

PRO Focus

The newsletter of the Virginia Pro Chapter, Society of Professional Journalists

April, 2005

Richmond, Va.

T-D journalists talk about Iraq

Spring programs highlight war, ethics, writing for the Web

Get ready for some great spring programs! Topics include embed reporting, ethics, confidential sources and online story forms.

These programs are free and open to members, guests and prospective members. RSVPs are requested to beckert@richmond.edu.

First up is "Too Close for Comfort in Mosul," scheduled for Friday, April 8, and featuring the Richmond Times-Dispatch reporter Jeremy Redmon and photographer Dean Hoffmeyer, who were embedded with Virginia troops in Mosul, Iraq.

Redmon and Hoffmeyer provided eyewitness coverage of the Dec. 21 rocket attack on a dining tent inside a U.S. military compound.

They were the only two reporters in the mess tent when the bomb exploded. They will discuss the attack and its aftermath, and the challenges of covering a tragedy as it occurred around them.

They will talk about how it af-



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Richmond Times-Dispatch photographer Dean Hoffmeyer was there during a rocket attack on Virginia National Guard troops in Mosul, Iraq.

ected them and their coverage of the event. And they will discuss how they became part of the story, granting almost as many interviews to other news outlets as they conducted themselves.

The program will also cover broader issues of covering a war today,

issues of ethics and technology. How did they prepare? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the system of embedded reporters? How did they deal with military censorship and editing back home? And what kind of reaction have they received?

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SPJ programs take you to Iraq and back

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Dutch-treat happy hour from 5:30-7 p.m., program from 7-8 p.m. At Legend Brewery, 321 W. 7th St., South Richmond. For directions, see <http://www.legendbrewing.com>. Maximum seating 50 people.

Next is “‘Bad’ News: A Look at Ethics in Today’s Newsrooms,” scheduled for Thursday, April 28, at 7 p.m. A panel discusses the ethical climate of today’s newsrooms, in light of the Dan Rather-National Guard story, columnists being paid off by the administration, and other issues that make consumers of news question reporters’ credibility.

Panelists: Caesar Andrews, editor of Gannett News Service, former APME president, and frequent lecturer on ethics and other topics; Jennifer Harper, Washington Times writer covering broadcast and electronic media issues and analyst for CNN, C-SPAN and other broadcast news outlets; Dorothy Abernathy, AP Virginia bureau chief; and Dr. Stephen Farnsworth, author and associate professor of political science at University of Mary Washington. Jim Mann, retired manag-



Hoffmeyer

Redmon

ing editor of The Free Lance-Star of Fredericksburg, will moderate.

Refreshments will be offered. The program is at University of Mary Washington (Woodard Campus Center, Red Room), Fredericksburg. For directions and campus map, see <http://www.umw.edu/vguide/directions.php>.

With your RSVP, please indicate any interest in carpooling.

Several programs also are being planned for May. “Protecting Confidential News Sources in Virginia” will be presented by John Douglass, former federal prosecutor and now University of Richmond law professor. He will discuss what reporters can and cannot do when using confidential sources in news stories. This program will be held at University of Richmond School

of Law, date and time TBA.

Also, a May program on “Non-Linear Storytelling for Online” will feature American University professor Amy Eisman and a discussion of new techniques for presenting stories on the Web. Details on the May programs will be announced later.

Finally, the 42nd Annual George Mason Award Banquet, our annual recognition of outstanding contributions to Virginia journalism, is set for Thursday, June 2, 6-9 p.m., at University of Richmond. The Mason honoree will be recognized as well as winners of the Virginia Pro Chapter’s two college scholarships.

Nominations for the 2005 George Mason Award are now being accepted.

Cash bar 6-7 p.m. on Boatwright Library Patio overlooking Westhampton Lake; dinner and program 7 p.m. at Tyler Hanes Commons. \$35 per person, with proceeds benefiting our Richmond SPJ/SDX Educational Foundation. Reservations are required.

Region 2 conference to be held in Towson April 8 and 9

The regional SPJ conference will be held at Towson’s Berkshire Marriott on April 8-9.

The Mark of Excellence Awards will be presented at the conference.

Items are being sought for the

Legal Defense Fund silent and live auctions. Already in hand are four tickets to Washington’s Nationals baseball team, but this is just a start.

Also needed: freebies to be placed in the bags of the attendees.

Anyone interested in offering expertise during the conference, either as a speaker or panelist or in critiquing student portfolios or resumes, can contact Region 2 SPJ Director Ann Augheron at aaugheron@spj.org or Kim Lauffer at klauffer@towson.edu.

Foundation continues to grow, improve

Twenty years ago, we had worked far longer than nine months to birth this baby - your Richmond SPJ/SDX Educational Foundation. Prior to 1985, when the chapter funded a \$500 scholarship, we had to pass the hat, and tap into the principal to award it.

Thanks to the efforts of some far-sighted members, the chapter now has a separate foundation that is tax-exempt to handle fund-raising campaigns and to manage the fund. Now, we rarely have to dip into the principal, and we also award two scholarships for \$2,000 each.

When we first started, two long-time chapter members, who wished to remain anonymous, offered pledges of \$6,000 each if the chapter would match those funds over the next five years. Other chapter members responded and we matched and even surpassed that first \$12,000 goal.

Fund-raising efforts and contributions have grown steadily over the years and our 20-year-old "child" is inching closer to the \$50,000 mark. While funds for this child's college years are assured, we've starting looking toward its future.

The chapter's Educational Foundation is seeking larger donations and grants from other trusts, foundations and companies. We need to be able to reassure these organizations that our funds are secure and will be carefully shepherded in the future. Some of the same far-sighted foundation members who helped create this baby 20 years ago are now exploring ways to safeguard its future.

The deaths of long-time chapter members Alf Goodykoontz and Jay Pace, who were instrumental in helping to foster the foundation, have motivated us to consider the future of these scholarship funds.

Jay Pace had been the foundation's longest-serving treasurer, and he did an excellent job of working with others to invest the funds and reporting to the foundation



Pace



Goodykoontz

board. And while Foundation President Wilford Kale can co-sign checks, and all board members knew how much money we had and where it was invested, no one had really asked for details about how Jay handled the treasurer's job. Our new executive director/treasurer Jim Mann has done a good job of sifting through the statements and making changes to continue administration of the funds. And he's sharing this knowledge with Anna Billingsley, the foundation's vice-president.

Foundation members are still considering other options to ensure an even longer life for our Educational Foundation, so it can continue to award annual scholarships to outstanding students at Virginia colleges who demonstrate an intent to pursue careers in journalism. We'll keep chapter members posted on our efforts, and we'll seek chapter support for any changes we propose.

As we celebrate our 20th year, we'll continue to lavish care on this "baby" and we'll continue with our efforts to safeguard its future.

In related matters, Jim Mann will serve as the foundation's representative on the scholarship committee. Under the guidance of chapter members Don Dale and Nancy Beasley, scholarship applications are due March 28. The foundation will meet on April 22 to approve the recommendations from the chapter's scholarship committee.

The foundation is also creating a new brochure to support its fund-raising efforts, and working on a plan to contact past SPJ chapter scholarship winners to seek their support for the chapter's scholarship program.

The SPJ/SDX Educational Foundation members are President Wilford Kale, Executive Director/Treasurer Jim Mann, Vice-President Anna Billingsley, Secretary Clissa England, directors Steve Richardson and Brian Eckert, and Gene Lepley, ex-officio chapter representative.

Contest judges needed for SPJ awards

Volunteers are needed to judge the SPJ-Detroit Metropolitan Chapter's "2005 Excellence in Journalism Awards" in the following categories:

- Radio breaking/spot news (6 entries)
- Radio general news story (15 entries)
- Radio sports (1 entry)
- Radio investigative (1 entry)
- Radio regular newscasting (6 entries)
- Radio news special/documentary (3 entries)
- TV general news story (2 entries)
- TV features (1 entry)
- TV investigative (3 entries)
- TV news special/documentary (1 entry)
- New media-Web site (2 entries)

Volunteers are needed to judge and to serve as coordinators of judging groups of at least three members. Groups can meet to review all entries together (recommended), or work alone and ship the entries around.

Volunteers are being sought to coordinate one group to do all the TV judging, one group to judge only the radio general news story judging, and one or two groups to split up the remaining radio categories.

Judges do not have to be working in, or have direct experience, in radio and/or television news. Non-members of SPJ and Virginia Pro Chapter who are active in journalism or journalism education may be nominated to serve as judges.

Also, SPJ's national office will contact our chapter soon to judge several categories of the national Mark of Excellence competition (student journalism). If you would be interested in being a judge in that competition, please let Brian Eckert know (beckert@richmond.edu).

Virginia SPJ Pro Chapter Treasury Report

by Treasurer *Dan Neman*

March 16, 2005

Starting balance:

\$2,977.04

Total credits:

.40 interest

.23 in January interest

.17 in February interest

Total debits:

\$762.00

**\$750 to Richmond SPJ/
SDX Educational Founda-
tion**

\$12 Wachovia Service Fee

Ending balance:

\$2,215.44

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