



Virginia Chapter Newsletter

May 2003

Chapter Honors "Ham" Smith

W&L Professor Wins George Mason Award

**By John Dillon
Richmond Times-Dispatch**

Hampden H. "Ham" Smith III, a journalism professor at Washington and Lee University, is the 2003 winner of the George Mason Award for outstanding contributions to Virginia journalism.

The award is given annually by the Virginia Pro SPJ chapter.

Smith joined the W&L faculty in 1974 as an assistant professor. He became a professor of journalism in 1986 and head of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communications in 1989. He has trained a generation of journalists now working in Virginia and elsewhere.

He brought real-world skills and experience to his classroom from 10 years as a reporter and editor for three newspapers in Virginia. He worked for the Staunton Leader and the Petersburg Progress-Index as a reporter and editor, and for The Richmond News Leader in a variety of editing positions.

He maintained his skills while at W&L by working as a copy editor for the Philadelphia Inquirer for many of the past 20 summers.

Smith also has been active in state and national journalism organizations and was a Fulbright lecturer at the American University in Bulgaria in 1998-99.

Bruce Potter, director of news synergy for Media General, Inc., nominated Smith, who was one of his professors.

"Professor Smith's inimitable 'tough love' style of teaching may have scared off some students who weren't quite prepared for the rough-and-tumble world of daily journalism," Potter wrote. "But those who survived his classes were better prepared to work in daily newsrooms, and they knew Professor Smith would provide solid career guidance."

Smith will step down as head of the journalism department at the end of this school year and enter a phased retirement.

The George Mason Award dinner honoring Smith will be held Wednesday, June 4, at the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond.



Hampden H. "Ham" Smith III

***MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS NOW FOR THE ANNUAL
GEORGE MASON AWARD DINNER: SEE PAGE 2***

Dinner Reservations Due by May 15

Make your reservations now for the annual George Mason Awards Dinner at the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, 701 E. Byrd Street, Richmond, on Wednesday, June 4.

The evening will begin with a 6:15 reception in the lobby of the Money Museum. Dinner will be served at 7 in the executive dining room on the 23rd floor.

The cost per person is \$35 (to be paid at the door). The deadline for reservations is May 15. Telephone Bonnie Falls, (804) 697-8114, or e-mail her, <rich.pameetings@rich.frb.org>.

Please allow at least 15 minutes for parking and security checks upon entering the FRB.

For directions to the FRB, see <<http://www.rich.frb.org/generalinfo/visitors/richmond.html>>.

Chapter Will Elect Officers, Board Members

The SPJ Virginia Pro Chapter will elect officers and board members at a brief business meeting at the George Mason Award Dinner June 4.

The nominees for chapter officers to be presented to the membership are Brian Eckert (president), Jim Mann (vice president), Denise Williams (secretary) and Wayne Scarberry (treasurer).



Brian Eckert

Three new board members to serve until 2006 will be selected. The nominees are Nancy Beasley, Dan Neman and Laurie-McKay Smith.

STARTED AS SPORTS STRINGER

Eckert, the nominee for president, has worked in nearly every branch of journalism, starting in high school as a sports stringer for six newspapers and a radio station. Upon graduation from Wake Forest University, he joined the Burlington County (N.J.) Herald as a reporter-photographer. His sale of an unsolicited manuscript on snow skiing in North Carolina led to international travel assignments and the assistant editorship of TravelScene Magazine in New York.

After leaving to finish writing a textbook on the humanities, Eckert won simultaneous jobs as morning news anchor-producer with New Jersey Public Television and news director of WJJZ-AM. Two seasons later, he joined commercial startup WRBV-TV (Vineland-Philadelphia) as producer of the evening news, adding anchor, news director, program director and production manager to his duties.

In 1988-89, he won a Rotary Foundation journalism scholarship to the Reuters Fellowship Programme at Oxford University, also working as a graduate intern and free-lance correspondent for Voice of America's London bureau.

Upon returning to the United States, Eckert entered public relations as Wake Forest's director of media relations. He later represented Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools and a major airline before joining the University of Richmond in 1999 as director of media and public relations.

TWO DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSSES

Mann, the nominee for vice president, has been associate managing editor of The Free Lance-Star in Fredericksburg since 1989. He has worked at the paper full-time since 1970.

In 1965, he graduated from the University of Iowa with a bachelor's degree in political science. Following college, he became a helicopter pilot in the Army. During the Vietnam War, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross twice - once when his helicopter was shot down during a combat assault near Saigon and again for flying through enemy fire to rescue the crew of a downed aircraft.

At the Freelance Star, Mann started by covering the Fredericksburg City Council; he then was editor of the weekend Town & Country section, and for a while he wrote a column. He worked as wire news editor and next became assistant city editor before moving up to his current position.

In 1997, he received the Distinguished Service Award from the Virginia Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists for his contributions to the chapter and to journalism in the state. He is now vice president of the SPJ, SDX Educational Foundation, which provides annual scholarships to Virginia college students planning to become journalists.



Jim Mann

ORGANIZES STATEWIDE TRAINING PROGRAMS

Williams, the nominee for secretary, has been director of professional development for the Virginia Press Association since 1999 and is responsible for organizing newspaper training programs throughout the state. Her journalism career spans 25 years. She has worked for The News-Journal (Wilmington, Del.), The Associated Press (Los Angeles), The Oakland Tribune, The Albuquerque Tribune, The Tennessean (Nashville) and the Daily Press (Newport News). She has also held positions at the Maynard Institute for Journalism Education, the California Teachers Association and The Achievement Council (Oakland, Calif.). A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Southern California, Williams also holds an MBA from the University of New Mexico. She is active in the Society of Professional Journalists, the National Association of Black Journalists, Calvary Chapel, Lit'Noire Book Club, Black Pearls, and Toastmasters International.



Denise Williams

& World-News from 1979 until 1989, when he moved to Rochester, N.Y. to become assistant picture editor at the Times-Union.

He was promoted to photo editor, where he was in charge of the photo operation for both the Times-Union and the Democrat and Chronicle. He started his own photography business in 1995, working for clients such as Time magazine, USA Today, The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Associated Press, Xerox, Bausch and Lomb, and Axzo Nobel Corporation. He moved his business to Richmond in 2000.

WORKING ON HOLOCAUST BOOK

Board nominee Nancy Wright Beasley was the 2000-01 winner of the Virginia Press Association's best in show for specialty writing and has been a professional journalist for almost 25 years, including seven years as a state correspondent for The Richmond News Leader. A recipient of a master's degree from



Wayne Scarberry

Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Mass Communications, Beasley now serves as an adjunct professor there.

Beasley, a free-lance writer, has been a personal columnist and a contributing editor for Richmond, The City Magazine for five years and has written award-winning columns and features for that magazine, as well as many others. She is working on a book that centers on a Richmond family who survived the Holocaust by living underground for nearly nine months in Lithuania during World War II.

MOVIE CRITIC IN RICHMOND SINCE 1986

Board candidate Neman is the movie critic at the Richmond Times-Dispatch, for which he also covers dance and comedy. He came to the T-D in 1992 when it merged with The Richmond News Leader, where he had been movie critic since 1986.

He was also the Helpline writer for a couple of years. Before that he was entertainment writer for the Bryan-College Station (Texas) Eagle. He is a native of Cincinnati and a graduate of the University of Chicago.



Nancy Beasley

FORMER GOOCHLAND COURIER M.E.

Board Candidate McKay-Smith recently joined the SunTrust Mortgage Inc. marketing team to manage the Continuity program, which aims to promote customer retention through e-business.

She is the former managing editor of the Goochland Courier, one of Virginia's newest community newspapers. During her tenure, McKay-Smith focused her efforts on building a newspaper that responded to community needs. In January, the Goochland Courier was named "Paper of Record" for the county.

McKay-Smith has also held several public relations positions with the Medical College of Virginia and the Commonwealth of Virginia. She served as a member of the marketing and public relations team for former Gov. Jim Gilmore's No. 1 e-business project, eVA.



Dan Neman

Continuing SPJ board members are Lisa Brownlee, Lee Bumgarner and Paula Otto (whose terms expire in 2004) and Dorothy Abernathy, Don Dale and Jonathan Hunley (whose terms expire in 2005). Wilma Wirt, adviser to the VCU student SPJ chapter, is an ex officio board member, as is the president of VCU student chapter.



Laurie-McKay Smith

Mission Statement

The mission of the SPJ Virginia Pro Chapter is to represent and bring together Virginia journalists on issues of importance to the profession to achieve fellowship, education and support, and to improve our credibility with the public.

Winners from Virginia Union and Mary Washington

Richmond SPJ, SDX Educational Foundation Awards Scholarships To Two Students

**By Don Dale
Virginia Pro Chapter Board Member**

The Richmond SPJ, SDX Educational Foundation, an affiliate of the Virginia Professional Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, has awarded two \$2,000 merit scholarships to Virginia college students committed to careers in journalism.

The 2003 scholarships were awarded to Stephen M. Lewis of Richmond, a rising senior at Virginia Union University, and to Portsia Simone Smith of Hanover, who will be a senior at Mary Washington College this fall.

The scholarships are awarded based on accomplishments, commitment to a career in journalism, and experience in journalism-related work and organizations. Applicants must be rising juniors or seniors attending a four-year accredited undergraduate college in Virginia.

Lewis, a journalism/mass communications major, is editor of Virginia Union University's student newspaper, The Informer, and has worked as an editorial assistant in the sports department at the Richmond Times-Dispatch for a year. He is a member of the VUU Chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists and plans a career in sports magazine feature writing.

Smith, a sociology major, is assistant news editor of The Bullet, the Mary Washington College student paper, and is an intern at the Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star. She is co-president of the college's Women of Color organization and plans a career in magazine journalism.

Lewis, a graduate of Henrico High School in Richmond, and Smith, who was graduated from Patrick Henry High School in Ashland, were among 20 scholarship applicants. They will be recognized at the SPJ chapter's annual George Mason Award dinner in Richmond on June 4.

President's Message

Goodbye and Thank You!

**By Laura Fortunato
Virginia Pro Chapter President**

Dear colleagues and friends:

This has been a memorable year for our nation. The world has changed before our eyes and our view of the world continues to change. What better field to work in than that of communications and journalism. We help provide the perspectives and details that educate, inspire debate and raise the voices of many. Our challenge for the future will be to train and inspire a new generation that takes that mission forward.

I'd like to extend a thank you to members, professional colleagues and the board of directors whose interest, commitment and support made this a successful year. I am particularly grateful to several colleagues who went the extra mile to help me during a year of learning and transition.

- Brian, you are a solid team player and a dear friend. I am grateful to you for

picking up the ball more than once and carrying it with great passion and energy.

- Denise, you are a true professional whose steadiness and grace inspire me.
- Wayne, you managed to keep one hand on the camera and the other on the ledger while keeping your own business thriving, a balancing act indeed.
- Nancy, the dancing diva of the SPJ Christmas party, neither snow nor sleet could still your feet. May you always rumba while you write. (Good luck with the book!)
- Don, the master of the newsletter and of other things creative and thought provoking. Thanks for keeping us on our toes.
- Dorothy, you set a good example for all women who are juggling work and family. I still don't know how you do it all. I am watching closely.
- John Dillon, thanks for helping put the George Mason event together and for all the wonderful insights you provide. Your experience and enthusiasm for our profession are admirable.
- Louise, there is not enough room here to say what I would like to say. You are an incredible newswoman and communicator. Your determined and passionate spirit, power and commitment are exemplary. You are an amazing woman and mentor. I am most grateful.
- A special thank you to Jonathon Hunley: Your voice is an important one that should be heard and heard often. Thank you for representing our district as Regional Director. You have been an excellent source of information for all of us and have kept us on top of the issues. Best of luck to you in your future professional journeys and your upcoming marriage.



Laura Fortunato
(Photo by Geep
Schurman, FRB-
Richmond)

Again, thanks to all of you. We have worked well and debated well, and our fellowship has made for memorable experiences.

Best wishes,

Laura

[Nina Totenberg Speaks at UR](#)

The War and the Supreme Court

**By Brian Eckert
Virginia Pro Chapter Vice President**

Government's need to violate civil liberties in wartime will be judged anew by the Supreme Court, NPR legal affairs correspondent Nina Totenberg told an audience April 15 at the University of Richmond.

Although limitations on freedoms have been imposed before during wartime, no previous war has been like the current one – with no end and no clear enemy. In such a setting, she said, civil rights are in peril. During previous wars and threatened hostilities, the high court has had to strike a balance between the conflicting needs of security and the prevention of tyranny in the form of concentrated executive, legislative and judicial power. This war, different from all others, is bringing about a concentration of power to a degree not previously experienced.

"Hundreds have been deported for things considered minor infractions only a few years ago. Immigration judges are routinely overruled by the attorney general and cannot act independently from political oversight. The executive branch has closed deportation hearings to the public," Totenberg said, giving examples of how President George W. Bush and Attorney General John Ashcroft have claimed new powers for themselves. "What is to prevent any one of us from being picked up off the street and being held without access to a lawyer or our families?" she asked.

Totenberg opened her talk with an assessment of the Supreme Court's future. She said she expects Chief Justice William Rehnquist to announce his retirement this spring while the Republican Party that appointed him controls the White House and Congress. And, she expects Bush to nominate White House counsel Alberto Gonzales as his successor. Totenberg said Bush has low interest in judicial matters but would use the opportunity to repay conservatives and the religious right, who have a huge interest in any court vacancies.

About a dozen Virginia Pro Chapter members and their guests attended the lecture and reception.

First Person

Long Hours, Low Pay ... and Giving 'Em Hell

**By Shel ton "Lee" Bumgarner
Virginia Pro Chapter Board Member**

I love being a reporter because I get to do things I love to do anyway - write, meet new people and give government officials hell.

Since I see myself as a writer anyway, being a reporter isn't so much work as it is an extension of my identity. Whenever I go on vacation and don't write for a week, I get all jittery and anxious like someone needing a drug fix.



Shelton "Lee" Bumgarner

Unlike most of the reporters I know, I'm something of an extrovert. I get energy from meeting new people and being a reporter affords me the opportunity to do just that all day. Also, I enjoy being the first line of defense against the stupid things government officials are otherwise inclined to do. Take, for instance, what the county administrator of Pittsylvania County wanted to do recently. Citing "security concerns," he wanted to block off the entire courthouse complex, leaving only one entrance for the public. Asked by a reporter (me) whether that might not unduly disrupt general access, he said that only the employees who worked in the clutch of buildings that made up the complex would complain.

The plan would have forced little old ladies who simply wanted to register to vote to walk from one end of the court house complex to the other, when in the past they just opened a door and turned left.

Since my couple of stories on the matter ran, the whole issue has been dropped down the memory hole as though it never happened.

Yeah, reporter hours are long and the pay is poor, but making small town America safe for terrorists, that makes all the difference!

Shelton Bumgarner is a writer for the Star-Tribune in Chatham, Virginia. He may be reached at <bumgarls@yahoo.com>.

Regional Director's Report

No Regional Restructuring, But Committee Impaneled To Study National Convention Sponsorship Policies

**By Jonathan Hunley
SPJ Region 2 Director**

SPJ's national board of directors didn't restructure the organization's regional boundaries as expected when it met April 26 in Indianapolis, but members approved national convention sponsorship policies and decided several other matters.

The regional restructuring would have lessened the number of regional directors from 12 to either eight or nine. The idea, I was told, was that larger regions would make for larger pools of applicants for the RD job.

This region, which comprises Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, Delaware and Washington, D.C., could have changed in slight ways. However, others, including Region 10 in the Pacific Northwest, would have been radically altered, and folks from that part of the country were not happy.

So after hearing their pleas and the comments of other RDs, including me, that the real problem may be the makeup of the RD job, re-mapping committee chairman Mark Scarp withdrew his proposal, and SPJ President Robert Leger decided to appoint a committee that will examine the board's structure and make recommendations.

The committee, chaired by former SPJ president and Wells Key-holder Reginald Stuart, will report back to the board, but don't look for any big changes until next year at least. That means the Region 2 convention will be held next spring at a location to be decided.

On sponsorship matters, the national board approved two sponsorship policies: one devoted to non-media supporters and the other to disclosure of sponsorship amounts.

The non-media issue raised a long debate about the ethics of taking money from companies not in the journalism field. In the past the society has frowned on non-media sponsors, but SPJ staff and some board members feel like we can put on a better national program if we have some more dollars behind our efforts.

After a long debate, compromise language was approved that allows non-media sponsorship but puts limits on it. For example, a non-media business can't contribute at the top sponsorship level as determined for a convention.

The corresponding disclosure policy is aimed at allowing SPJ members full access to sponsorship figures.

A considerably shorter debate was held on the issue of flag-desecration legislation. President-elect Mac McKerral submitted a resolution that says SPJ is officially against this kind of law because it weakens the First Amendment's right of free expression.

Others, including me, feel this isn't the best use of SPJ's lobbying efforts. We should be examining issues that affect the day-to-day application of our craft. But the dissenters came up short on this debate. So SPJ is now officially against flag-burning legislation.

No matter your flag-burning position, I think most - if not all - of us supported embedded reporters. I made a motion at the meeting to honor the late journalists Michael Kelly and David Bloom as Fellows of the Society. My thinking was that this was simply a nice thing to do for two of our brethren who died while on the job.



Jonathan Hunley
SPJ Region 2 Director
(Photo courtesy The Free
Lance-Star)

Several questioned whether this was the right award for these two men, though, so my motion was voted down. The board's Executive Committee will discuss in July a plan for honoring Kelly, Bloom and all the other journalists who died in Iraq. That recognition likely would come at the national convention.

Finally, the board voted to recommend holding the line on national dues, which are now \$72. The final say must come from convention delegates in September.

National SPJ Resource Center on the Web

Visit the National SPJ home page on the Web and click on "resources" for a wealth of information. The URL is < <http://www.spj.org/>>. Each of the topics below is a clickable link to more information.

- [SPJ Contacts](#) — Have a question you need answered or a concern you'd like to express? This is the place to find the SPJ resource that can help.
- [FOIA](#) — Here you'll find resources for journalists and the public on issues involving access to government records and activities and freedom of information education.
- [Ethics in Journalism](#) — Sigma Delta Chi's first Code of Ethics was borrowed from the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 1926. In 1973, Sigma Delta Chi wrote its own code, which was revised in 1984 and 1987.
- [Diversity](#) — On both chapter and national levels, SPJ provides an open forum for the discussion of diversity issues in journalism.
- [Bulletin Boards](#) — If you've got an idea you'd like to share, or if you'd just prefer to lurk and hear what others are saying, SPJ's Bulletin Boards are the forum you're seeking. All visitors can read the postings, but only registered SPJ members can join the discussion.
- [SPJ-Related E-Mail Discussion Lists](#) — Through the volunteer efforts of some of SPJ's members, there are two automated e-mail lists to which you can subscribe. Keep up with the latest developments in journalism ethics and professional journalism by subscribing to one or both of SPJ's automated e-mail lists.



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