VisCom Division makes capital out of the capital

There is a Chinese saying that goes like this, “Eat mountain when by the mountain, and eat ocean when by the ocean.” When we are by the U.S. capital, well, we should eat the capital. That’s what the VisCom Division did during the summer this year.

Making capital out of the profuse presence of major media outlets in the D.C. area, VisCom Division practiced Tai chi Kung Fu by grabbing experienced media pros to the conference site to talk to the educators and taking conference attendees out to the National Geographic magazine for an informative field trip. Together with Magazine, CTEC, CCJA and RTVJ divisions/IGs, VisCom hosted the resplendent pre-convention workshop with a peak attendance of 90 people. Speakers from multiple major media outlets, mostly based in D.C., such as the Washington Post, National Geographic, and CBS, shared the podium with the J-School faculty who had been teaching or researching multimedia reporting. The workshop,

(continued on page 7)

AEJMC 2008 Convention Panels

Although the 2008 convention is months away, the planning has already begun. You can be a part of the process by proposing topics and possible panelists. You can also pitch a Chicago location for an off-site visit as well as suggest Chicago-area journalists who would be outstanding speakers. To help with your brainstorming, here are a few panels that have been proposed so far:

- Is still photography dead?
- Visual portrayals of gay and lesbian couples in advertising
- Beyond the query letter: The journalist as independent entrepreneur
- Using visual communication skills in forensic analysis

Is your great idea missing? If so, please send it to me today at rmartinkratzer@jou.ufl.edu. I need to submit our division’s ideas to headquarters no later than Nov. 1.

What to include in your proposal:
- Type (i.e. PF&R, Teaching, Research)
- Tentative Title
- Possible Moderator
- Possible Panelists (limit to three so we can work on linking with other interest groups and divisions)
- Brief Description
- Possible Panel Co-sponsors (divisions or interest groups)

I appreciate your help in making the next convention a thought-provoking experience for our members.

Renee Martin-Kratzer, Ph.D. is 2nd Vice Head of VisCom and Assistant Professor of Journalism at the University of Florida.
Political candidates have probably never been more visually accessible than during this campaign season. I've been watching all the Web sites pop up for the presidential primary campaigns, featuring passionate stories about humble beginnings, family photos pleading virtues and values, and patriotic banners pledging strategy and action. Typographic images undulate with the promise of news, views, blogs, events, sign-ups and downloads. These are rich pickings for viscom researchers.

For the past 10 months, some colleagues and I here at UF have been collecting and organizing political media material into a digital repository that will provide a generous well of data for our research projects. This data includes news reports and ads about political figures—in broadcast, print, and online forms; news releases, brochures, and flyers produced by candidates and campaigns; and Web pages and interactive online media distributed by political candidates, office-holders, organizations, etc.

While having these resources already at hand and pre-sifted is a researcher's dream, this project has made me aware of all of the visual political data easily available online to scholars today. Where can you find what?

Find Political Advertising Examples:
• Mixed Messages: Tracking Political Advertising, http://projects.washingtonpost.com/politicalads/. This project is a searchable database of approximately 200 political ads, catalogued and presented as video or audio. Searchable by candidate or organization, year, state, type of race, issues and ad content, such as tone, attack, factual, record, etc.
• Campaign Ads at CSPAN, http://www.c-span.org/vote2004/campads.asp, is an archive of campaign ads of all major presidential candidates in the 2004 race as well as ads by MoveOn.org and the Club for Growth.
• Political Advertising Resource Center, http://www.umdparc.org/. The Center for Political Communication and Civic Leadership at the University of Maryland offers a nonpartisan informational Web site that analyzes the television advertisements used in local, state and national political campaigns. Both candidate-based and issue ads are analyzed.

Find Videos about Political Advertising:
• The 30-Second Candidate, http://www.pbs.org/30secondcandidate/front.html, is a PBS documentary supplement that features an historical timeline of U.S. political advertising on TV, a unit on the creation process "From Idea to Ad," and "Tricks of the Trade" on how particular meanings and moods are manipulated. You can also find transcripts of the programs.
• The Living Room Candidate, http://livingroomcandidate.movingimage.us/index.php, a history of Presidential campaign commercials, 1952-2000, is presented by the American Museum of the Moving Image in cooperation with the Political Communication Center, University of Oklahoma.

(continued on page 3)
Helping VisCom Grow

When I first attended AEJMC Visual Communication meetings almost a decade ago, I had recently moved from working as a professional journalist and a media studies teacher to being, once again, a full-time graduate student. My first AEJMC conference marked my return to academic research. Despite being a middle-aged professional, my anxiety level was high.

My experiences with the VisCom division were mixed—I met interesting, inspiring individuals, but as a group the division was small, working on basic organization, and not especially welcoming to a newcomer.

That has changed. I’ve watched VisCom grow into a warm, vibrant group with officers who understand the importance of collaboration, diversity and outreach. VisCom is moving in healthy and exciting directions, but we need to go even further. As Membership Chair for 2007-2008, I hope to continue the good work of other recent officers who have looked for ways to bring in new people, fresh ideas, and to interact with other divisions.

As we work to build membership, I’d like to hear your suggestions on the following:

**Working with other divisions.** The rationale is simple. My background is in newspaper writing, but I became fascinated with the power of the visual image as I listened to readers’ very visceral reactions to news photographs – reactions I didn’t hear when it came to even graphic text. The importance of the visual image to Mass Communication and Society, Media Ethics, International Communication, History, and Technology divisions seems clear. How can we more effectively make that point to our colleagues and students?

**Increasing ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity.** I still see a quite limited range of faces at VisCom meetings, and at AEJMC conferences as a whole. I’d like to reach out to international exchange students, members of the Minorities and Communication Division, and examine how successful we’ve been in reaching AEJMC members from journalism programs that have a diverse mix of students.

**Making new members feel welcome.** I believe the division has come a long way during the past few years in achieving a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Again, we need to go further, and continue to find ways not just to reach out, but to keep in touch with, and encourage, new members.

As a new officer, I welcome your thoughts and suggestions on all of these goals. I look forward to being part of VisCom’s continued growth and success.

Meg Spratt, Ph.D. is the Membership Chair for VisCom and is at the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma at the University of Washington. mspratt@u.washington.edu

See me, feel me (continued from page 2)

- Ad Wars (PBS), http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/media/july-dec00/ad_wars_9-21.html features the NewsHour September 21, 2000 program transcript (plus audio and video) on candidates’ battles over the airwaves and what impact their message is having on voters.

These are all great sites for political communication visual artifacts, predominantly campaign television advertising, already collected, organized and ready for your perusal. Or, just throw on your hip-hug boots and plunge into the streaming world of online campaigning, because from the results of our one-year collection—where over 80% of our catalogued political materials came from Web sites (news, bios, TV ads, blogs, images, issues, solicitations)—it looks like this sport is one we’d better get used to.

• Hillary Clinton
  http://www.hillaryclinton.com/about

Hillary was raised in a middle-class family in the middle of America. From that classic suburban childhood in Park Ridge, Illinois, Hillary went on to become one of America’s foremost advocates for children and families; an attorney twice voted one of the most influential in America; a First Lady of Arkansas who helped transform the schools; a bestselling author; a First Lady for America who helped transform that role, becoming a champion for health care and families at home and a champion of women’s rights and human rights around the world.
Teaching “Art” in Visual Communication

In my position as the teaching chair for the Visual Communication Division, one topic I would like to see us address this year is the integration of traditional art works into our visual communication curriculum. To clarify, when I say “traditional art works,” I am referring to all forms of artistic media including, but not limited to, painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, prints and decorative arts from both classical and contemporary traditions. There are, of course, many topics in visual communication that lend themselves to the integration of art. For example, in a discussion of form, the artistic style of pointillism illustrates of the use of tiny, juxtaposed dots to create a cohesive form. The painting “A Sunday on La Grande Jatte” by French painter Georges Seurat is a prime example. There a wonderful scene in the film “Ferris Bueller’s Day Off” in which the camera zooms closer and closer to the painting until the forms disappear and only the dots themselves are visible. As another example, the abstract work of British sculptor Henry Moore vividly illustrates the mind’s ability to see shapes in abstract objects.

Traditional art work can also be integrated into applied projects. For a layout assignment, I ask students to research a work of art and then create a layout in Adobe InDesign that incorporates an image of the work of art and a well-crafted analysis based on the student’s research. This project works well as a brochure or as a one-page flyer. To begin this project, I have each student select a work of art from a stack of postcard-sized images. (Postcards are readily available in the gift shop of any art museum, or they can also be purchased online). Next, the students spend 10 minutes looking at the work and then write an initial “reaction” to the piece. From there, the student conducts research and develops an appropriate layout. The art work itself serves as a “guide” for the development of the layout. For example, a modern sculpture by Alexander Calder warrants a much different layout than the portrait work of Gilbert Stuart. This project incorporates, research, writing and design skills. In addition, the project allows students to learn about a traditional art work within a visual communication context.

With Creative Projects, the Times are Always a Changin’

As moderator for the Creative Projects session at the Washington, D.C., conference last August, I reminded the group of how far we had come since my first AEJMC presentation in 1993.

Back then, just to play it safe, I’d brought my own equipment set-up in two metal cases. Making the flight from Florida to Kansas City were two Kodak carousel slide projectors, a Wollensack cassette player/dissolve unit, a 50-foot orange extension cord and a six-outlet electric strip. I assumed they’d have a screen or I might have packed that, too. I would be showing “Having Fun with Photojournalism,” a carefully timed seven-minute slide/tape show featuring student work from my photo classes accompanied by music from Mason Williams (“Classical Gas”) and a moody Kenny G saxophone tune.

Between 11 and midnight on the night before the session, my wife and I carefully assembled the set-up, perfectly aligning the overlapping registration patterns for the two slide projectors. I had labeled the slide trays with a note on each – “Start tray A on 0,” and “Start tray B on 1.” We ran the show with sound, and everything worked perfectly. Happy that my show was all set, we left the room (continued on page 7)
Designing an effective logo that looks professional, visually represents AEJMC, and immediately communicates the city for the 2009 AEJMC convention in Boston is an opportunity for our students to apply their creativity and explore their potential as graphic designers. The rules for entering this year’s AEJMC logo contest will be announced soon. The annual logo competition challenges our students to use their graphic design skills, artistic sense, and visual communication abilities.

Graphic design professors probably have differing ideas about what is the best way to teach students how to design logos that successfully communicate. Authors William L. Haig and Laurel Harper in their book The Power of Logos: How to Create Effective Company Logos state, along with other principles, that a logo with power is one that “establishes immediate recognition for the company.”

Similarly, the logo for the annual AEJMC convention should communicate immediately and have visual impact. When viewers see the AEJMC convention logo, they should “get it”—they should understand how the logo brings to mind the city where the conference is scheduled to be held, whether through conveying the flavor of the town, or by including a famous landmark that is visually synonymous with the city, or by some other visually creative meanings. In a successful AEJMC logo, the typographical elements, “AEJMC,” the word “August,” and the name of the city should be well integrated into the logo design through well-selected fonts, placement, and balance.

In the book Graphic Communications Today (4th ed.), authors William Ryan and Theodore Conover say “ideally, a logo or trademark should be consistent, appropriate, unique, clear, positive, memorable, as well as simple.” A logo should not be busy or cluttered, and, in my opinion, a logo should be compact. Its parts should not be spread out.

The logo for the annual AEJMC convention should look professional and “work” visually. For that to happen, a designer must successfully transfer her/his creative concept for the logo onto paper—for the logo contest judging, and for use in promotional materials, on conference nametags, etc. The logo must be reproducible for these purposes without losing image quality. It should also work well visually for online use.

Students in the graphic design courses I teach at Hawaii Pacific University (HPU) have been entering the AEJMC logo contest for several years now. In the beginning, there was a learning curve as I learned how the logos should be correctly prepared for entry in the contest by following the contest rules and making the logo designs the required size and correct format. After a couple of years of students in my classes submitting logos, students from my classes won first place in the AEJMC logo contest three years in a row. Other logos designed by HPU students have also placed in the contest.

I feel blessed that these students were in my classes and that they were so successful. Each semester, I try to help students understand what makes well-designed logos communicate effectively. I also demonstrate for students ways to use computer software to make shapes and parts for their logo designs and have the students practice these techniques.

I have made designing logos for the annual AEJMC logo competition one of the major projects in the graphic design courses I teach. Other professors in HPU’s College of Communication have also made entering the logo contest available to their students. In the design courses I teach, I have each student submit three different logo designs for the contest. Each student is limited to submitting three logo entries. I have the students print two copies of each logo design—one to be graded and the other for entry into the contest. If time allows, I give students the opportunity to replace or redo any, or all three, of the logos they have submitted by a specific due date. If a student tells me she/he does not want to enter the contest, I try to honor that request.

Each Spring semester, some

(continued on page 6)
of my colleagues and I select the top 10 logos that will represent Hawaii Pacific University in that year’s AEJMC national logo contest. Before we gather as a group to judge the logos, the professors with logo entries designed by students in their classes each do a preliminary judging to remove logos that obviously will not move forward in the combined judging session. Some logos get eliminated from the competition because they are not effective logo designs (such as logos that received a "C" grade or lower in grading), or due to problems of poor image quality, or because of not following the contest rules—such as the large version and/or small version of the logo not being the correct size, etc.

Following the preliminary judging, we place the remaining logo entries into groups, or flights, on the floor in the office of the Dean of HPU’s College of Communication. We narrow down the logo entries until we have selected the top 10 logos that will be sent to the national AEJMC logo contest, along with two or three alternates in case problems are discovered with any of the top 10 logos while I am preparing the entries for submission.

Brian Cannon, Ph.D. is Coordinator AEJMC logo contest, and Assistant Professor, Hawaii Pacific University. bcannon@hpu.edu

Looking for more information on the AEJMC Visual Communication Division?

Visit the Web site: http://www.mtsu.edu/~aejmc/index.html

Do you have information for the newsletter? Contact the editor:

Ed Youngblood ed.youngblood@ttu.edu (806) 742-6500 x. 229

HPU student Bonnie Beatson’s logo uses her artwork of the world-famous Golden Gate Bridge to promote the San Francisco 2006 convention. The bridge extends into the distance at right until the road becomes the tip of an ink pen. Writing utensils have been integrated subtly into the design of a few of the winning AEJMC convention logos over the past 12 years or so.
and headed up to our room at the Hyatt Regency. Imagine my surprise the next morning when I went downstairs and discovered that there had been a session in “my” room before Creative Projects! The table we had dragged over to hold the slide projectors had been pushed against a wall. The duct tape holding down the orange power cord had been pulled aside. Were slides trays A and B still level? Could I scramble and still make a decent first-ever-juried AEJMC presentation? Much to my relief, everything ran fine. The slides all dissolved in sync and Kenny G got a few people misty-eyed toward the end. I’d stuck to my 15-minute time limit and could now enjoy the rest of the convention without worry. At the end of the week, we jammed the equipment back into the metal cases and lugged them through the hotel lobby to catch the Super Shuttle. Rob Heller of Tennessee noticed our struggle and offered a parting shot I wouldn’t forget. “Just think,” he said. “Some day we’ll be doing these things on a disk or something and we won’t need all the heavy stuff.” Well, Rob Heller really was a visionary. Not long after that comment, people started showing up with a program called PowerPoint and those fat disks called ZIPs that would hold a whopping 100 megs of material. Using a sort of modified overhead projector, you could magnify whatever was on a computer screen for the whole room to see. And the sound didn’t play off a separate CD player; it was incorporated with the pictures.

Colleagues – we’ve come a long way.

Start gathering your best work and think about how to effectively show it off for your peers. Did you get a summer grant and pursue a passionate project? Did you volunteer your services to a non-profit group and showcase your talents with creative visual work? Have you collaborated with your students and gained recognition with an offbeat group effort of significance? Have you got a book in the works? Did you develop a demonstrative, different way to teach a class that was getting outdated?

Look ahead to the Creative Projects April 1 submission deadline for the Chicago AEJMC national convention in August 2008.

See you there…..and BYOTD (Bring Your Own Thumb Drive).

Times are Always a Changin’ (continued from page 4)

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VisCom Division makes capital (continued from first page)

titled “Teaching and Working in a Multimedia World,” presented trends, challenges, teaching tips, and research findings regarding media convergence and multimedia experiences. The pre-convention workshop was a major event for the VisCom and an intellectual feast for the attendees.

Many interesting ideas were circulated in the five panels. For instance, Don Wittekind from the University of North Carolina said that while audio slide shows,inear infographics and video documentaries are all legitimate Web forms, all three can be done in media other than the Web. Wittekind challenged faculty to teach students interactivity, which truly separates the Web from other media and makes the Web stand out as a unique and legitimate mass medium. Wittekind said that most media companies don’t have expertise in using Flash Action Scripts and that the industry needs graduates with those skills. In one of the panels, based on my research and my observation of recent developments in the industry, I expressed that J-schools need to produce more backpack journalists even though some people still don’t believe that it is necessary. Ju-Don Marshall Roberts, managing editor of Washingtonpost.com, corroborated my argument, saying that most people in his newsroom are generalists these days. Gail Fisher, senior photo/illustrations editor from National Geographic also said that, for a good photographer, knowing how to shoot still photos is not enough. Thanks to Mindy MacAdams of the University of Florida, who graciously took charge of the shaping of the workshop. Readers can find some of the material presented at the workshop at the workshop Wiki.
VisCom Division makes capital (continued from page 7)

http://www.macloo.com/journalism/aej07/.

Together with the Magazine Division, VisCom led more than 50 attendees to visit *National Geographic* and *Travel* magazine, which were just a few blocks away from the conference site. We enjoyed hearing the an exciting account of how *National Geographic* staff worked on the King Tut story in 2005 and how they used CT-scan technology to determine that King Tut was not violently murdered. The trip also provided attendees better insight into what what types of graduates magainzes like *National Geographic* need.

I attended a majority of the panels and paper sessions during the conference. Each supplied me with something I was able to carry home. I would like to express my sincere gratitude toward all the VisCom officers, panel idea proposal submitters (no matter whether your idea was included in the program or not), moderators, discussants, and presenters for your time, efforts, and intellectual inspiration. Lastly, but not least, my whole-hearted thanks go to Loret Steinberg of the Rochester Institute of Technology, who provided outstanding leadership for our division last year. I received much help from her while I was programming the VisCom portion of the conference.

Four veteran journalism educators were honored at the VisCom Luncheon during the conference. Michael Carlebach was honored for his distinguished achievements and lifetime contribution to photojournalism and visual communications; Kay Amert for her distinguished achievements and contributions in teaching and researching visual communication; and Zoe Smith and Julianne Newton for their dedication and outstanding service to the division.

In the 2007-2008 year, the VisCom Division has the following goals to achieve:

1. **Increase diversity within the division**
   a. Communicate/work with other divisions; invite greater collaboration in VisCom programming and publications
   b. Create a VisCom brochure, indicating who we are, what we do and how we would like to expand the dialogue within our division (to be distributed at AEJMC events and mailed to divisions representing diverse voices). The business meeting attendees decided that content would be provided for J-school students to be engaged in an open competition to design the brochure.

2. **Mentoring/support system**
   a. Develop a mentoring section of the Web site as planned this year; VisCom members who have offered to serve as mentors to grad students and new faculty will have their areas of expertise and contact information listed.

3. **Newsletter and Web site**

Visual Communication intersects and integrates with the work and interests of almost all divisions and groups in AEJMC in some way. We would like to find new ways of collaborating, to expand formal and informal interaction among our members.

   a. Guest columns in our newsletter by members of other divisions
   b. Links on our Web site to work/research done by members of other divisions

The newly elected leadership is already working on achieving these goals. Nothing, however, can be done without our members’ involvement. Over the years, as a research chair, second vice head, and vice head, I have communicated with many VisCom division members. I have been amazed at how supportive they are. This is a really lively and energetic division. We have never been short on laughter, wisdom, and support. I hope such a tradition will be carried on in the years to come.