The VisCom division is alive and well. The Toronto AEJMC annual convention was a huge success with topics ranging from the visual communication of portable communication devices to the ever popular creative projects session. Jean Trumbo from the University of Nevada, Reno deserves a round of applause for the great job she did programming the convention. Kimberly Sultze Saint Michael’s College deserves congratulations for a job well-done over the past three years as alder of the VisCom division.

At least one major decision was made at the convention that will affect all of us in VisCom: Contract with a professional research journal company to produce, market and sell VisCom Quarterly (VCQ). This will bring our “one of a kind” juried research journal into the real world. This is an exciting time for VCQ. The gathered VisCom members at the business meeting discussed this change for quite awhile. This important move to have Lawrence Erlbaum Associates (LEA) partner with us requires our division to raise membership dues. I assure you this decision was handled in a deliberative fashion. In the end, the 40 or so VisCom members voted near unanimous approval to raise annual dues for the division to $40. At the same time, we voted to give graduate students a discounted membership rate. Elsewhere in Viewpoints, Julianne Newton, current editor of VCQ has more details on the contract and the reasons supporting his change.

The National Press Photographers Association had published VCQ from the beginning as an insert to News Photographer magazine. Financial considerations have forced NPPA to suspend this arrangement. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to NPPA for their support of our division and VCQ. I thank all the folks in NPPA, particularly Jim Gordon, former editor of News Photographer magazine, for this amazing show of inter-organization cooperation and support.

It is because of the hard work of many people: VisCom members like Jim Kelly of Southern Illinois University, Julianne Newton, University of Oregon and NPPA members like Jim Gordon, professor emeritus Bowling Green State University School of Journalism that VCQ is thriving today. Next time you receive your issue of VCQ, take a moment to look at the people listed in the masthead. Maybe spend a little bit of time and send an email or two thanking those people who dedicate themselves to making VisCom a great division to belong to.

Other exciting news (especially if you are tired to getting SPAM) involves the change of the VisCom listserv from Yahoo groups to one that Vice Head Michelle Seelig has set up with her institution, the University of Miami. There had been quite a stream of odd SPAM on the Yahoo Groups listserv. VisCom was not successful trying to eliminate the spammers from this group, so the decision was made to create...
The AEJMC Visual Communication Division made a bold decision at the August business meeting: to move forward with a proposal to establish Visual Communication Quarterly as a separately published, independent journal. Funded for a decade by the National Press Photographers Association, the journal has published 82 juried research articles since its inception in 1994. If our plans for expansion succeed, we will be able to publish four times the number of articles per year while keeping our acceptance rate below the 25% rate considered the maximum standard for a prime journal.

The division has submitted a formal proposal to Lawrence Erlbaum Associates to begin publishing VCQ with Volume 12. The agreement will require that the division contribute $20 per member for each year’s subscription to VCQ. In exchange, the division gains the backing of an established publishing house, complete with an infrastructure for production, archiving, indexing and marketing. Added bonuses include a profit-sharing arrangement between the division and LEA, as well as online availability of articles.

The changes require an increase in AEJMC VisCom division dues in order to fund costs of printing VCQ. The $20-per-member cost we will pay LEA is a good deal, costing much less than other journal subscriptions.

The decision to begin a new publishing strategy for VCQ will resolve a number of challenges facing the journal. First, as we noted in the last newsletter, NPPA is experiencing financial difficulties that led to its withdrawal of support for printing costs for VCQ. Production of 11,500 copies, the amount necessary for distribution of VCQ to NPPA members, libraries, and VisCom Division members, cost close to $10,000 in 2003. NPPA also paid for inserting the journal into News Photographer and for postage.

NPPA leadership expressed the desire to continue publishing the journal as part of News Photographer, but determined that they could no longer pay for printing. The April 2004 issue of VCQ, a double issue, was funded by the University of Oregon School of Journalism and Communication and the AEJMC VisCom Division. Although the division sought funding through other sources, we determined the most stable—and exciting—option was to seek independent status and the support of a major publisher.

Moving VCQ into independent status also will resolve a second major issue: indexing. Libraries and index editors express confusion about the publication status of VCQ, sometimes indexing the journal separately and sometimes indexing it as News Photographer. Publishing VCQ separately and under the auspices of an established publishing house will increase the credibility of the journal and make it easier for scholars to find and reference its articles.

We already have entered into an agreement with LEA to archive and distribute the eight years of bound volumes that previously were stored at NPPA and AEJMC headquarters. The original plan was to sell the bound volumes in order to fund reprinting of the first two years’ issues so we would have a complete set for archiving VCQ separately from News Photographer. Without aggressive marketing, the back issues languished in storage. LEA will market the volumes to libraries and museums.

LEA has expressed optimism about our proposal. Linda Bathgate, senior acquisitions editor for LEA, is in regular correspondence with us to iron out contract details. If the VisCom Division’s executive board approves the contract, negotiations will advance to the executive board of AEJMC for final approval at the midwinter meeting in December.

With the move to LEA, we will redesign the publication for printing efficiency and to improve the look of the journal. To complete Volume 11, a double autumn issue of VCQ in its current format is in production (see Articles sidebar). LEA has already offered production support, along with the UO journalism school.

An examination of 580 front pages from 10 large-circulation U.S. newspapers during the six months before and after September 11, 2001, found an increase in the size and use of photographs, and decrease in text content and graphics. Further, the research found an increased reliance on visual techniques and principles of composition in the 1,700 photographs and 220 graphics examined. This preliminary study suggests that September 11 may have signaled a subtle shift in the use and application of visual imagery within the daily large-circulation newspapers examined, a shift that may evolve into a more complete transformation in the use of visual content in daily newspapers.

"Influencing Creativity in Newsrooms: A Survey of Newspaper and Web Designers," by Renita Coleman and Jan Colbert

This research examines influences on the creativity of news designers. Results show that one of the most important predictors of high creativity levels was the type of office designers had. An office of one's own, or one shared with a few others, was significantly associated with higher creativity. A cubicle and no workstation designers could call their own were related to lower creativity. In addition to the delicate task of nurturing the personality characteristics that are consistently predictive of creativity, newsroom managers should be encouraged to provide designers the kind of work situation that is also significantly associated with higher creativity.

"Too Human for Life: Hansel Mieth's Photograph of Heart Mountain Internment Camp," by Dolores Flamiano.

Flamiano analyzes the work of photographer Hansel Mieth as pioneering socially conscious photography, a movement that is generally associated with later photographs such as W. Eugene Smith. An analysis of Mieth's photographs of Japanese Americans interned at the Heart Mountain Relocation Camp in Wyoming during World War II demonstrates that she was ahead of her time in bringing a humanistic look and feeling to photographs of minority communities. The study also examines Mieth's contributions to public discourse on racism, as well as her impact on the style and substance of photojournalism. In addition, through a close reading of such primary sources as interviews and correspondence, the author brings forth the previously hidden life, dreams, triumphs and frustrations of a pioneering female photojournalist of the 20th century.
DIV HEAD’S NOTES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1.

a new listserv. Michelle took up the charge and set-up our new list. Instructions and information can be found in this issue of Viewpoints.

And by the way, I suppose some of you might be wondering how I got to be head of VisCom this year. Well, the short version is that last year (2003) Jean Trumbo of the University of Nevada stepped in to fill an empty position in VisCom leadership as Vice Head. She was not really sure if she wanted to take on a two-year commitment (Vice Head ascends to the throne of VisCom Head) so I volunteered to take over as head if she decided she had had enough. After programming all of VisCom’s sessions for Toronto Jean decided to step out. True to my word, I stepped in to the position of VisCom Head after the gathered membership voted its approval at the business meeting this year. Jean had served VisCom before in our leadership roles and I thank her for stepping up last year in the role of Vice Head. This is my second go around as well. Four or five years ago (it’s just a foggy memory now) I served proudly in VisCom’s leadership positions: 2nd Vice Head, Vice Head, Head. Feel free to contact me if you have any comments, concerns or congratulations about VisCom: bkj@uiuc.edu. All of you should start making your plans to attend AEJMC 2005 in San Antonio. Who knows, you might be elected 2nd Vice Head and begin your own journey into VisCom leadership.

“Shock and Awe” Research Ideas

By Edgar Huang, Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis

Coming up with a good idea for a research project is probably the most difficult part in conducting a study. What if someone tosses to you a bunch of not just good, but great, ideas for research projects? Will you feel “shock and awe”? That’s what I felt when I first saw this summer the dream paper titles listed by Dr. Julianne Newton in her recent proposal to Lawrence Erlbaum Associates (LEA) that explored the possibility of publishing Visual Communication Quarterly (VCQ), for which she has served as the Editor, as an independent journal. I was enthralled by Dr. Newton’s list and wanted to immediately start a couple of studies proposed in there. I thought other VisCom folks might want to see this dream list, too. For those who feel like to get more ideas to conduct VisCom research, this dream list, I hope, will be of great help to you. I would like to thank Dr. Newton for her leadership and for sharing her great research ideas. I encourage you to work on a topic or collaborate on a topic. Finally, don’t forget to submit your finished products (the more the merrier) to Visual Communication Quarterly. With permission from Dr. Newton, I am posting the dream titles for VisCom research in the adjacent sidebar, in no preferred order.

Dream Titles:

► Toward Synthesis in Visual Communication: Where We’ve Been—Where We Need to Go
► A Historical Overview of Scholarship in Visual Communication
► Visual Theory: Primary Approaches
► Top Ten Studies in Visual Communication: Analysis and Critique
► How Best to Study the Visual: The Need for a New Generation of Methods
► Bridging the Word-Image Gap in Professional Practice: A Survey of Editors, Designers and Photographers in the World’s Largest Print Publications
► The New Media Environment: More Than Words Plus Pictures
► Beyond Either-Or: Integrative Research in Visual Cognition
► Looking Beyond the Rearview Mirror: Using McLuhan’s Tetrads to Predict Effects of Current Technologies on Culture and Society
► McLuhan’s Tetrads: Resonating Interval or Synchronous Chord?
► The Resurgence of Photojournalism in Electronic Publishing
► Old and New Technologies: Looking for Wisdom Through a Study of Old and New Functions
► The New Look of Print: Influences of Internet and Television Design
► Life May be a Video Game: The Virtual Worlds of Young Communicators
► A Theory of Visual Ecology: Bringing Wholeness to a Disparate Field
► Seeing and Knowing: Visual Truth at the Crosswords

Two New-Media Competitions:
Sponsored by VisCom’s sister division in the Broadcast Education Association: Communications Technology.
For faculty: http://www.beafestival.org/faculty.html
For students: http://www.beafestival.org/student.html
Notes from a week in New York.

Article and photos by Loret Gnivecki
Steinberg, Rochester Institute of Technology 2nd Vice Head

Saturday 8/28

It’s not that hard to find, the lot between a church and a repair shop with a hand-painted “Flat Fix” sign next to the Virgin of Guadalupe. Signs hang from a chain link fence and the lot itself is filled with blue plastic tarps and nylon tents. The biggest sign says “Welcome to BUSHVILLE! Land of the Poor.”

It’s incredibly hot and humid, and the tarps’ shade isn’t much shelter. Cheri Honkala is pouring chilled water over her two-year-old son’s head. Guillermo’s perspiring face erupts in laughter, and when Cheri hands him the bottle he continues to pour it on himself. When Bushville went up, the city turned off the water in the park across the street.

Cheri is the founder of the Kensington Welfare Rights Union. “The media isn’t talking about real stories happening to people every day in this country,” she had explained earlier in the week. “With 1400 reporters coming into the city, this is a real opportunity. We’ve got one shot to talk about the hidden war in this country.”

When I asked about that conversation, Cheri looked around. “See? And you’re the only press who’s come to Bushville today.”

There’s a press conference for the children to speak about homelessness. One of the children tells us, “I don’t think anybody cares that there are people who are homeless.” His face appears much older than his gangly adolescent body. There is a knot in his forehead. “I don’t think anybody wants to know that I don’t have a house to live in or sometimes we don’t have anything to eat.”

Sunday 8/29

There are people everywhere — families with babies and small children, veterans, people in wheelchairs and people with walkers, groups who wanted to march together, friends who work together or live in the same neighborhood or went to school together — every age, class, social status, gender, race and nationality.

More formal groups have large banners and matching shirts, hats, chants and songs. They stage die-ins or mock “press conferences.” Some have made large puppets or images of politicians.

The front of the march arrived at Union Square at about 11am. Seven hours later marchers were still arriving at the Square. Organizers estimated that more than 400,000 participants had passed them so far, a figure the police later say is an underestimate. Before then, though, an anonymous policeman had put the count at 100,000.

That night, CNN Headline News had no report of the march during its 10 pm to 11pm slot. The BBC described how “100,000 New Yorkers protested” the Republican National Convention.

Monday 8/30

The UN building dominates the sky behind Dag Hammarskjold Plaza but everything else is obscured by a wall of police officers. Beyond them the Poor People United have gathered.

This is the group that had been camped at Bushville. Others have joined them, including Billionaires for Bush. One of the Billionaires asks about Bushville and another answers “I think we summered there once. Lovely.”

PPU has a permit for the rally but not for a march. Cheri Honkala asks the audience to repeat: “We do not believe in violence. We march in the name of the poor and the homeless. Some of our members are deaf and visually impaired.”

Everyone learns the routine, but tension mounts as the time to march comes closer. Then it’s time. Youths wearing identical t-shirts take positions and link arms in front of the first line of marchers. The next row includes people with wheelchairs, blind and deaf marchers and the elderly. These are joined by Cheri, Esther (the elected mayor of Bushville), their children and most of the speakers. This line is now arm in arm and others fall into place behind them.

As the procession moves forward the police appear to be making way. At intervals everyone comes to a complete halt for discussions between participants and po-
A group of right-wing Protest Warriors takes prominent positions next to the boots with signs like “Liberating Iraqi Children From Tyranny – It’s Co$t too much!”

The Friends have also arranged 1,000 pairs of civilian shoes near a sign that lists 16,000 Iraqis who have died so far. Some passers-by have put flowers, a small flag or a note on some of the soldiers’ shoes or on some civilian shoes.

A daisy carefully arranged in the straps of a small red pair of children’s shoes wilts as the day goes by and people walk silently between the rows.

Later the same afternoon, the Labor Council sponsors a rally near the convention site. There’s a lot of teasing and small talk about families, how the kids are doing and plans for a beer afterwards.

Julio Hernandez, who moved to this country from the Dominican Republic, stands silently with a huge photograph of the president playing golf. It says, “Bush isn’t working and neither am I.” Hernandez said it’s been a long time since he’s had a job. He adds that this is the first time that he will be voting in an election.

That night there’s a party for Hispanic delegates at the Copacabana, paid for by Coca Cola. Ring Out, which uses bells to “create a special force” for political expression, will protest at 9:30. At ten they’ll be joined by others for a noisy Argentinean-style street protest. “No-one asked the city for a permit... imagine if Argentina had waited for permission.”

The demonstrators are corralled between blue wooden barricades and a concrete wall. The press is barricaded about ten feet away. Several people, some in NYPD uniforms, walk slowly up and down the barricades at close range, photographing demonstrators. A newspaper photographer moves to get a better camera angle and is told to get behind the barricade.

As the party goers leave they quickly duck into vehicles. A few appear embarrassed about the calls from demonstrators criticizing Coke’s environmental and labor practices.
A group leaves the Copa, pauses to watch, then crosses the street to look at the signs and ask the police what the din is about. As a reporter emerges from an interview inside the club passed them, he is told to keep walking back to the media area. He has time to hear one of the delegates shout “communist scum!” and the other yell “get a job!” The delegates go back across the street and hail a taxi.

Thursday 9/2
The Artists and Activists United for Peace have assembled at 125th and Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard in Harlem. Before I get there, two young men call out from a stoop.

“Hey, you from the press? You wanna know what’s really goin’ down up here in Harlem?” Ty and Trav just want to talk. They see a lot going on, they say, but not much of it helps anybody’s life here in Harlem.

“These people, they fix up buildings and then the rent costs more and people have to leave. This one across the street from us, it’s section 8, and they’re chang-ing it so’s folks who lived here a long time are going to have to move.”

When asked if they’re employed, both shake their heads no. “Ain’t no jobs up here. Outsiders that come up here and open up businesses, they never give jobs to the people who live here. Some of the people who come here to make profits take it all with ’em and we can’t tell ’em not to.”

Looking down the block I can see that a squad car has passed us.

“If police see us talking to you, they’d stop and watch for a while.” Ty said. “Yeah. We live here and we’re not supposed to be standing around talking with a white woman.”

A couple of blocks away rapper Chuck D urges the crowd to turn off their televi-sions, get off their couches and look at their lives. “Celebrity is the drug of Amer-ica, put there to keep people occupied. You see some celebrity with their bling-bling, you forget you ain’t got a job.

“We got to talk about jobs and housing and people’s lives! I’m tired of just a few celebrities coming out and talking for all of us. TV shows we think are all cool are brain-washing us! The masses are all taught not to think for ourselves.”

Chuck D leans forward. “Becoming a citizen of the world is something we have to do….. not just red, white and blue.”

Sister Camille Yarborough pours ritual water and asks everyone to join hands and pray to our ancestors. “Ashay, Ashay, Ashay…. Be with us. Be with us. Be with us….”

Malik Zulu Shabazz stands behind a cadre of New Black Panther members. He speaks about a new Black era. The issues resonate with the other speakers’ – housing, jobs, tokenism, the need to work together for change. “Black Power.”

There’s a man in the audience who has stood at the front, toward the blue barricades, throughout, slowly waving a huge red, yellow, green and black flag. His smile is radiant.

Dusk brings a rush back to Union Square. On the evening of September 11, 2001, New Yorkers were drawn there. Now they wanted to return in memory of 9/11 and the war dead in Iraq.

People hold candles and each other. Some write messages in chalk and others assemble flower-ers, candles and photo-graphs of loved ones who have died or who are serving in the military. Some have made altars for the Iraqi dead.

Fernando Suarez had crashed the convention and was protected by the Texas delegation for three hours after he told them, “My son died last march from a cluster bomb in Iraq. I gave my son’s life for this country and I can’t stay in this place?”

Jason Chupik and Jen Mediano have come from New York. “We wanted to be a part of the people who are saying there’s something wrong.” Jen described how she’d gone earlier to a reading of the constitution. “I cried,” she said. “I’ve heard the words before. They’re larger now.”

The square is packed with people now, and we notice a growing group of red t-shirts that gradually forms a circle.

A young woman walks through the square with a bag of rose petals, asking people if they’d like some. Several of us place ours carefully near Jesus’ photo-graph. One woman touches her hand to her lips and then to the petal she has just placed on the ground before she walks away.

It is a long time before I can leave the square. When I got back to Rochester and looked through the stack of newspapers that had piled up while I was away, I could find no mention of any of the events I’d seen and photo-graphed.
We need to bring together ideas about panel proposals for the 2005 AEJMC convention in San Antonio. The division’s deadline for receiving these is ASAP. All ideas are welcome. Here are some ideas, just to get you thinking:

► The Election (of course)  
► Changing work roles due to new technologies.  
► Issues related to visual ethics.  
► Issues related to the visual portrayal of Hispanics in the media.  
► Visual communication research—do’s and don’ts to getting published.  
► Rise of weblogs among both photojournalists and freelancers.  
► Software instruction for photo journalism classes—changes in storytelling due to convergence.

To propose a panel for the 2005 AEJMC Convention in San Antonio, mail or e-mail the following ASAP:

1) Proposed panel title.
2) One or two paragraphs describing the background and importance of the topic, and what issues panelists might discuss.
3) Whether this would be a Teaching Panel or Professional Freedom and Responsibility (PR&R) Panel. (Unclear on what PF&R means? Go here: http://aejmc.org/about/PF&R.html)
4) A list of possible panelists. You don’t need to have this nailed down, though it helps to know early. If you don’t have a specific name, tell me what type of person you are aiming for—a scholar with a particular expertise, or someone from a particular industry.
5) Likely co-sponsors—working with another AEJMC division or interest group is helpful under the AEJMC system.
6) Your name, mailing address, phone number and e-mail address.
7) Estimate costs (if any).
8) Estimate technology needs (if any).

NOTE: Please do not submit the same panel idea to another division. Remember, if your panel is selected, it will be your job to line up panelists and to moderate the discussion.