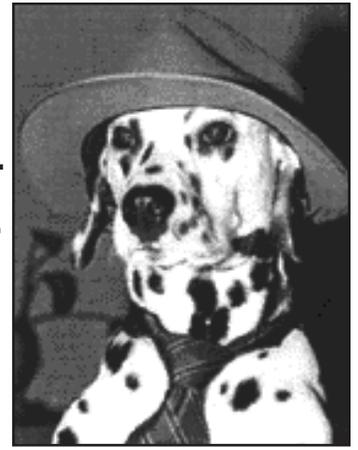


# Spot News

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## Local media-PR relations appear good; ethical dilemmas stem from other factors

By Dorothy Bowles, Spot News editor

Convincing top managers, corporate officers and sub-contractors to be proactive about situations that, while legal, present potentially damaging public relations is often difficult. That was one point that panelists representing both PRSA and SPJ made at the joint luncheon last week.

TV news organizations owned by publicly traded companies must live up to the RTNDA and SPJ codes of ethics, as well as business codes, Jan Wade, WATE-TV general manager, said.

Donna Creech, community relations manager at Shaw Environmental, commented about problems dealing with government sub-contractors who may be reluctant to follow federal directives to involve and inform the public about environmental clean-up projects.

Ellen Liston, community relations director at the East Tennessee Children's Hospital, noted restraints presented by the HIPPA law in her dealings with the media. She also said everyone at her hospital is bound by its organizational ethics policy.

How to play stories about crime to avoid accusations of sensationalism and whether to use names of victims who testify in open court were among the ethical dilemmas that Darrell Richardson, The Oak Ridger editor, discussed.



**Steve Geimann, new president of the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation, presented Georgiana Vines a brass clock on behalf of the Foundation in honor of Vines' nearly 24 years of service at the national level of the Society of Professional Journalists. Vines was first elected to the national SPJ board as a regional director in 1982; also served as at-large director and president-elect before becoming president for 1992-93. She was on the Foundation board for 14 years. The Foundation is SPJ's educational and fundraising arm.**



**Jean Ash, chapter vice president and delegate to the national convention in Chicago, proudly displays the plaque the ETSPJ won as the best small chapter in the nation for excellence in professional development.**

## National Convention 2006

*Excerpts from The Working Press, the convention newspaper produced by student SPJ members*

### Brewer bounds into SPJ presidency

SPJ's new president-elect, Clint Brewer, said after his election Saturday that he plans to use the office to help make the organization a better advocate and resource for the average journalist.

"We need to explain the relevancy of our organization to their working lives," said Brewer, who edged out Bruce Cadwallader 74-60 Saturday in the first contested race for president-elect in recent memory.

Brewer, the executive editor of The City Paper in Nashville, Tenn., and a member of SPJ for 15 years, said he hopes to focus more attention on issues of concern to local chapters, improve online services, and strengthen communication between members and their

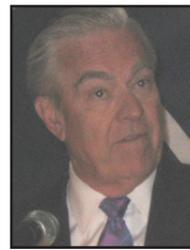


It's called the Brehon Pub now, but 25 years ago it was the Mirage Tavern, scene of a journalistic sting operation that almost won a Pulitzer Prize until jurors questioned the ethics of journalists working undercover. Reporters for the Chicago Sun-Times, the Better Government Association and CBS' "60 Minutes" leased a Chicago bar and waited for crooked city inspectors to come in with their hands out, looking for bribes to overlook code violations. Did they ever! Leaky pipes, unclean floors — nothing stopped the Mirage Tavern from getting the inspectors' OK as long as the bribes kept flowing. Was it entrapment? Did it go too far? Twenty-five years after the Mirage, the questions are still debated. All the originals were on-hand to discuss their work in the very building where the shady deals went down. (Photo by Jean Ash)



national representatives on the board. (By Drew Kerr, University of Iowa)

### After 40 years in the business, there's no slowing down keynote speaker Bill Kurtis



Bill Kurtis

A deadly tornado in Topeka, Kan., and a simple warning — "for God's sake, take cover" — propelled Bill Kurtis into a career in journalism. The Washburn University School of Law grad was studying to pass the bar when a friend asked Kurtis to fill in at a local TV station that day. After staying on air for 24 hours, Kurtis knew it was a defining moment in his life. His career since, "is history," the 65-year-old said. (By Michael Malik, Indiana University)

**From Kurtis' speech:** *We have lots of information presented by highly talented reporters, producers, and editors. But when we examine a newscast it often looks like our over-processed food supply. Sugars are celebrity gossip stories. Salts are crime stories producing a lot of heat. The fats are tabloidesque stories, packaged very attractively — mindless and easy to consume.*

### Board approves \$30,000 grant

Continuing its tradition of support for First Amendment rights, SPJ on Wednesday awarded a jailed independent journalist a \$30,000 grant — the largest ever given by SPJ.

Freelancer Joshua Wolf was sent to a California federal prison Aug. 1 after refusing to turn over to government officials his unpublished footage of a violent protest. The SPJ grant, approved by the National Board, will help pay Wolf's legal expenses, which his lawyers have agreed to cap at \$60,000. (By Kristin Longley, Michigan State University)

## ETSPJ Officers and Board of Directors

**Ed Hooper**, president

**Jean Ash**, vice president for Front Page Follies, communications coordinator

**Mia Rhodarmer**, vice president for Golden Press Card awards (co-chair)

**Ann Lloyd**, secretary

**Dan Foley**, treasurer

**Dorothy Bowles**, immediate past president, Spot News editor, Golden Press Card awards co-chair

**Elenora Edwards**, program chair

**John Huotari**, membership chair

**Christine Jessel**

**Adina Chumley**

**Lisa Hood Skinner**

**Randy Tedford**

**Georgiana Vines**

**Letters to the Editor Policy:** The board encourages letters to the editor of Spot News. Like letters policies at most newspapers, we ask that letters be limited to 200 words or less. Letters will be subject to editing for space and content. Send e-mail to [etspj.communications@gmail.com](mailto:etspj.communications@gmail.com)



Ashley Yeager, UT student chapter president and convention delegate, and Jean Ash, ETSPJ delegate, pose outside the Chicago Tribune Building. The quotation from John Milton emblazoned on the building facade reads "Give me Liberty to know, to utter and to argue freely according to my conscience, above all other liberties." (photo by Bonnie Hufford)

## One-member one-vote measure fails, but may come up again

By Jean Ash

The vote was close: 70-65, and judging from comments made from the microphone during the discussion period, most delegates were undecided before casting a majority of votes against the proposed bylaws change that would have altered the way SPJ membership elects its top officers in Chicago last month.

The proposal, sponsored and heavily promoted by outgoing SPJ President Dave Carlson, would have allowed each member to cast his or her own ballot via the Internet or phone from home in the same 24-hour period during the annual convention. Candidates' presentations at the convention would be web cast live and they could set up interactive chat rooms, etc., to allow members to ask questions and get to know them.

**Currently, the president,** president-elect, VP for campus chapter affairs and secretary-treasurer are selected by a vote of chapter delegates who are physically at the convention—and physically at the business session. Chapters have votes based on number of official members in blocks of one vote per 50 members or fraction thereof. (The East Tennessee Chapter had one vote for our membership of about 45 at the deadline. We have gained a few new members since then and may be over 50 now.)

Those in favor of the measure said SPJ should be the bastion of free expression by allowing each member to have a

say in the election process. A particularly moving comment was made by a young woman originally from Hong Kong but now a member of an Iowa chapter.

**She asked** the delegates to consider how Hong Kong is now governed in the wake of its handover to China in 1997: the "representatives" who make laws there are mostly hand-picked by the communist government in Beijing and do not really have any responsibility to the people they govern.

Someone compared the current procedure to the Electoral College. Another argument was that not all members are affiliated with a chapter and thus are disenfranchised as things stand now.

**Opponents noted** that there's never been an outpouring of dissatisfaction with the way the voting is done now and that most members who don't attend the convention have little interest in the leadership. Some said National should make sure all members are affiliated with the nearest chapter in their state which would solve the disenfranchisement objection.

Others were concerned with the proposed process of web casting and using Internet setups that could easily fail and leave non-attendees out of the loop after all.

**Going into the convention,** I was leaning toward voting for the bylaws change but at our Board Retreat in July,

two board members expressed doubt about it. One was concerned that chapters with hundreds of members might be able to force a candidate to victory with little opposition.

Another continued that line of thinking saying it might be harder for candidates from small chapters like ours to have a chance at election to national office. Nobody at that meeting of the ETSPJ board spoke strongly in favor of the measure but empowered me to vote according to the discussion.

**For me, as your delegate** with a single vote, it came down to direct democracy vs. representative democracy. Many governing bodies, like city councils and state legislatures, are examples of the latter

I voted to leave the system alone for now even though all the reasons for changing it have merit. I agree that there should be some organizational changes like those proposed to make sure all members are associated with a chapter and another that would raise the total number of votes, say, threefold, so that small chapters like ours could split three votes according to the membership's wishes instead of having to vote either A or B.

**I also feel** that the issue had a thorough airing and hope that chapter members everywhere will make it known to their boards how they want leadership selected. I look forward to the issue coming up again.

## Three area members elected to 2006-07 Board of Directors

**Elenora Easterly Edwards** grew up in a newspaper family, as her parents owned The LaFollette Press and the Jellico Advance-Sentinel. She says she “worked on the papers all my life” until we sold them

After graduating with degree in English from Maryville College, she studied six semesters at the University of Missouri School of Journalism, Columbia, and there worked for Missouri Press Association and the Freedom of Information Center.

From there she worked for 24 years at the Clinton Courier-News as a reporter, then news editor, then worked as substitute for other staffers and the publisher and on special projects.

She has been managing editor of The Tennessee Press for the past 15 years. She and her son live near Clinton. Elenora has been a member of SPJ most



**Elenora Edwards**

of the time since 1971.

**John Huotari** is the city hall reporter for The Oak Ridger. John, who lives in Oak Ridge, has been at the paper full-time since Oct. 2005. Prior to that, he had completed two internships at the News Sentinel in Knoxville and had worked for The Oak Ridger as a Roane County correspondent.

John is completing a bachelor's degree in music at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, where he took several journalism courses and worked for the student newspaper, The Daily Beacon.

Besides East Tennessee, he has lived in Denver, Seattle, and Minneapolis.

**Ann Lloyd** is the local host of NPR's All Things Considered on WUOT. She's been with the station for three and a half years. Since joining WUOT, she's won a number of awards for feature reports from SPJ and AP. She can occasionally be heard on NPR covering an East Tennessee story. Just recently, Ann had the pleasure of fulfilling a professional dream: producing a feature

for Voice of America.

Ann's broadcast background stretches back to 1970 when she started out as a rock and roll DJ. After a few years of abusing her hearing, she made the switch to news. She's worked at a variety of stations in Michigan, Las Vegas, Kansas and Tennessee.

### Please help

- by volunteering to chair the Auction Committee for the Front Page Follies. Michael Holtz, communications director of local American Cancer Society, and other members will help, but we need a co-ordinator.
- by nominating the person you would like to honor at Follies. The board will make a decision at the October meeting, so act now.

### Mark your calendar

- Sunday, Oct. 8, 5:30 board meets at Mandarin House West.
- Wednesday, Dec. 7, 6 p.m. tentative date for Christmas Party at Maplehurst Inn.



**EAST TENNESSEE CHAPTER**

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