

The Reporter



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The Nation's Oldest National Honorary Collegiate Journalism Organization

We're back from Nashville

National Council meets and sets Spring agenda

By Mary Beth Earnhardt
SCJ Interim Executive Director

The SCJ National Council and chapter representatives met at the 2004 College Media Advisers Convention in Nashville, TN.

Items topping the agenda included technology, the biennial convention, philanthropy and publications.

TECHNOLOGY

A listserv has been set up by the National Office to facilitate the business of the National Council. The listserv has been in place for several weeks now and seems to work well. The National Council decided that a second listserv should be set up for all chapter advisers and presidents. The National Office is working to achieve this goal. In the future expect a phone call confirming your e-mail address.

The website has been updated and the Constitution Handbook and other valuable information is now available online. The webmaster, Adam Earnhardt, is working with the server vendor to establish an online store and secure donation center. The goal is to make dues payments and donations online in the next few years.

CONVENTION

With the 2004 convention a major success (thanks to the VWC Chapter of SCJ and their tireless adviser, Dr. William Ruehlmann) discussion

turned to determining the dates for the 2006 convention. Valdosta State University in Valdosta Georgia has been selected as the site, and Frank Barnas and his chapter will serve as our hosts. Barnas was unable to attend the National Council meeting, but suggested some possible dates. Ruehlmann suggested the convention take place at the same time as the last one, which was the first weekend in March. Barnas will be contacted to see if this weekend works with the Valdosta calendar.

Sites were discussed for the 2008 convention with both Shirley Shedd from Evangel College and

Vivian Wagner from Muskingum expressing an interest in hosting the events.

PHILANTHROPY

The National Council voted to present the Student Press Law Center (SPLC) with a check for \$1,000. Past SCJ President, Sheridan Barker made the presentation.

February is philanthropy month for SCJ member chapters. Last Fall, the SCJ National Council voted to make SPLC the national philanthropy at the National Council meeting in Virginia Beach. It was determined that February would be our philanthropy

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The National Council and several chapters met in Nashville. The group discussed technology, publications, future conventions and the national philanthropy. Also, Executive Director, Dr. Arthur H. Barlow received an award from CMA for his work as adviser to the Clarion Student Newspaper, *The Clarion Call*.
Photo Courtesy of the Virginia Wesleyan College Chapter of SCJ.

Fraternity members steal newspapers after paper printed their Greek letters

Members of Phi Gamma Delta say their Greek letters are only to be used under special circumstances

INDIANA – Fraternity members at Indiana State University said they stole more than a hundred copies of the *Indiana Statesman* because the student newspaper's use of their Greek letters in an article offended them.

Statesman adviser Merv Hendricks was eating lunch in the student union on Nov. 1 when he saw a group of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity members with two stacks of newspapers at a nearby table.

"I had a suspicion it was either someone who really liked what we published or didn't like at all what we published," Hendricks said.

Hendricks recovered the newspapers and restocked the racks. He said he later received a call from the university athletic director who had returned more papers to the stacks, identifying fraternity members as the culprits.

Later the four newspaper racks in the student union were found emptied.

A Phi Gamma Delta member told *Statesman* Editor in Chief Beth White on Nov. 1 – after the paper had been distributed but before they had been taken – that the fraternity reserves its Greek letters for special circumstances. She told him the newspaper would refrain from printing the letters in the future. He seemed OK after the conversation,



White said.

"Obviously they weren't OK with it," she said.

White said the staff had no way of knowing how many newspapers were stolen. The student paper publishes three times a week and prints 6,500 copies.

"I was so shocked," White said. "We've gone to several conferences where other newspapers have talked about something happening and a group stealing their papers and I thought, that is so ludicrous, I can't imagine that happening."

The paper contained \$6,000 worth of advertising, and a print run of the *Statesman* costs approximately \$1,200, White said. "That doesn't include the wages for student workers," she said.

In the Nov. 3 edition the *Statesman* published an editorial stating the staff had reason to believe the fraternity was responsible for the theft and that the paper would press charges against the individuals who stole the copies.

The next day a fraternity member

gave White the names of three Phi Gamma Delta members who had stolen the papers. "The fraternity as a whole didn't agree with [the theft]," White said.

The three members have been punished within the fraternity and school officials alerted the fraternity's national headquarters.

The fraternity members apologized to the *Statesman* in a letter to the editor on Nov. 8, saying, "We believe the students involved in this action overreacted to your misuse of our [Greek] letters. We also believe that to brand these students as 'criminals' and 'anti-first amendment' was an overreaction."

"Taking a few hundred copies of a free newspaper because of loyalty to a Greek organization is stupid. We admit that," the letter said.

Hendricks said the individuals should be disciplined within the university judicial system.

"They are reacting to internal Greek protection of their own image," Hendricks said. "Our point would be there is a proper way to make that complaint and that is not stealing the newspaper."

This story is reprinted with the permission of the Student Press Law Center. For more information about the issues of the student press check online at www.splc.org.

Anonymous group admits to theft of 5,000 copies of alternative weekly

Student group said in e-mail that *Medium's* content was to blame

NEW JERSEY – A student group calling itself the Progressive Activists has admitted to stealing 5,000 copies of Rutgers University's widely criticized alternative weekly, *The Medium*.

The group sent an anonymous e-mail on Nov. 15 to the university's student newspaper, the *Daily Targum*, claiming responsibility for the Nov. 10 theft of the "hate-charged commentary."

"By confiscating the issues we took a stand against the racism, bigotry, and sexism this publication conveys," the letter reads. "Though we do respect the First Amendment which grants individuals the right to freedom of speech, we do not respect, nor condone the hate speech

that *The Medium* disseminates. No member of the Rutgers community should be subjected to abuse by a publication funded by students."

The Progressive Activists are not an official campus group, said *Medium* opinion editor Ned Berke.

The Medium has a press run of 6,000, which costs about \$600 to print, Berke said. After the original issues were stolen, 4,000 additional copies were printed and distributed around campus.

The Medium gained national notoriety in April when its cover depicted a carnival game, "Knock a Jew Into the Oven," under the headline "Holocaust

Remembrance Week 2004."

Although past issues have created controversy, Berke said this issue did not contain anything that would be offensive to any particular campus group.

Moreover, the Progressive Activists' justification for the theft – that the *Medium* "serves no purpose to the Rutgers community" – is false, said *Medium* adviser and journalism lecturer Ron Miskoff.

"[*The Medium* has] some very thoughtful, intelligent articles amid some things that offend people," Miskoff said. "There may be stories or comments in there which some people don't like but

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The Contest deadline is December 31!

By Art Barlow
SCJ Executive Director

Now is the time to select and submit. Carefully choose what you believe is your finest work from the past year and enter the SCJ national contest.

Remember, your National Office is providing your chapter with this means of recognition.

Our SCJ National Contest is professionally judged and a prestigious award is the right start for the right career.

Take the time to compete.

***** CONTEST RULE CHANGE *****

The matter of photo prints was addressed at the SCJ meeting in Nashville, and it has been agreed that the language about sending in prints for the photo contest be stricken from the rules.

Many schools have gone completely to digital.

To be very clear:

Prints are NOT required. Full tear sheets are.

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they fail to see beyond other articles which are very valuable."

Berke said after the issues were stolen, *Medium* staffers called the Rutgers University police to report the theft, but were initially told there was little the police could do. Miskoff later called the campus police and asked the department to investigate the theft.

Rutgers Police Detective Thomas Chartoff said the matter is being investigated. He declined to comment further, citing the investigation, but said the police have tracked the e-mail from the Progressive Activists to the *Daily Targum* and know where it originated.

Berke said Rutgers students, who are not always appreciative of *The Medium's* content, have come out strongly against the theft.

"The people who have been loudest about the theft are the Rutgers students themselves," he said, noting that a commentary that will appear in the next issue

is from a student who "doesn't like *The Medium*, she thinks it's offensive, but she criticizes these groups for what they did."

"The students are more or less on our side," he said.

In their e-mail the Progressive Activists asked, "How much racism, sexism, and bigotry is allowed to pollute our environment before something is done?"

But Miskoff said that should not be an issue.

"This all seems to be coalescing around the ... content of the newspaper, which in my opinion really should not be part of the discussion right now," he said. Instead, the issue should be "whether the students have the right to put out the paper the way they see fit."

This story is reprinted with the permission of the Student Press Law Center. For more information about the issues of the student press check online at www.splc.org

Spring Agenda from page one

month. All member chapters are encouraged to conduct a fundraiser and send the proceeds of this fundraiser to SPLC. More details are coming in the January newsletter. Also, Dr. Arthur Barlow, Executive Director, reminded members that the Marion Street Press is a great way to raise funds and increase our journalism libraries.

PUBLICATIONS

Copies of the SCJ publication, *The Feature Story Strikes Back*, were available at the meeting. *Feature Story* author, Ruehlmann, spoke to those present about the publication. National Council decided that a copy of the book would be sent to all member chapters who send in initiation reports this year. Additional copies will be available, an order form is being created by the National Office and will be available soon.

In addition to *The Feature Story Strikes Back*, other publications are planned by SCJ. A monographs series on items like conducting a newspaper readership survey for campus publications and being an SCJ adviser were mentioned as possible topics for the series.

SCJ First Vice President, Mary Jennings, appointed SCJ webmaster Adam Earnhardt as the editor of *The Collegiate Journalist (TCJ)* magazine. This magazine will be an online publication.

In addition to these major areas a few other items were covered at the meeting. Vivian Wagner from Muskingum College was elected to the position of Officer-at-Large, she will assist current officers with the business of the organization. Also, there was a brief review of the budget. The meeting took place on November 5 at 10:00 a.m. immediately following a recruitment session for interested schools.

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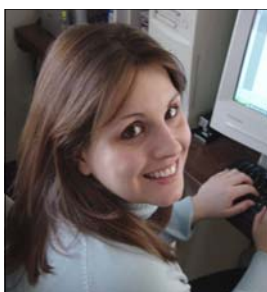
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Notes from the *Interim* Executive Director



In the last three months a great deal of business has been conducted on behalf of student journalists. The Nashville convention was an invigorating session of executive board members, chapter members, and National Office workers. The Spring semester has been planned (see story on page one) and an agenda is in place for the National Office.

We are gearing up for the first ever National Philanthropy Drive. We encourage chapters to use the month of February to raise funds for our National Philanthropy, the Student Press Law Center. This new initiative serves our organization on several levels. First, the Student Press Law center is a worthy friend of collegiate journalists. They are the best line of defense and advice for us, and our help is needed and appreciated. Second, chapter advisers are often asking me ways to get their members involved with the organization. Past initiation, the National office does not require many activities of its members. Supporting SPLC is a way to organize our efforts and create events around a good cause. Third, the National Office has regularly supported Student Press Law Center at the CMA Fall convention, this gives us an opportunity to expand that support to the Spring semester as well.

Many campuses vary on the rules they set forth for fundraising activities, so I encourage you to check with your student organizations office before organizing your events. However, a car wash, 50/50 drawing, or book sale are some ideas to consider. Also, remember the agreement with Marion Street press. If you would like to sell books from their collection, please contact the National Office for materials and details.

Have a great break.

SCJ Chapter Notes and News

Congratulations to our new members at:

Virginia Wesleyan College, VA—7 new members;
Muskingum College, OH—6 new members;
Hampden-Sydney College, VA—4 new members;
Southwest Missouri, MO—11 new members;
Murray State, KY—2 new members.

The SCJ contest deadline is approaching!

The rules are enclosed with this mailing. For more information contact the National Contest Director, Mary Jennings. Her phone number is (256) 765-4426 or you can email her at mcjennings@una.edu.

Don't fall behind on the law.

For the latest briefings on the legal issues of the collegiate press and answers to frequently asked questions, check out the Student Press Law Center online at www.splc.org. Remember SPLC is SCJ's official national philanthropy.

The SCJ Reporter

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