



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

## Ernie Pyle and teaching war correspondence



Photo courtesy [www.38thvac.com](http://www.38thvac.com)

Ernie Pyle, one of the most iconic war correspondents in American history, was responsible for many of the most enduring images from World War II. He died nearly sixty-five years ago and remains one of the “Patron Saints” of journalism. For more on Ernie Pyle, see page 6.

### NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

## *Narrating an unending story*

As journalism and mass communication programs retool for the digital age, the question of why students should study journalism history is being asked with renewed regularity. It is a question with its own history, posed countless times as curricula changed to accommodate a changing media industry. Journalism and mass communication histo-

**Tim Vos**



Chair  
Univ. of Missouri

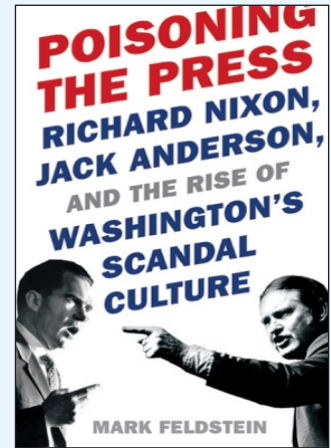
rians are so accustomed to the periodic posing of the question that they have crafted and collected lists of ready answers.

I like those lists – they remind us of the intellectual and ethical insight to be gained from the study of the past and they remind us of the civic value of attending

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ONLINE  
[www.aejmchistory.org](http://www.aejmchistory.org)

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## 2012 AEJMC CONFERENCE

# Division seeks papers, reviewers

The History Division invites submissions of original research papers and historiographical essays on all aspects of media history for the AEJMC 2012 convention in Chicago. All research methodologies are welcome.

Papers will be evaluated on originality and importance of topic; literature review; clarity of research purpose; focus; use of evidence to support the paper's purpose and conclusions; and the degree to which the paper contributes to the field of journalism and mass communication history. The Division presents awards for the top three faculty papers.

Papers should be no more than 25 double-spaced pages, not including notes or appendices. Multiple submissions to the Division are not allowed and only one paper per author will be accepted for presentation in the History Division's research sessions. Authors should also submit a 75-word abstract. The author's name and all other identifying information must be removed from submissions.

Papers must be electronically submitted using the services of All-Academic; the website is [www.allacademic.com](http://www.allacademic.com). The deadline is midnight, April 1, 2012. Authors are encouraged to read the Uniform Paper Call for detailed submission



information. The organization's website is [www.aejmc.org](http://www.aejmc.org).

**Student Papers:** Undergraduate and graduate students enrolled during the 2011-12 academic year may enter the Warren Price Student Paper Competition. The Price Award recognizes the History Division's best student paper and is named for Warren Price, who was the Division's first chair. Student papers should include a separate cover sheet that indicates their student status but omits the author's name or other identifying information. Students who submit top papers are eligible for small travel grants from the Edwin Emery Fund. Only full-time students not receiving departmental

travel grants are eligible for these grants.

**Call for Reviewers:** If you are willing to review papers for the History Division research competition, please contact Lisa Burns at [Lisa.Burns@quinnipiac.edu](mailto:Lisa.Burns@quinnipiac.edu) and indicate your areas of expertise and/or interest. We will need approximately 75 reviewers for the competition. Graduate students are not eligible to serve as reviewers and, in general, reviewers should not have submitted their own research into the competition.

**Contact information:** For more information, contact History Division Research Chair Lisa Burns (Quinnipiac University) at [Lisa.Burns@quinnipiac.edu](mailto:Lisa.Burns@quinnipiac.edu) or 203-582-8548. ■

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

# AJHA Book of the Year Award

Recognizes the best in journalism history or mass media history published during the calendar year. The book must have been granted a first-time copyright in 2011. Entrants should submit four copies of their books to the book award coordinator by March 31, 2012.

Send materials to:

**Aimee Edmondson**  
**Ohio University**  
**E.W. Scripps School of Journalism**  
**204 Scripps Hall**  
**Athens, Ohio 45701**

Please contact Aimee Edmondson at [edmondso@ohio.edu](mailto:edmondso@ohio.edu) or 740.597.3336 with any questions. ■

## VOS

Continued from Page 1

### *Narrating an unending story*

to our field's shared and divergent ideals. And while it is likely best to leave well enough alone, I nevertheless feel compelled to revisit the question of "why study journalism and mass communication history?" So, I offer three observations. I'll focus on journalism in particular, because that's what I teach and what I know best.

First, the value of learning journalism history cannot be separated from what is taught and how it is taught. Few journalism professors simply catalog a list of historical facts; instead we craft overarching narratives. What plots we choose to narrate has everything to do with the usefulness of studying journalism history.

Students should first come to understand that the news media is not a "natural" feature of the social environment, but the accumulated result of historical processes. For good or bad, a range of ideologies, material conditions, and institutional forces have forged the cultural capital of journalism, i.e., the institutional identity, epistemological orientation and ethics of contemporary journalism. New entrants to the journalistic field become stewards of this cultural capital. It's an inheritance, however, that other institutions would like to put to their own uses. As Patrick Champagne puts it, "The history of journalism could well be in large part the story of an impossible autonomy – or, to put it in the least pessimistic way, the unending story of an autonomy that must be re-won because it is always threatened."

When students enter into journalism they will quickly face the reality of a cast of characters who, seeking their own ends, relentlessly gnaw at journalism's autonomy. Too often, new and not-so-new journalists, ignorant of the value of their inheritance, are willing to use it to bargain for popularity, profits, or placation. If journalists are asked to adopt politicians' tortured use of language (e.g., calling torture enhanced interrogation), constrain the marketplace of ideas at the bidding of

the powerful, or sacrifice information for commercialization – and they no doubt will be – they must know what cultural capital is at stake.

Second, the narrative we craft of journalism's formation and evolution must ultimately make the students themselves main characters in the story. They will be the defenders of journalism's cultural capital. Our graduates become the narrators

path dependent mechanisms that create inertia in the face of reform efforts. Paul Pierson reminds us that as institutions develop in time, they have a tendency to condition cultural expectations, create asymmetries of institutional power, and produce exit costs when switching paths – all factors that reformers must take into account as they plot changes. Teaching journalism history must identify how

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of the story as it moves forward. As narrative theorist David Carr reminds us, we do not first live and work and then narrate the story afterward. Rather, we negotiate the present and plot for the future based on our understanding of the narrative arc of the past.

To narrate the story, students must know the rhetorical scripts and discursive resources of the past. For example, if journalists had reached beyond their own lifetimes to access the debates of Walter Lippmann and Arthur Bullard about the role of journalism and public opinion heading into World War I (see Stephen Vaughn's *Holding Fast the Inner Lines*), I suspect twenty-first century journalists might have improvised a very different story from what they did during the last decade.

Third, students will not just be the defenders of journalism's cultural capital; they will be its reformers as well. Our inherited cultural capital is not without its problems; some of that capital may very well need to be exchanged for something newer and better. Here, too, the study of journalism history and how we study it is crucial.

The irony is that we are not free to change things in the present if we are ignorant of the past. Journalism history should explore those historically-formed

these factors shape our field. We will not narrate revolutionary changes in the future if we are unaware of the ways that path dependence limits our own agency in the present.

So, the value of journalism history is the value of any liberal arts curriculum. When we provide our students with knowledge of historical processes and a range of rhetorical resources, we provide them with the means of liberation – liberation from those who seek to compromise journalism's cultural capital and liberation to imagine and create a new and better journalistic capital.

*Sources cited:* Carr, D. (1986). *Time, narrative, and history*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press; Champagne, P. (2005). The 'double dependency': The journalistic field between politics and markets. In R. Benson & E. Neveu (Eds.), *Bourdieu and the journalistic field* (pp. 48-63). Malden, MA: Polity; Pierson, P. (2004). *Politics in time: History, institutions, and social analysis*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.; and Vaughn, S. (1980). *Holding fast the inner lines: Democracy, nationalism, and the Committee on Public Information*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. ■



## TEACHING STANDARDS

*The power of the cohort, the power of the small group*

Speed Graphic. The Muckrakers. Narwhal's Mustache. Mass Media Superstars. Cupcakes. Hoppy & the Four Ladies. Team Fuego. The Bunnies. Narrative Ninjas. The Unicorns. Stone Soup. The Ladies Chablis. Group Without A Name.

**Berkley Hudson**

Teaching Chair  
Univ. of Missouri

My students in classes of different sizes, at different levels, chose these names, and many others, for their small groups. Although I have threatened to buy my students T-shirts, baseball caps, pens and pencils with logos branded with their group

names, I have not done that yet. I have found, though, that the more I encourage students to form small cohorts the better that they engage with one another, with learning and with me as their professor.

In classes of every size, I preach the power of small groups. They help to relieve the pressure for the professor to solve everyone's problems. They help students to relieve their own pressures and help them to learn.

Small groups are one of many strategies that can heighten student engagement. I create "snack clubs" with the members assigned to provide food for class. I bring in masks I have collected from around the world, and then I have students role play with the masks and speak in different personae in response to questions I pose. I bring in apples for them to eat and have them consider the post-modern educational world in which students—with Apples—no longer bring apples for the teacher.

At the start of the semester, I pass out index cards and have students fill out both sides: three things that would make this class perfect, on one side; on the other, three ways the professor and colleagues



(From left) Berkley Hudson (Missouri), Sue Wescott Alessandri (Suffolk), Dana Rosengard (Suffolk) and Tori Ekstrand (Bowling Green). This was an intra-disciplinary, doctoral student, study cohort at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill made up of Hudson (media history), Alessandri (advertising/strategic communication), Rosengard (broadcast), and Ekstrand (media law). In Fall 1999, they dressed in good-humored honor of UNC methods teacher Phil Meyer, who often wore a baseball cap and bowtie to class.

can help this semester. I compile them and then we take turns reading these aloud at the next class. Students give voice to dreams, to worries. And we fill out index cards with our media diets and then read those aloud.

Still, the small group is one of the best tools I have in my teaching toolbox. As many of us may do, I take the Think-Pair-Share idea and use it in variegated ways.

At the start of the semester I use quirky approaches to divide the class into groups. I may group them by birth months, birthdates or birthplaces. Or I may divide the class into groups of three or four or five and then assign a number to each group. Then I put those numbers into a paper grocery bag and pass the bag around and have the students select one number. Or I may have everyone count off in class and divide them up accordingly.

The students select their group coordinator who communicates with me. And I charge them to come up with a group name. Then I meet with them in class and outside of class. They select the location such as a coffee shop or restaurant on campus or off campus. Now with Doodle Poll and other scheduling tools, it's even easier to find mutual meeting times.

The group meetings don't eliminate the

opportunity for students to meet with me individually. But with four or five students I can cover in thirty-minutes to one hour common questions and problems.

These are thinking, researching, writing and revising groups. I recognize there are different kinds of small groups and different ways to acknowledge manifold learning styles. I also recognize that grading team projects can pose problems. What to do about slackers and laggards? The pedagogical literature addresses this. There will be slackers. There will be laggards. They don't deserve as good of a grade.

A recent *New York Times* opinion piece offers food for thought on collaborative groups.

Author Susan Cain made this argument:

"Solitude is out of fashion. Our companies, our schools and our culture are in thrall to an idea I call the New Groupthink, which holds that creativity and achievement come from an oddly gregarious place... Lone geniuses are out. Collaboration is in."

This kind of groupthink collaboration, she wrote, is counter-productive. "[T]he most spectacularly creative people in many fields are often introverted, according to studies by the psychologists

## 2012 AEJMC CONFERENCE

# Papers sought for Law and Policy Division

## Special call seeks legal history papers for AEJMC 100th anniversary

The Law and Policy Division invites submission of original research papers on communications law and policy for the 2012 AEJMC Conference in Chicago. Papers may focus on any topic related to communications law and/or policy, including defamation, privacy, FCC issues, intellectual property, obscenity, freedom of information, and a myriad of other media law and policy topics. Papers outside the scope of communications law and policy will be rejected.

The Division welcomes a variety of theoretical orientations and any method appropriate to the research question. A panel of judges will blind-referee all submissions, and selection will be based strictly on merit. Authors need not be AEJMC or Law and Policy Division members, but they must attend the conference to present accepted papers.

Paper authors should submit via the online submission process as described in the Uniform Paper Call. Please see submission criteria and instructions at

[www.aejmc.org](http://www.aejmc.org).

Law and Policy Division papers must be no longer than 50-double-spaced pages with one-inch margins and 12-point font, including cover page, appendices, tables, footnotes and/or endnotes, and end-of-paper reference list, if applicable. (Footnotes and/or endnotes and reference list may be single-spaced.) Papers that exceed 50 total pages or are not double-spaced will be automatically rejected without review. Although Bluebook citation format is preferred, authors may employ any recognized and uniform format for referencing authorities, including APA, Chicago, or MLA styles. Papers that include author-identifying information within the text, in headers, or within the embedded electronic file properties will be automatically rejected (review the instructions on the AEJMC Web site for stripping identifying information from the electronic file properties). There is no limit on the number of submissions authors may make to the Division.

Student authors of single-authored papers should clearly indicate their student status on the cover page. Student submissions will be considered for the \$100 Whitney and Shirley Mundt Award, given to the top student paper. The Law and Policy Division will also cover

conference registration fees for the top three student paper presenters.

**Special call for legal history papers:** As part of AEJMC's 100th Anniversary celebration in Chicago, the Law and Policy Division will be hosting a special call for papers dedicated to legal history. Research papers for the special call should focus on the study of the history of law in the field of communication, broadly defined. Legal history is closely connected to the development of society and papers should be set in the wider context of social, cultural, and political history. Papers should be uploaded via the special call link on the All-Academic submission site, and should conform to all requirements of the Law and Policy Division Paper Call and the AEJMC Uniform Paper Call. Papers will be judged together with papers from the Law and Policy Division Paper Call. Submitters who qualify for presentation at the AEJMC 2012 conference will present their research at a special research panel dedicated to legal history.

**If you have questions, contact:** Derigan Silver, Law and Policy Division Research Chair, Department of Media, Film and Journalism Studies, University of Denver, 2490 S. Gaylord St., Denver, CO 80208-5000, Phone: 303-871-2657; email: [derigan.silver@du.edu](mailto:derigan.silver@du.edu). ■

## HUDSON

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### *Power of Small Groups*

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Gregory Feist. They're extroverted enough to exchange and advance ideas, but see themselves as independent and individualistic. They're not joiners by nature."

Subsequently, provocative letters to the editor called into question Cain's assumptions. Washington University professor Keith Sawyer wrote:

"Decades of scientific research have revealed that great creativity is

almost always based in collaboration, conversation and social networks — just the opposite of our mythical image of the isolated genius. And educational research has found that deeper learning results when students participate in thoughtful argumentation and discuss reasons and concepts."

Sawyer continued: "The increasing use of collaboration, in classrooms and in the workplace, is not a short-lived fad; it is solidly based in research, and it works."

When I was a doctoral student at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, our beloved mentor Dr. Margaret

Blanchard encouraged us media history students to meet regularly. We did, often at Foster's Market. Out of that group came dissertations that won prizes, secured jobs and book contracts. Our group of learners bound together in the common goal of supporting each other and creating fine scholarship. Once, Dr. Blanchard hosted a dinner for her past and present media history students when we were together for a regional AEJMC conference in Chapel Hill. She helped us to build a community of learners, a community of teachers. Small groups can do that. ■

# In the footsteps of Ernie Pyle

By Owen V. Johnson  
Indiana University

Ernie Pyle, perhaps America's most famous war correspondent, died more than sixty-five years ago on tiny Ie Shima, off the coast of Okinawa in the Pacific. He was three and a half weeks short of his forty-fifth birthday. Pyle's death came just six days after President Franklin D. Roosevelt passed away. In both cases, many Americans felt they had lost an old friend. Newspapers across the country editorialized about the man who gave readers a sense of what being on the front lines was like. He has become an icon whose works constitute for many people the meaning and memory of World War II. No journalist since then has been able to establish himself as the equal of Pyle, though many have dreamed of matching the accomplishments of this 5 foot, 7 inch, 110 pound native of Dana, Indiana. Part of the reason is that journalism has changed since Pyle's day. And part of the reason is the myth that has grown up around Pyle.

In many ways, Pyle has become the patron saint of journalists. His name is frequently evoked as someone whose work should be emulated. The anniversary of his death is commemorated each year as National Columnists Day by the National Society of Newspaper Columnists. While he was best known as the reporter who wrote about ordinary people, he was admired by and a friend of people such as John Steinbeck, Ernest Hemingway, photographer Robert Capa, Andy Rooney, cartoonist Bill Mauldin, and critic A.J. Liebling. Four full-length books of his work were published in his lifetime. Since then we have seen the publication of two compilations of his work -- one peacetime and one wartime -- and most of his original books have been republished.

Five years ago I proposed that

Indiana University establish a course devoted to the study of Pyle and his writings. With approval from both the School of Journalism and the Office of the Vice-President for International Affairs, the course, "In the Footsteps of Ernie Pyle," was launched in spring 2008.

The course is about far more than Pyle's work. It examines the Indiana from which he came, his career as a reporter, his development as the country's premier aviation correspondent, and then his service as a managing editor. We discuss his work for almost seven years, and finally, his wartime work. We also get acquainted with the many people who knew him well. Last year, for the first time, we were able to make a visit to Pyle's hometown of Dana, Ind., and visit the historical site there.

The course includes an overseas

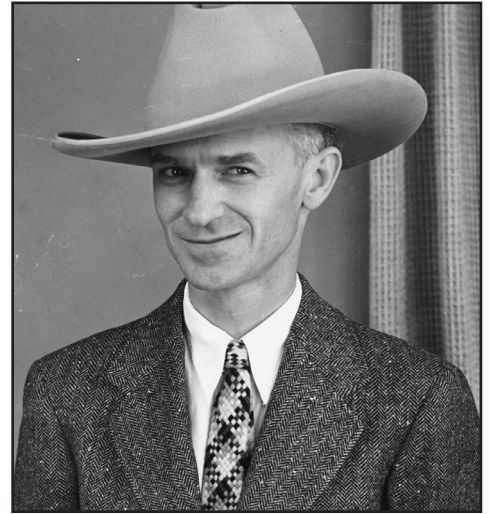
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In many ways, Pyle has become the patron saint of journalists. His name is frequently evoked as someone whose work should be emulated.

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component that takes students from London to Paris via Normandy during spring break. In London, we visit the Imperial War Museum, the Churchill War Cabinet Rooms, St. Bride's Church and St. Paul's Cathedral. We usually arrange a talk by a veteran war correspondent or foreign correspondent based in London. The first year, for example, we met with John Burns of the New York Times.

In Normandy we visit Pointe du Hoc, Omaha Beach, and the American cemetery. In nearby Bayeux we visit a British cemetery and the International Journalists Memorial. (Since we're in the neighborhood we also include a stop at Mt. St. Michel. In Paris, we take a



**Ernie Pyle wearing a hat that he picked up at the 1936 Dallas Exposition.**

walking tour of World War II Paris, as well as a bus tour of the major sights of the city. We've also been fortunate to visit with a photo editor who knew Pyle as well as almost all the great photographers of the twentieth century.

The course has three main objectives:

1. To explore the life and writing of Ernie Pyle against a backdrop of American social, economic, political and cultural patterns and developments;
2. To assist in developing an appreciation of Pyle's writing; and
3. To develop an understanding of the challenges of war correspondence and foreign reporting.

Jim Tobin's biography, *Ernie Pyle's War*, provides a basic narrative for the students, although it is thin on the first forty years of Pyle's life. In addition, the students read two books of collected



# Sidney Kobre Lifetime Achievement and Distinguished Service Nominees Sought

Do you know a journalism historian who has had a major impact in our field and should be recognized for those contributions? You can nominate that person for our top award, The Sidney Kobre Award for Lifetime Achievement in Journalism History.

Deadline for nominations is May 11, 2012. Winner will be honored at the AJHA conference in Raleigh in October. For a list of previous winners visit the American Journalism Historians Association website at [ajhaonline.org](http://ajhaonline.org) and look at the "awards" page.

The organization's highest honor recognizes individuals with an exemplary record of sustained achievement in journalism history through teaching, research, professional activities, or other contributions to the field. Award winners need not be members of the AJHA. Nominations for the award are solicited annually, but the award need not be given every year. Those making nominations for the award should present, at the minimum, a cover letter that explains the nominee's contributions to the field as well as a vita or brief biography of the nominee. Supporting letters for the nomination are also welcome. Please send Kobre nomination material to:

**Mike Conway**  
**Indiana University**  
**School of Journalism**  
**940 E. 7th Street**  
**Bloomington, IN 47405**

Contact Mike Conway at [mtconway@indiana.edu](mailto:mtconway@indiana.edu) with any questions.

We also have a separate award for those who have had a major impact on journalism historical research but are not necessarily journalism historians or professors: Distinguished Service to Journalism History Award

The Distinguished Service to Journalism History Award recognizes contributions by an individual outside our discipline who has made an extraordinary effort to further significantly our understanding of, or our ability to explore, media history. Nominations are solicited annually, but the award is given only in exceptional situations. Thus, it is not given every year. Those making nominations for the award should present, at the minimum, a cover letter that explains the nominee's contributions to the field as well as a vita or brief biography of the nominee. Supporting letters for the nomination are also welcome.

Deadline for the Distinguished Service to Journalism History Award nominations is also May 11, 2012 and should be sent to the address above. ■

## Clio AMONG THE MEDIA

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Submissions to Clio are welcome. Please send them to: Kathy Roberts Forde at [forderk@sc.edu](mailto:forderk@sc.edu). Electronic copy by e-mail is preferred. Submissions may also be mailed to Kathy Roberts Forde, School of Journalism and Mass Communications, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208.

For information, contact Forde at (803) 777-3321, or the email address above.

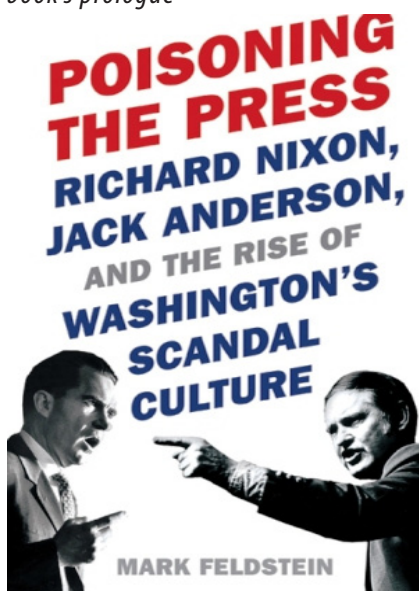
Recent issues of Clio may be accessed at: <http://www.utc.edu/Outreach/AEJMC-HistoryDivision/histpub.html>.

## BOOK EXCERPT

# Poisoning the Press

Mark Feldstein

■ *Mark Feldstein's Book Poisoning the Press (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010) has been widely and positively reviewed in the popular press and scholarly journals. Feldstein received the Frank Luther Mott-Kappa Tau Alpha Book Award and the AJHA Book Award for this important work. The following excerpt is taken from the book's prologue*



It seemed an unlikely spot to plan an assassination. After all, the Hay-Adams was one of Washington's most venerable old mansions, adorned with plush leather chairs, rich walnut paneling, and ornate oil paintings, located on Lafayette Square directly across the street from the White House. But on a chilly afternoon in March 1972, in one of the most bizarre and overlooked chapters of American political history, the renovated luxury hotel did indeed serve as a launching pad for a murder conspiracy. More surprising still was the target of this assassination scheme, syndicated columnist Jack Anderson, then the most famous investigative reporter in the United States, whose exposés had plagued President Richard Nixon since he had first entered politics

more than two decades earlier. Most astonishing of all, the men who plotted to execute the journalist were covert Nixon operatives dispatched after the President himself darkly informed aides that Anderson was “a thorn in his side” and that “we’ve got to do something with this son-of-a-bitch.”

The conspirators included former agents of the FBI and CIA who had been trained in a variety of clandestine techniques, including assassinations, and who would later go to prison for their notorious break-in at Democratic Party headquarters in the Watergate building. According to their own testimony, the men weighed various methods of eliminating the columnist: by spiking one of his drinks or his aspirin bottle with a special poison that would go undetected in an autopsy, or by putting LSD on his steering wheel so that he would absorb it through his skin while driving and die in a hallucination-crazed auto crash.

In one sense, the White House plot to poison a newsman was unprecedented. Certainly no other president in American history had ever

wiretapped journalists, put them on enemies lists, audited their tax returns, censored their newspapers, and moved to revoke their broadcasting licenses. It was, more lastingly, that Nixon and his staff pioneered the modern White House propaganda machine, using mass-market advertising techniques to manipulate its message in ways that all subsequent administrations would be forced to emulate. Nixon simultaneously introduced the notion of liberal media bias even as he launched a host of spinmeisters who assembled a network of conservative news outlets that would drive the political agenda into the twenty-first century. At the same time, Nixon and subsequent presidents effectively bought off news corporations by deregulating them, allowing them to gorge themselves on a noxious diet of sensationalism and trivialities that reaped record profits while debasing public discourse.

How did all of this come to pass? In many ways, the rise of Washington's modern scandal culture began with Richard Nixon and Jack Anderson, and their blistering twenty-five-year battle

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Their story reveals not only how one president sabotaged the press, but also how this rancorous relationship continues to the present day.

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been suspected of ordering a Mafia-style hit to silence a journalistic critic. Yet it was also an extreme and literal example of a larger conspiracy to contaminate the rest of the media as well, a metaphor for what would become a generation of toxic conflict between the press and the politicians they covered. It was not just that Nixon's administration

symbolized and accelerated the growing conflict between the presidency and the press in the Cold War era. This bitter struggle between the most embattled politician and reviled investigative reporter of their time would lead to bribery and blackmail, forgery and burglary, sexual smears and secret

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## JOHNSON

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### *Ernie Pyle*

Pyle writings, *Ernie's America* and *Ernie's War*. Both of the latter books are out of print, so students must buy used copies through E-bay or Amazon or other online sources.

As part of their work in the course, students write one domestic and three European columns in Pyle style. They also keep a trip journal and write an examination. Finally, they write a research paper in which they make use of a collection of Pyle's letters and all of Pyle's columns as they were distributed by Scripps-Howard.

In the first year, 30 students took the course, but since then enrollment has been limited to 15 to 20 people. Both graduate and undergraduate students may participate. Students must apply for admission. Class rank and grades are considered, but we also like to include students who have never traveled abroad before. For the 2012 course, we were able to admit sixty percent of the applicants. Students pay about half (\$1750) of the travel costs, with the School of Journalism paying the rest through a combination of gifts and tuition income.

The students, not surprisingly, love the course. Several of them have launched international careers because of how much they liked the course.

Alumni and friends who have heard about the experience have expressed their desire to take a similar course. We are planning an alumni trip in spring 2013.

It's odd in a way that English departments devote individual courses to well-known writers, such as Hemingway, Faulkner or Steinbeck but that journalism schools do not, even though journalism courses provide opportunities for students to immerse themselves in journalists' writing and the context of their lives and times. Washington State University



Photo courtesy [www.38thevac.com](http://www.38thevac.com)

### **Ernie Pyle in a hospital in Italy, 1943**

does have an introductory course that draws heavily on Edward R. Murrow, but more for inspiration than understanding. We simply need more of these courses.

My own interests and research have greatly facilitated this course. Through the serendipity of an assignment I gave one of my classes a little over a decade ago I have immersed myself in the life and writings of Pyle. I have collected copies of more than 1200 letters Pyle wrote, including some that remain in private hands. I have visited in Albuquerque, Minnesota, Los Angeles and elsewhere with people who knew him well. I've collected copies of thousands of newspaper articles written about him. My bibliography of Pyle-iana has reached 104 single-spaced pages. I even discovered that his first bylined article appears to have been published in the student newspaper of Indiana's archrival, Purdue University.

When someone asked me earlier this year what Pyle's favorite drink was, I knew where to find out.

(It was bourbon, usually with water). My recent article uses his letters to help understand the transformation he underwent as a student at Indiana University. In Prague, I found Czech translations of three of his books, although I still don't know why they were translated, and who was the driving force behind the project. I am working on two Pyle books, one a selection of his letters, and the other, his complete writings about Indiana.

Those interested in learning more about the Ernie Pyle course can find material at <http://journalism.indiana.edu/resources/erniepyle/ernie-pyle-class/>. My appreciation of Pyle on the 60th anniversary of his death is at <http://journalism.indiana.edu/resources/erniepyle/ties-to-the-school/ernie-pyle-60-years-after-his-death/>. ■

## FELDSTEIN

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### *Poisoning the Press*

secret surveillance—as well as the assassination plot. Their story reveals not only how one president sabotaged the press, but also how this rancorous relationship continues to the present day. It was Richard Nixon's ultimate revenge.

It was this very lust for revenge—Nixon's obsession with enemies—that would destroy him in the end. In the President's eyes, his antagonists in what he called the "Eastern establishment" were legion: liberals, activists, intellectuals, members of Congress, the federal bureaucracy. But none was more roundly despised than the news media, and none

in the media more than Jack Anderson, a bulldog of a reporter who pounded out his blunt accusations on the green keys of an old brown manual typewriter in an office three blocks from the White House. Although largely forgotten today, Anderson was once the most widely read and feared newsman in the United States, a self-proclaimed Paul Revere of journalism with a confrontational style that matched his beefy physique. Part freedom fighter, part carnival huckster, part righteous rogue, the flamboyant columnist was the last descendant of the crusading muckrakers of the early twentieth century. He held their lonely banner aloft in the conformist decades afterward, when deference to authority characterized American journalism and politics alike.

At his peak, Anderson reached an audience approaching seventy million people—nearly the entire voting populace—in radio and television broadcasts, magazines, newsletters, books, and speeches. But it was his daily 750-word exposé, the "Washington Merry-Go-Round," that was the primary source of his power; published in nearly one thousand newspapers,

it became the longest-running and most popular syndicated column in the nation. Anderson's exposés—acquired by eavesdropping, rifling through garbage, and swiping classified documents—sent politicians to prison and led targets to commit suicide. He epitomized everything that Richard Nixon feared.

The President had always believed the press was out to get him, and in Anderson he found confirmation of his deepest anxieties. The newsman had a hand in virtually every key slash-and-

hero to contemporaries and in part because he was overshadowed by other reporters during the Watergate scandal. In addition, the Nixon cover-up continues even from the grave, as his estate and federal agencies block access to many historical records. Still, a wealth of fresh material—oral history interviews, once-classified government documents, and previously secret White House tape recordings—shed new light on this fascinating tale of intrigue.

The struggle between Nixon and Anderson personified a larger story of

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It was a supreme irony that Nixon triggered a renaissance of the very investigative reporting he so passionately reviled, and it turned out to be one of his most lasting legacies.

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burn attack on Nixon during his career, from the young congressman's earliest Red-baiting in the 1940s to his financial impropriety in the White House during the 1970s. Even Nixon's most intimate psychiatric secrets were fodder for Anderson's column. The battle between the two men lasted a generation, triggered by differences of politics and personality, centered on the most inflammatory Washington scandals of their era. In the beginning, Anderson's relentless reporting helped plant the first seeds of Nixonian press paranoia. In the end, Anderson's disclosures led to criminal convictions of senior presidential advisors and portions of articles of impeachment against the Chief Executive himself. The columnist both exposed and fueled the worst abuses of the Nixon White House, which eventually reached their apogee in the Watergate scandal that ended his presidency in disgrace.

Surprisingly, the story of the Nixon-Anderson blood feud is little known, in part because the muckraker's checkered reputation made him an unsympathetic

political scandal in the nation's capital during the decades after World War II and involved a virtual Who's Who of Washington's most powerful players: Joseph McCarthy, J. Edgar Hoover, Martin Luther King, George Wallace, Henry Kissinger, Ronald Reagan, and all three Kennedy brothers, John, Robert, and Teddy. Anderson's vilification of Nixon, a blend of courageous reporting and cheap shots, focused on his private as well as his public life and helped usher in what another beleaguered president, Bill Clinton, would call "the politics of personal destruction." It was a supreme irony that Nixon triggered a renaissance of the very investigative reporting he so passionately reviled, and it turned out to be one of his most lasting legacies.

In turn, the President's fierce campaign against Anderson proved to be the forerunner of the modern White House political attack machine. Not only did Nixon set the combative tone that would resonate in the "war rooms" of future political campaigns

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### *Poisoning the Press*

and administrations, he also helped launch the careers of many powerful personalities— Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Patrick Buchanan, Karl Rove, Roger Ailes, Lucianne Goldberg—who would achieve notoriety for their own abilities to manipulate the media on behalf of Nixon’s presidential successors. While Anderson’s tireless muckraking of Nixon was exceptional, the vitriol it spawned would become standard fare in the nation’s capital for the next generation.

To be sure, Anderson was just one in a legion of Nixonian enemies, just as Nixon was only one of Anderson’s many antagonists; in no sense was the relationship between the President and the columnist one of equals. It is not surprising that the two men had only a handful of face-to-face encounters over the years: Nixon kept his distance from most reporters, even sympathetic ones, and Anderson rarely spent much time with his prey. Still, “as a target of ugly thoughts,” the President’s legal counsel said, the investigative columnist eclipsed all of Nixon’s other adversaries. “At the White House,” another senior advisor recalled, “we considered him our arch nemesis.”

For a variety of reasons, Anderson posed the greatest threat of any newsman: because he was willing to publish derogatory information that

more mainstream journalists eschewed; because his syndicated column allowed independence from censorship by any single editor or publisher; and because he was unencumbered by any pretense of objectivity. Indeed, Anderson unabashedly thrust himself into the fray, gleefully passing out classified documents to other reporters and righteously testifying before congressional committees and grand juries that would invariably be convened in the wake of his disclosures. In the secret office of Nixon’s White House operatives, Anderson’s name was posted on the wall as a kind of public enemy number one, inspiring them against their foe. According to one presidential aide, Nixon’s enmity was so great that “he will fight, bleed and die before he will admit to Jack Anderson that he’s wrong or that he’s made a mistake.”

The warfare between the two was intermittent, punctuated by an occasional truce born of expediency or exhaustion or some greater enemy looming temporarily on the horizon. With each attack came a counterattack, until it became nearly impossible to determine who struck first or who was really at fault. While Anderson hounded Nixon in the full glare of the media spotlight, the President’s assaults were launched in secret and designed to remain hidden.

In their determination to vanquish each other—and in their larger quest for power—Nixon and Anderson did not hesitate to use ruthless tactics. The President’s transgressions, of course,

were criminal, and included obstruction of justice by paying hush money to cover up the Watergate break-in, and other acts of political sabotage and abuse of power. Anderson’s infractions were less infamous but also glaring. Years before Watergate, he was linked to bugging and break-ins, and he came perilously close to exposure for bribery and extortion of his news sources. Both men rationalized their duplicitous means in the belief that their ultimate ends were pure. Neither seemed to appreciate the inherent moral contradiction in what they did, or the similarities between their own calculating opportunism. Although both were propelled by a sense of personal virtue, they would be remembered above all for their dirty tricks.

In the end, Nixon and Anderson both learned the hard way the true, coarse price of power, brazenly grasped though fleeting alliances of convenience and a myriad of compromises great and small. “Few reach the political pinnacles without selling what they do not own and promising what is not theirs to give,” Anderson wrote, for “it is easy to forget that power belongs not to those who possess it for the moment, but to the nation and its people.” Yet this was as true for journalists like Jack Anderson as it was for politicians like Richard Nixon. In utterly different ways, these utterly different men both played crucial parts in poisoning government and the press. ■

#### CALL FOR PROPOSALS

### International Conference of Thomas Paine Studies 2012

Iona College, the home of the Thomas Paine Collection, seeks proposals for presentations for an international conference of professional, graduate, undergraduate and lay scholars to be held October 19-21, 2012. Presentations should aim to be 20 minutes in length. The Conference Committee welcomes proposals for individual papers on any subject related to Thomas Paine’s life, legacy [current or past], writings or ideas [e.g. history, literature, politics, philosophy, rhetoric, media studies/mass communication, cultural anthropol-

ogy, and education]. Please submit a one page abstract of your proposed presentation by March 15, 2012.

While presenters are most welcome to propose papers on any pertinent subject, some possible paper/session themes are:

Paine in America; Paine and Freedom of Thought; Paine and Popular Culture; The Message, the Messenger and the Media; The International Influence of Paine; Paine, his Critics and his Champions in Past and Present; Paine and Religion; The Age of Reason and Revolutions; The Politics of Paine in the Past and Present; Social Justice and Social Welfare.

Iona College is located a quarter mile from

Thomas Paine’s cottage and burial site in New Rochelle, NY. Iona’s beautiful 35 acre main campus is only a 25 minute train ride from New York City.

Please send all proposals via regular mail or e-mail (e-mail preferred) by March 15, 2012, to: [dthierry@iona.edu](mailto:dthierry@iona.edu) or:

**Daniel Thierry**  
**Dept. of History**  
**Iona College**  
**715 North Ave**  
**New Rochelle, NY 10801**

The Conference Committee will notify presenters of their acceptance at the end of May 2012.