Contact her at: mlamoni-
ca@bridgew.edu; (508) 531-2802.**

Anti-intellectualism, presidential politics and the news media

By Dane S. Claussen
Point Park University

Both before and since George W. Bush was elected president in 2000, more than one columnist, commentator, and Web site asked some variation of what Roger Simon asked in the July 19, 1999, *U.S. News & World Report*: “How bright do you have to be to be president?” Christopher Hitchens observed in the October 9, 2000, *Nation* that the Republican Party “packages and presents a provincial ignoramus who can neither read nor write.” Eventually, E. J. Dionne, in *The Washington Post* (March 13, 2001), told Bush’s opponents, “Now is the time for a moratorium on calling the president of the United States stupid”—not because he thought Bush intelligent, but only because he didn’t want the public to have low expectations. In fact, some pundits had gone so far as to ask the lowest common denominator question: Is George W. Bush too stupid to be president?

Bush’s intelligence (or lack thereof) presents political scientists, campaign strategists, journalists, historians, and others with numerous fascinating questions, such as: What percentage of the public has realized Bush is vapid, when did they realize it, and why did apparently at least some of them vote for him anyway? What percentage of the electorate is itself too dim to realize or understand how dull-witted Bush is? What percentage of the public is in denial, allowing cognitive dissonance to give themselves a more favorable assessment of their president than the evidence suggests is warranted? And so on.

After a terrorist attack on New York City and Washington on September 11, 2001, and the launching of a surprisingly easy “war against terrorism” in Afghanistan and Iraq, the American public’s esteem for Bush increased dramatically although Bush’s limited vocabulary and the simplicity of his impromptu statements showed that the president had not changed. (Archconservative Alan Keyes, in an interview published in the January 27, 2002, *New York Times Magazine*, refused to answer a question about Bush’s speaking skills.) During the country’s months-

long patriotic fervor, Chris Matthews, host of the “Hardball” television program, was almost alone among politicians, pundits, and prominent journalists in pointing out that Bush was still the same man he was before—more focused, generally more serious, and more emotional, but no more intelligent, educated, nor articulate than he had been previously. Writing in the January 20, 2002, *New York Times*, David E. Sanger pointed out that Bush’s use of “black-and-white terms,” serving him well in war, still wouldn’t work very well during peace. Sanger noted, “Mr. Bush’s phrases seemed simplistic” and his vocabulary simply “blunt.” In the February, 2002, *Vanity Fair*, even Christopher Buckley’s mostly favorable article noted that Bush “probably last consulted a thesaurus at Andover”; that Bush finally had more “gravitas” than before September 11, when he was a “frat boy who choked on his tongue talking about ‘subliminal’ advertising”; and that Bush displays “quaint, Manichaean simplicity.” Just for good measure, Buckley reminded his readers, “during the presidential campaign, Bush could not name the leader of—among three other countries—Pakistan.”

By late 2002, two former Bush administration officials, one of whom was John J. DiIulio Jr, former head of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, were confessing the truth about the Bush administration’s anti-intellectualism. DiIulio told the January, 2003, issue of *Esquire* magazine that he had essentially been the White House staff’s only intellectual or policy wonk on domestic issues. DiIulio said he hadn’t even witnessed “three meaningful, substantive policy discussions.... There were, truth be told, only a couple of people in the West Wing who worried at all about policy substance and analysis.... [T]he lack of even basic policy knowledge, and the only casual interest in knowing more, was somewhat breathtaking.”

See Presidential, page 10

Winter '04

clio 9

Presidential, from page 9

The article's author, Ron Suskind, quoted another "senior White House official" still working there, as saying, "certainly in domestic policy, there has been almost no meaningful consideration of any real issues. It's just kids on Big Wheels who talk politics and know nothing. It's depressing. Domestic Policy Council meetings are a farce." Shortly thereafter, former Bush speechwriter David Frum's book, *The Right Man: The Surprise Presidency of George W. Bush*, admitted that with the exception of political director Karl Rove and Office of Management and Budget Director Mitch Daniels (who later quit to run for governor of Indiana), "conspicuous intelligence seemed actively unwelcome in the Bush White House." A book-length treatment of the Bush administration, by Suskind with the help of now-former Secretary of the Treasury Paul O'Neill, has recently reinforced—in great detail—these earlier revelations.

Thus, those with a broader view of history—such as political historians, journalism historians, political scientists, and others—can appropriately ask another group of questions centered around this one: How did presidential politics and nominees decay from Adlai Stevenson and John F. Kennedy, two intelligent men who—to greater and lesser extents, respectively—eagerly posed as intellectuals, to Jimmy Carter, who de-emphasized having been a nuclear engineer and instead emphasized his Plains, Georgia, roots, and Bill Clinton, a Rhodes Scholar who downplayed Georgetown, Yale, and Oxford in favor of Hope, Arkansas, to George W. Bush, who has continually bragged about having been a "C" student and who attended Harvard Business School (in an experimental program for students whose undergraduate degrees were in the humanities) only when his application to his home-state University of Texas law school was rejected?

A direct relationship, in fact, exists between the news media and the public asking, in effect, if Adlai Stevenson was too smart to be president and less than fifty years later asking if George W. Bush was smart enough, or too dumb, to be president. The

American public's long-time anti-intellectual attitude eventually was reflected in and by a presidential candidate, and then president, who was perhaps the least intellectual occupant of the White House since Harding or Coolidge and perhaps the most anti-intellectual one since Andrew Jackson.

The American public's comfort with, if not demand for, the "common touch" is not limited to presidential politics, of course. Even in the competitive government civil service system, and the supposedly ruthless—Darwinistic—business world, executives and managers are not always seeking out the best and the brightest, even in a high-tech economy called the Information Age. And the general public is not completely to blame. As I show in my latest book, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Media: Magazines and Higher Education* (Peter Lang Publishing, 2004)—a case study of popular magazines' coverage of higher education since World War II—the news media, which depend on a literate, intellectually curious audience, often do nothing to discourage, and even frequently implicitly encourage, the public's anti-intellectualism. For the record, I use historian Richard Hofstadter's definition of that term, found in his Pulitzer Prize-winning *Anti-intellectualism in American Life* (1963): "complex of historical relations among a variety of attitudes and ideas that have many points of convergence. The common strain that binds together the attitudes and ideas which I call anti-intellectual is a resentment and suspicion of the life of the mind and of those who are considered to represent it; and a disposition constantly to minimize the value of that life."

Written as a response to McCarthyism and as a plea for U.S. citizens to wake up to and fight their own anti-intellectualism, Hofstadter's book suggested that U.S. anti-intellectualism must be checked, and the author held out the possibility that some forms of intellectual civil life can be encouraged. However, Hofstadter's book clearly showed that he believed the country was likely to continue to be anti-intellectual. His thesis was a fundamentally

See Presidential, page 11

Presidential, from page 10

scathing, depressing indictment, and one that has stood the test of time, as subsequent authors suggest. Among his major accomplishments was rejecting both myths of perfection corrupted by historical decay, which have yet claimed subsequent writers such as Neil Postman, Allan Bloom, or Donald N. Wood, and visions of utopian inevitability.

But at least in part because Hofstadter apparently was unaware of George Hage's 1956 dissertation (see below), Hofstadter rarely mentioned the mass media in his 1963 book, and when he did, it was often in passing—such as the following passage: “At times the schools of the country seem to be dominated by athletics, commercialism, and the *standards of the mass media*, and these extend upwards to a system of higher education whose worst failings were underlined by the bold president of the University of Oklahoma who hoped to develop a university of which the football team could be proud. Certainly some ultimate educational values seem forever to be eluding the Americans. At great effort and expense they send an extraordinary proportion of their young to colleges and universities; but their young, when they get there, do not seem to care even to read” (emphasis added).

Hofstadter may have almost entirely ignored the media in his 1963 book, but ironically, his first published writing on anti-intellectualism (a 1953 article in *Michigan Alumnus Quarterly Review*)—together with books by Oscar Cargill, Henry Steele Commager and Merle Curti—inspired George S. Hage (the late, long-time journalism professor at the University of Minnesota), to write his 1956 doctoral dissertation on anti-intellectualism in newspaper coverage of American politics.

Specifically, Hage analyzed newspaper coverage of the presidential elections of 1828 and 1952, and found that John Quincy Adams had been criticized for “book learning” and support of a national observatory, while Adams and Adlai Stevenson were both ridiculed for their “gifts of language.” Hage called references to candidates’ “unreflective” traits, primarily those “concerned with physical action and development, with knowledge gained through the

senses or intuitively, and with exaltation of the heart or the head” as “not anti-intellectual in themselves” but “divorced from reflection and valued above it by the anti-intellectual.” Press appraisal of Stevenson’s intellect was overwhelmingly positive, while it had been negative for Adams, but Hage concluded that this probably was because Stevenson was a “wit” while Adams was a “theorist.” However, Dwight Eisenhower’s and Andrew Jackson’s non-intellectual and anti-intellectual qualities both received more coverage than Stevenson’s and Adams’ intellectual qualities.

Hage, like Curti and George Santayana, also had found that “The insinuation of effeminacy was designated an indicator of intellectualism from the viewpoint of the anti-intellectual.” Hage was the first to trace the linking of effeminacy and anti-intellectualism back to Adams’ time: the *Albany Argus* called Adams’s clothing “the climax of affectation and dandyism”; the *United States Telegraph* said he “fights best by ‘midnight lights’”; and the *New York Enquirer* described his supporters as “very accommodating in their disposition” and as speaking French. Similarly, Hage pointed to editorials referring to Stevenson as “Adelaide” or “Adeline,” calling his voice “fruity” or “trill[ing],” his vocabulary peppered with “teacup words,” his role as assistant to the navy secretary as “a lacy sort of dilettante,” and one of Stevenson’s supporters as a “typical Harvard lace-cuff liberal.” Hage noted that these kinds of insults had been common since before 1828, but he also echoed a 1955 analysis by David Riesman and Nathan Glazer when Hage observed: “How powerful, then, is the political consequence of combining the image of the homosexual with the image of the intellectual—the State Department cooky-pusher Harvard-trained sissy thus becomes the focus of social hatred and the Jew becomes merely one variant of the intellectual sissy—actually less important than the Eastern-educated snob!” Hage was particularly concerned about the future effectiveness of intellectuals if they continued to be associated with homosexuals and/or traitors.

See Presidential, page 12

Presidential, from page 11

After Hage's dissertation, and despite such major books as *The Last Intellectuals* (1987) by Russell Jacoby, and *The Closing of the American Mind: American Culture in the Age of Academe* (1987) by the late Allan Bloom, the news media's role in anti-intellectualism *per se* (as opposed to the general "dumbing down" of American culture), was almost entirely ignored by scholars until 1991. Then Daniel Rigney, a sociologist of knowledge at St. Mary's University, constructed a theory of American anti-intellectualism based on Hofstadter's book and other works. Wrote Rigney in part: "In retrospect, Hofstadter fails to anticipate the power of mass communication to shape American cultural life and to influence attitudes toward intellect. The power of the media to define the terms of public discourse has not, however, escaped the attention of more recent social critics. Postman (1985), for example, examines public discourse in an age dominated by entertainment industries, concluding that the electronic media have not produced Orwell's dark vision of an externally imposed oppression after all, but rather something more akin to Huxley's vision of a brave new world, a trivialized culture that creates an almost limitless appetite for amusement and diversion. News and education are now essentially popular forms of entertainment, competing with situation comedies and video games for the fun-consumer's shortened span of attention."

And while acknowledging that liberal and leftist scholars such as Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky exaggerate somewhat, Rigney added, "The effects of mass media on attitudes toward intellect are certainly multiple and ambiguous. On the one hand, mass communication greatly expand the sheer volume of information available for public consumption. On the other hand, much of this information comes preinterpreted for easy digestion and laden with hidden assumptions, saving consumers the work of having to interpret it for themselves. Commodified information naturally tends to reflect the assumptions and interests of those who produce it, and its producers are not driven entirely by a passion to promote critical reflection."

Jeffrey C. Goldfarb's 1998 book, *Civility and Subversion: The Intellectual in Democratic Society*, also is conscious of the interaction between the news media and anti-intellectualism. Goldfarb claims that the news media's standards in both competence and ethics have declined, resulting in less "serious discussion" in the news media generally, and that broadcast soundbites inhibit such serious discussion more so than did or does newspaper and magazine articles. Most significantly, Goldfarb understands that the modern news media potentially give intellectuals access to a larger audience than ever, while at the same time the public is content with granting intellectuals' roles to Oprah Winfrey and Phil Donohue. Concludes Goldfarb, "fail[ing] to draw the distinction between the intellectual and the entertainer, between empty talk and deliberation... makes sense only when informed discourse is confused with talk performance; important distinctions concerning cultural quality are not made. When they are made, the room for the intellectual would appear to be small indeed." Even Goldfarb, however, only tangentially addressed anti-intellectualism *per se*, and wrote relatively little else about the news media. Most recently, Judge Richard A. Posner's *Public Intellectuals: A Study of Decline* highlighted intellectuals' access to news media and the frequently low quality of their contributions, while also displaying his own ignorance of how and why journalists work.

So although many scholars have written since Hofstadter about the "dumbing down" of American popular culture, negative depictions of teachers in television and film, and so on, and I have recently attempted to take into account the histories of both the news media and of anti-intellectualism as I gathered and analyzed evidence of anti-intellectualism in specific news media, both a comprehensive history of anti-intellectualism in U.S. media and/or a comprehensive history of the news media's role in American anti-intellectualism remain to be written.

Much of this article is adapted from parts of Chapters 1 and 2 of *Anti-intellectualism in American Media: Magazines and Higher Education*, by Dane S. Claussen (Copyright 2004 by Peter Lang Publishing). All rights reserved.

Those ‘Big Fish,’ historians and ‘the one that got away’

By Paulette D. Kilmer
University of Toledo

Wonder Bread — enriched and fortified with ninety essential vitamins and minerals — cost a dollar for three loaves, and so since my mother raised no fools, I bought a dozen to feed the birds. Well, within a week, the blue jays dwarfed my neighbor’s toy bull dog and drowned out the noon whistle. The doves broke the top off the pine tree. The tweedy baby European starlings resembled turkeys strutting around the patio.

Certainly, while journalism historians might chuckle at the above paragraph, they won’t believe it happened because the style warns them that it is a crock. The official term for crock among folklore scholars is “liar tale” or “windy.” A mistake people often make is lumping together liar tales, legends, and myths under the umbrella of false, malicious, and destructive.

This “Wonder Bread” stretcher may convince some you that I wouldn’t recognize the hallowed “FACTS” if they trotted through the pet door. I made up the birdie windy to illustrate that liar tales differ from legends and myths. All

three forms of narrative show historians the values, fashions, and sensibility of an era.

Recently, I saw *Big Fish*, a movie that hasty, gismo-addicted viewers categorize as an extended liar’s tale. Some simultaneously refer to it as a myth, legend, and windy.

This ‘Wonder Bread’ stretcher may convince some of you that I wouldn’t recognize the hallowed ‘FACTS’ if they trotted through the pet door.

Historians learn the most when they follow the example set by David Sloan and Jim Startt in *Historical Methods in Mass Communication*. These co-authors define terms precisely and evaluate sources in light of their audience and cultural purpose.

Perhaps, one of the reasons I enjoyed “*Big Fish*” was because it transported me back to the yard in front of my grandparents’ trailer.

Their friends as well as my brother, aunt, uncle and me, congregated on breezy summer nights for a supper dictated by

Illinois heat waves — strawberry shortcake and half-and-half complemented with milk.

My grandmother kept the baking-powder biscuits warm and put the water, milk, and the half-and-half on ice. It was the best supper! Just as the stars began to twinkle, the lighting bugs, like a magic carpet, floated over the center field of the track (where my grandfather trained his harness horses). Everyone — me included — told a story. Grandpa played the emcee, offering brief introductions and hilarious banter. As a child, I learned the difference between liar’s tales, which weren’t based on anything but humorous unlikely juxtapositions, and legends, which grew from a kernel of truth into an adventure that proved each one of us in our hearts truly is Odysseus on a quest that takes a lifetime to complete.

Moreover, regardless of how hard we try to stick to the facts when we describe our escapades to others, the passage of time erodes our memories into a version of what happened that never corresponds exactly with the actual sequence of events. Consider eye-witnesses who all saw the same crime or accident but, nevertheless, relate very different accounts.

History Division Officers

(Partial list)

Head/Program Chair: Dr. Janice Hume

Assistant Professor
Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication
University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602-3018
E-mail: jhume@uga.edu
Telephone: (706) 542-5980 FAX : (706) 542-2183

Vice Head/Research Chair: Dr. Patricia McNeely
Professor

College of Journalism and Mass Communication
University of South Carolina
Columbia, S.C. 29208
E-mail: mcneely2000@yahoo.com
Telephone: 803-777-3303 FAX: 803-777-4103

Secretary/Clio Editor: Dr. Dane S. Claussen
Associate Professor and Director of the Journalism
and Mass Communication Graduate Program
Point Park University

201 Wood Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Telephone: (412) 392-3412 Fax: (412) 392-4720
E-mail: dclaussen@ppc.edu, dsclaussen@hotmail.com

Teaching Standards Chair: Dr. Ford Risley

Associate Professor
Journalism Department Head
College of Communications
The Pennsylvania State University
203 Carnegie Building
University Park, PA 16802
Telephone: (814) 865-2181 FAX: 814-863-6134
E-mail: jfr4@psu.edu

Professional Freedom

and Responsibility Chair: Dr. Earnest L. Perry

Associate Professor
Missouri School of Journalism
179C Gannett Hall
Columbia, MO 65203
Telephone: (573)882-4214 FAX: 573-884-5400
E-mail: perryel@missouri.edu

Fish, from page 13

In “Big Fish,” director Tim Burton shows audiences that the recitation of facts doesn’t reveal the truth perceived within the heart.

While some historians reject the notion that subconscious archetypal forces color the way humans regard facts and, therein, shape the news; others embrace the idea that news inherently contains the seeds of timeless narratives.

Likewise, reviewers of “Big Fish” tended to either hate or love Burton’s interpretation of John August’s screenplay based on the novel by Daniel Wallace. For example, writing for *The New York Times*, A.O. Scott sounded a bit like cranky Anthony Comstock (the late nineteenth-century self-appointed pope of decency who warned that

youths would read themselves into moral and intellectual idiocy.) Scott lambasted Burton for “[choosing] maudlin moonshine over engagement with the difficulties of real life...” and “declining to explore the causes or costs of his [the protagonist’s] addiction to fantasy.” (All reviews mentioned in this article can be found online at www.rottentomatoes.com) “The Wolf”, commenting for IOFILM agreed, noting: “Big Fish is drowning in molasses...The film fails on every level.” The nay-slayers despised the motion picture’s premise that truth exists on two planes — one dealing with physical occurrences and the other revealing how human beings attach meaning to their experiences emotionally. Historians could learn from “Big Fish” to appreciate the power of

See Fish, page 15

Fish, from page 14

narrative as a conduit between dry facts and the bedrock of a community's mores and the aspirations of individuals.

Indeed, Rob Vaux (the reviewer for Flipside Movie Emporium) explained, "It ["Big Fish"] doesn't celebrate the preposterous as much as the reality hiding behind it and the belief that the tale is always intermingled with he who tells it." Historians keep in mind that even the most sincere reporter/editor enters the inverted pyramid simply by selecting its components. Every account, even when the writer strives to be impartial, evolves within a cultural context mirrored in the legends of the period. A legend is a narrative based on a nugget of truth and recounted in a memorable way that reminds listeners of revered maxims.

One of the challenges confronting historians is balancing the absolute necessity for unearthing the facts with the equally compelling charge to be open to what Vaux referred to as "a heartfelt lesson" — "that something doesn't have to be factual to be true." A critic for *The New York Observer* (Andrew Sarris) explained that Burton's film communicates through mythology and metaphor. A myth is a sacred story people believe so intensely that it shapes their actions and, thus, becomes actuality. A metaphor compares two things normally not associated together. In "Big Fish," the Alabama rivers represent life itself, and we are the jumping fish always seeking a bigger pond. Over the past decade, I have learned that history and metaphor do

converge into the public and private narratives folks tell to justify and understand their existence.

Human beings seek closure from polar opposites, like right versus wrong or fact versus fiction. But life is messy. Sons and fathers struggle to fathom one another. So do mothers and daughters.

In 'Big Fish,' the Alabama rivers represent life itself, and we are the jumping fish always seeking a bigger pond.

In "Big Fish," the son embarks on a sojourn of the soul to find out what really happened to his father. He discovers, just in time, that the old man isn't a liar. In fact, the boy realizes that the greatest gift his pop has given him is the lore that extols the inner truths invisible to those entombed in "just the facts."

For instance, the giant, the circus owner who metamorphoses into a werewolf, the witch with the glass eye that shows individuals how they will die, and the singing Korean Siamese twins, all demonstrate the folly of believing in stereotypes instead of having faith in the goodness of others.

"Big Fish" reminded me that all of us draw upon a subconscious pool of narratives to navigate the often rocky waters of our lives, on the homepage of Reeltalk, Betty Jo Tucker concluded that Big Fish offers the same insight, which "Frank Lloyd Wright once pointed out, 'The truth is more important than the facts.'"

Details, from page 2

life and, sometimes, domestic and foreign policy. But what effects did these women have on social changes /policies in other countries and cultures?

Or, how might women in other countries/cultures have inspired change in the United States?

The purpose of this panel is to learn more about how

women's social reform efforts may have crossed geographical boundaries, even language barriers, to inform the work of other women in other cultures.

