

The Reporter



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The Nation's Oldest National Honorary Collegiate Journalism Organization

President Ruehlmann sets the agenda

By Dr. William Ruehlmann
SCJ National President

Greetings, SCJers!

We're still coming down from the invigorating biennial convention at Virginia Wesleyan College last spring.

A good and informative time was had by all.

VWC and SCJ alumnus and current and professional Washington DC, reporter Chris Williams spoke on getting that first journalism job and the importance of every story you write in preparation for it, no matter where your byline appears: "Be ruthlessly efficient about cranking out these stories and make the most of your time," he said of building a portfolio.

And as I have advised the hard-working staff of *The Marlin Chronicle* here at Wesleyan, "At 3 o'clock in the morning, when the office smells like spilled coffee, sausage pizza and something that might have been carry out Chinese, and the phone is ringing because one of the RA's at last has an ID on the mud wrestler on the page-two photo, and the story or the page or the section or, heaven save us, the issue is finally coming together, reflect just for one moment upon how much fun you're having."

Fun it is. AND a public service. What better line of endeavor could there be?

Don't forget the annual ACP/CMA National College Media Convention

is coming up in Nashville, November 3-7, and we'll be there for an important SCJ meeting which will be noted in the program, so please join us if you can.

Among our new efforts will be the publication of a feature writing text and some helpful monographs on journalism, and we expect to unveil our first volume there.

And don't forget our ongoing SCJ initiatives to induct new members and to recruit new chapters.

Also, all chapters have the opportunity to enter our national SCJ journalism contest in December (details enclosed).

We're small but straight-ahead committed to the encouragement and support of student journalists. In our organization, every member helps every other member.

We believe in individual effort empowered by the team like a newspaper.

Stay well and in touch.



National President Dr. William Ruehlmann poses with members of his hard working SCJ Chapter. (Photo courtesy of the Virginia Wesleyan chapter of SCJ.)

Campus newspaper objects to new policy, asks state attorney general to rule

KENTUCKY — Objecting to a new university policy that allows victims' names to be deleted from campus police incident reports, the University of Kentucky student newspaper, the *Kentucky Kernel*, formally requested an open-records decision from the state's attorney general on Sept. 20.

On Aug. 25, the university began allowing victims to have their name withheld from open-records requests by checking a box on the police report. The policy also formally classifies police incident reports as "preliminary documents," exempting them from the state open-records law.

The university said it will continue to release the altered reports in order to comply with the federal Clery Act, which requires universities to disclose basic crime information such as date, time, location and a summary of the incident. Before Aug. 25, university police released unaltered reports to the media.

In a letter to Attorney General Greg Stumbo, lawyer for the *Kentucky Kernel* Jon L. Fleischaker said, "The attorney general has long recognized that a police incident report is a final document." He also argued that the police report does not change throughout the course of the investigation and therefore cannot be considered preliminary.

Kernel Editor in Chief Emily Hagedorn said the issue arose last spring after a series of assaults on campus. Police released information on a student who had been shot but initially withheld the name of an employee who was assaulted.

"It was really odd because they released the [names of] people who had more serious injuries than this guy who was just shaken up by



things," Hagedorn said.

When police refused to release the name, Hagedorn said the paper published stories and editorials about the issue and filed a freedom of information request. The name was eventually released.

"We didn't hassle [the employee] or anything like that," Hagedorn said. "We had a brief in the paper, just to say we got the name, and [that] so and so declined to comment."

The newspaper has always printed victims' names when appropriate, Hagedorn said. She said the reason the employee did not want his name released was that he feared retaliation.

"If they feel unsafe then they need to tell us; the police can't just censor that and keep that from us," she said. "Nine times out of 10, I can't think of anyone who was actually mad when we called them for comment," she said.

University of Kentucky Counsel General Barbara Jones also said the idea for withholding identities began with an employee who requested that his name be withheld.

"Based on the way the attorney general's opinions had been released, I could not figure out a way to protect his identity," Jones said. After three days—the maximum time agencies have to release requested information under open-records laws—Jones released the employee's identity.

The new policy was implemented out of respect for victims' privacy,

Jones said.

"My concern is that in a lot of instances, people aren't arrested, people aren't prosecuted, and the only person that becomes the public figure is the victim. And I don't see what's right about that. Why does the victim become the public figure?"

In the first 21 incidents of the fall semester, Jones said 11 victims requested their identity be withheld.

Following complaints from the *Kernel* and other local media, Jones wrote to Stumbo on Sept. 3 asking for a written opinion on the issue.

Jones said police reports become final once the investigation is complete, and the information becomes public if charges are filed. However, Hagedorn is concerned the media would never get victims' names, even if a case is closed for years.

In August, the state Attorney General ruled in a separate case that police cannot adopt a broad policy of withholding names, but that addresses, phone numbers and other information can be withheld. Identifying victims' gives the public an opportunity to scrutinize the police, Stumbo wrote.

Previous Kentucky Supreme Court decisions have said the names of juveniles and sexual assault victims do not need to be released.

A spokeswoman for Stumbo said his opinion is expected Oct. 15. Hagedorn said the *Kernel* is prepared to appeal if necessary. Jones said University of Kentucky officials have agreed to abide by the attorney general's decision.

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.

Webmaster reports on homepage changes

By Adam Earnhardt
Webmaster

The SCJ website is now available to members at www.scj.us.

We have secured this new domain name and purchased different server space to accommodate our changing needs.

The name change should bring us greater name recognition and will be easier for chapter members to remember.

The site has been at this new address for several months, but some items are still under construction. Repeated tests have revealed areas for improvement and I encourage each member of SCJ to test out the new site and send me feedback at aearnhardt@clarion.edu or call me directly at (814)393-2659.

This year should also bring an increased number of chapter websites.

As the importance of the web as a marketing and communications tool continues to grow, so should our web presence.

Several chapters have individual sites, but I would like to see all chapters develop and maintain a web presence.

If you have a site, please email the address to me so I can create a link from the home page.

Another goal for this school year is to create and manage online forms and publications.

The website has allowed our organization a wealth of opportunities and I plan to take full advantage of this.

The SCJ web presence is over 5-



Webmaster Adam Earnhardt
(Photo courtesy of the Clarion University.)

years-old.

We have gone through many changes in this time, and I am looking forward to leading us through more changes in the future.

Barlow to receive award in Nashville

By Mary Beth Earnhardt
SCJ Interim Executive Director

Dr. Arthur H. Barlow, SCJ National Executive Director, has been selected as the College Media Advisers Four Year Distinguished Newspaper Adviser for 2004.

The award will be presented during the CMA Fall convention in Nashville, Tennessee.

SCJ President Dr. William

Ruehlmann reminds us, "WE knew what we had first, and recognized the incomparable Arthur as SCJ Adviser of the Year at the convention in March!"

Dr. Barlow has been working with SCJ for many years. He has served as President and is currently in his eleventh year as Executive Director. In addition, he was adviser to Clarion University newspaper, *The Clarion Call*, and founded

the Clarion University non-fiction magazine, *The Eyrie*.

"Dr. Barlow is an asset to all collegiate journalists," said Mary Beth Earnhardt, Interim SCJ Executive Director.

"Dr. Barlow believes in protecting and advancing collegiate journalism and his work has provided us with many opportunities. SCJ, CMA, and Clarion University are lucky to have him."

HEY SCJers - Don't forget to attend the CMA convention!

Nashville Convention - November 3-7

And plan ahead for the upcoming CMA conventions

Spring 2005 Convention March 17-19 in New York

Fall 2005 Convention October 27-30 in New Orleans

National Council

President

Dr. William Ruehlmann
1584 Wesleyan Drive
Virginia Wesleyan College
Norfolk/Va Beach, VA 23502-5599
(757)455-3419 FAX (757)461-5025
E-mail: wjruehlmann@vwc.edu

Past President

Dr. Sheridan Barker
Carson-Newman College
Box 1869
Jefferson City, TN 37760
(423)581-7731

First Vice President

National Contest Director

Mary Jennings
University of North Alabama
Box 5027
Florence, AL 35632
(256)765-4426 FAX (256)765-4275
E-mail: mcjennings@una.edu

Second Vice President

Shirley Shedd
Communication Department
1111 N. Glenstone
Evangel College
Springfield, MO 65802
(417)865-2811
E-mail: sashedd@aol.com

Third Vice President

Dr. Michael Longinow
Department of Communication
RM 400 Morrison Hall
Macklin Dr.
Asbury College
Wilmore, KY 40390-1198
(606)858-3511 ext. 248
E-mail: mlonginow@asbury.edu

Executive Director

Arthur H. Barlow
Becker Hall
Clarion University
Clarion, PA 16214
(814)393-2515 FAX (814)393-2186
E-mail: barlow@clarion.edu

Chapter Representatives

Dr. Joe Mirando
SLU 10428
Hammond, LA 70402
(504)549-3374
E-mail: rhi@thunder-rain.com

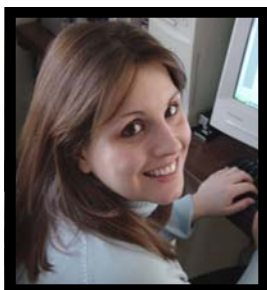
Cathy Keuhner
Shenandoah University
1460 University Drive
Winchester, VA 22601
(540)678-4338
E-mail: ckeuhner@su.edu

Frank Barnas
Communication Arts Department
Valdosta State University
Valdosta, GA 31698
(229)259-5087 FAX (229)245-3799
E-mail: fbarnas@mail.valdosta.edu

Dr. Sheridan Barker
Carson-Newman College
Box 1869
Jefferson City, TN 37760
(423)581-7731



Notes from the *Interim* Executive Director



We are now a month into the new semester and the SCJ National Office is up and running. As the Interim Executive Director I am working hard to complete the tasks assigned to the National Office at the convention.

First, Dr. Bill Ruehlmann and I are working with a printer to publish his text, "The Feature Story Strikes Back." While we are still in discussions about format and costs, things are looking good. The text would be the first of its kind and we plan to distribute copies to our active chapters. In addition to the Feature text, we also plan to publish a monographs series and bring back *The Collegiate Journalist* magazine as a web publication.

Second, the SCJ National Contest deadline will be here before you know it. Please remember to gather your best work and submit it before the December deadline. Enclosed with this publication is a list of contest rules. This contest is a great opportunity for our chapters. It is judged by professional journalists.

Third, the initiations are beginning to trickle into the office. In addition to gaining membership through our current chapters, I have also sent starter kits to several universities that are interested in chartering a new chapter. The growth is healthy and we are prepared for even more.

Finally, remember to attend the CMA convention in Nashville. It is a wonderful opportunity for collegiate journalists to gather and learn from each other. Your National Council will be meeting in Nashville and through a listserv so we can continue with our assigned tasks.

SCJ Chapter Notes and News

Congratulations to our NEW MEMBERS at:

Midland Lutheran College, NE—9 new members.

Clarion University of Pennsylvania will host College Media Day VIII on October 15, 2004.

The day will include two keynote addresses, several academic sessions, and presentations by media professionals. For more information check out the website at www.clarion.edu/cmd. SCJ members are invited to attend. Please pre-register before October 11.

The SCJ contest deadline is approaching!

The rules are enclosed with 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.

The SCJ Reporter

The SCJ newsletter is published once a month during the fall and spring semesters in accordance with the Clarion University of Pennsylvania academic calendar. It is created on an Optiquist computer using Microsoft Publisher 2000.

Editor...Mary Beth Earnheardt

Please send submissions to:

Art Barlow
Becker Hall
Clarion University
Clarion, PA 16214

E-mail:
barlow@clarion.edu
mearnheardt@clarion.edu

