

Viewpoints

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The official newsletter of the Visual Communication Division of AEJMC

‘Does Canada Count?’ Crossing Mental Boundaries

By Kimberly Sultze, St. Michael's College
Division Head

Every year in our department's course in global communication, one of the first things we do is ask students to create a list of places outside the U.S. that they have traveled to and directly experienced — a list of countries, territories, protectorates, etc. The only stipulations are that they've stayed in the country for longer than 48 hours and spoken to at least five locals during their visit.

The results have been pretty interesting. When their answers are plotted on a map, it typically looks something like the image to the right, heavy on Europe and the Caribbean, but with over three-quarters of the world's surface unvisited.

When examining the map in class, we usually get into a pretty good discussion about how we know what we know about other nations; how we build up our mental, intellectual, and emotional pictures of many places in the world, from Afghanistan to Iraq to South Korea to Kenya, and how much of that 'knowledge' is based on second- or third-hand information. Frequently, the discussion will make students uncomfortable. In the case of this travel mapping exercise, one of the ideas is to start off the course by getting students to recognize how much they really don't know about other people and places—and perhaps, to unseat stances of certainty they may have built up over the years about groups of people they have never met. A world exists out there that most of us have never directly experienced, and major chunks of that world routinely do not get cov-



Regions of the world outside the U.S. that students are most likely to have visited.

ered by our major national news media.

I began thinking more about this discussion exercise recently when the AEJMC announced the topic for the Toronto convention plenary session: how the U.S. is perceived by Canada and also how Americans view Canadians. Just about every year, while students are wracking their brains for foreign countries they've been to, at least one student will ask, "Does Canada count?" Now, this may be the bane of teaching at a college in Vermont that is not so far away from the border. But I think it also reflects a dominant American state of mind. The assumption is, in effect, isn't Canada just an extension of us?

But is it? To what degree does this assumption hold water? And what do Americans really know about Canada, anyway?

continued on page 2

Inside

3 Best of Web Winners

Four sites honored with first-place awards

4 Paper Presentations

Browse a listing of the 15 research papers accepted for presentation

6 Documenting Reality

Photojournalists face the challenge of capturing a subject's life without passing judgment

7 VisCom Quarterly

Mark your calendars for a division meeting in Toronto to discuss this journal's future

continued from page 1
Talking to Americans

Rick Mercer, from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's comedy show "This Hour Has 22 Minutes," asked such questions a few years ago. The result was a television show titled "Talking to Americans" in which he conducted interviews with people from the



Kimberly Sultze

United States, asking them questions — absurd questions — about Canada.

In the introduction to the show, Mercer describes Americans as friendly and generous, and "some of the nicest people." But, he continues, they are also willing to "go on at great length about subjects they know nothing about." In the case of Mercer's on-camera interviews, the subject matter they know nothing about is Canada. The Americans he interviews are not only the human-on-the-street variety (on a New York City street, at Mount Rushmore, at a boat show in Florida), but also staff, faculty and students from some of our most respected academic institutions (Princeton, Harvard, UC-Berkeley), as well as state governors (from Arkansas, Iowa, and Michigan) and then-Presidential candidates (George W. Bush). The content of Mercer's interviews ranges from the embarrassing to the disturbing. Americans on camera congratulate Canada for finally adopting the 24-hour clock, paving 800 miles of roads, legalizing insulin, getting electric lights in the Parliament, and officially becoming part of North America — in the year 2000.

They offer up strong opinions about Canada and also about U.S. military action: Bomb Saskatchewan? You gotta do what you gotta do. How to thin the Vancouver caribou herd? Pummel them with tinbits.

Unfortunately, Mercer's show never really gets down to the subtleties of cultural or national differ-

ence. However, like Michael Moore's documentary "Bowling for Columbine," "Talking to Americans" vividly conveys the idea that differences exist — and also that there is a massive discrepancy in what citizens of each country know about others.

Mercer's underlying plea is one that we can take with us to Toronto. The convention is an excellent opportunity to ask some questions that can extend our visions and our knowledge of Canada, of the U.S., and of visual media.

Convention Highlights

- The VisCom pre-convention, Teaching Design Basics for New and Old Media at 1 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 3
- Top refereed research papers in Visual Communication at 11:45 a.m. Wednesday, Aug. 4
- The Best of the Web presentations at 5 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 5
- The Creative Projects presentations at 3:15 p.m. Friday, Aug. 6
- The members meeting (formerly known as the business meeting) at 6:45 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 5.

Important issues will be discussed at the members meeting, so please come and share your ideas. Julianne Newton, editor of *Visual Communication Quarterly*, will discuss the future of the journal. (See her article on page 7.) And, as usual, we will be electing officers. If you have an interest in one of the positions, contact me at ksultze@smcvt.edu or Jean Trumbo at jmtrumbo@earthlink.net.

Many thanks go out to the officers who have served the division this year with their excellent work: Vice Head and Program Chair Jean Trumbo; Second Vice Head Michelle Seelig; PF&R Chair Loret Gnivecki-Steinberg; Teaching Chair Ken Heinen; Research Chair Edgar Huang; Creative Projects Chair John Freeman; Best of the Web Chair Reggie Radniecki; Logo Competition Chair Shawn McKinney; Membership Chair Dan Close; Co-webmasters Keith Greenwood and Mike Kennedy; and Newsletter Co-editors Renee and Brian Kratzer. See you all in Toronto!

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Travel Tips

By Kimberly Sultze, St. Michael's College
Division Head

If you haven't been to Canada recently, you should know that some things have changed both with air travel and border crossings. In the post-9/11 world, you should be asking yourself not only "what documents do I need to get into Canada?" but also "what documents do I need to get back into the United States?"

Personal experience compels me to tell you that the requirements for getting back into the U.S. have become more restrictive, and also that the requirements may vary depending on how you travel and where you cross the border. When U.S. citizens are asking the question, the official response is that you need "proof of U.S. citizenship." This would be documents such as a passport or birth certificate but NOT a driver's license. To avoid hassles and delays, carry proof of citizenship.

A comparison of the United States and Canada in advertising slogans

"As American as apple pie"

— *saying, origin unknown*

"Baseball, hot dogs, apple pie, and Chevrolet!"

— *Chevrolet TV advertisement, 1975-1976*

"As Canadian as possible, under the circumstances"

— *winning entry to a Canadian radio show contest that asked for an ending to the phrase, "As Canadian as ...", circa 1968*

"Hey. I'm not a lumberjack or a fur trader. And I don't live in an igloo or eat blubber or own a dogsled. And I don't know Jimmy, Sally or Suzy from Canada, although I'm certain they're really, really nice. I have a Prime Minister, not a President. I speak English and French, not American. And I pronounce it 'about,' not 'about.' I can proudly sew my country's flag on my backpack. I believe in peace-keeping, not policing. Diversity, not assimilation, and that the beaver is a truly proud and noble animal. A toque is a hat. A chesterfield is a couch, and it is pronounced 'zed,' not 'zee.' Zed! Canada is the second largest land mass, the first nation in hockey, and the best part of North America. My name is Joe, and I am Canadian."

— *Canadian TV advertisement for Molson beer, 2000*

Judges select winners of 'Best of the Web' contest

By Justin Brown & Regene Radniecki
Best of the Web Co-chairs

The winners of the 2004 AEJMC 'Best of the Web' Design Competition, co-sponsored by the Visual Communication and Communication Technology & Policy divisions, have been announced. This year's competition generated 50 qualified entries, with four sites earning first-place designations.

Below is a listing of this year's winners. These award-winning sites may be viewed online at:

<http://www.jou.ufl.edu/aejmcweb/>.

First-place recipients will be presenting their sites during the AEJMC Convention in Toronto at 5 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 5.

Department or school sites

First Place: Edgar Huang, University of South Florida St. Petersburg, "Department of Journalism and Media Studies"

Second Place: Jeff Rutenbeck, Judianne Triglia, Brian Comerford, Amy-Beth McNeely, & Alyssa Pumphrey, University of Denver, "Digital Media Studies Program"

Teaching

First Place: Thomas McHardy,

James Madison University, "Interactive Tutorial on High-Definition Television (HDTV)"

Second Place: M. Joseph Hinshaw & Steven D. Anderson, James Madison University, "Video Exposure Control Tutorial"

Journalism

First Place: Andrew DeVigal, San Francisco State University, "Xpress Online"

Second Place: John Kaplan, Kevin Allen & Craig Lee, University of Florida, "Florida FlyIns"

Third Place: Kim Grinfeder and

Bruce Garrison, University of Miami, "Our National Parks"

Creative

First Place: Monica Postelnicu, University of Florida, "The Shtetl Economic History Project"

Honorable Mentions

Prabu David, Ohio State University & Frank Biocca, Michigan State University, "Media Interface and Network Design Labs (M.I.N.D. Lab)"; Thomas Bivins, University of Oregon, "History of the School of Journalism and Communication"; Prabu David, Ohio State University, "JCOM 101: History of Communication"; Christof Demont-Heinrich & Lynn Schofield Clark, University of Colorado at Boulder, "Media, Culture & Meaning"; Mary McGuire, Chris Waddell & Roger Martin, Carleton University, "Capitol News Online."

Scholarly paper presentations to cover wide range of topics



Ken Kerr, PhotoSensitive

View from the CN Tower



Bernard Weil, PhotoSensitive

Boardwalk along Lake Ontario



Tannis Toohey, PhotoSensitive

Selling roasted corn in Little India



Toronto Tourism

Toronto skyline

By **Edgar Huang**
University of South Florida
Research Chair

Congratulations to the authors of the papers that have been chosen for presentation at the summer convention. Twenty-nine judges picked these 15 papers out of 31 submitted. I thank all the judges for their hard work. Below is the schedule for the VisCom paper presentations:

Top Student and Faculty Papers

11:45 a.m. Wednesday, Aug. 4

“The Homogenized Imagery of Activist Organizations on the Internet” (Top faculty paper)

Linda Jean Kensicki, Minnesota

“Digital News Photography: Is the Historic Record a Blip on the Screen?” (Second-place faculty paper)

Howard Bossen, Michigan State

“Alteration Tolerance: Gauging the Acceptability of Digital Manipulation Techniques in News Photographs” (Third-place faculty paper)

Lulu Rodriguez and Joel Geske, Iowa State

“Myth and Photography: A Semiotic Analysis of Magazine Ads” (Top student paper)

*Janis Teruggi Page,
University of Missouri*

Patterns in News Photography and Viewer Response

5 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 4

“Out of the Pool and into the Bed: Photographic Coverage during the Persian Gulf and Iraqi Wars in Three U.S. Newspapers”

*Paul Lester & Cynthia King,
California State-Fullerton*

“‘They Took It Down’: Picturing the Toppling of the Saddam Hussein Statue in National and International Newspapers”

*Shahira Fahmy,
Southern Illinois-Carbondale*

“News Photography and Reactions to Tragedy: How Journalistic Imagery Triggers Emotion and Influences Perceptions of Violence, Safety, and Responsibility”

*Margaret A. Spratt,
University of Washington*

“Conventionalization in Newspaper and Magazine Feature Photography: A Study of Winning Photographs in the Pictures of the Year International Competition”

*Keith Greenwood & C. Zoe Smith,
University of Missouri*

Perceptions and Copyright Issues Involved in Visual Media

8:15 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 5

“A Continuum of Difference: Race and Gender in Visual Depictions of Sporting Females”

*Marie Hardin, Susan Lynn &
Kristie Walsdorf, Penn State*

“Male Newspaper Photographers’ Perceptions of Women Photojournalists”

*Ken Heinen & Mark Popovich,
Ball State*

“In the Age of the Instant: The Influence of the Digital Camera on Social Interaction Between Subject and Photographer in Photojournalism”

Dennis Dunleavy, San Jose State

“The Impact of Group Identity on the Spiral of Silence: An Examination of Freelance Photographers and Copyright Retention Issues”

Vincent Filak & Thomas Price, Ball State

Scholar-to-Scholar Poster Session: History and Effects in Visual Media

1:30 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 5

“The Phenomenon of the Gros Canon”

Kay Amert, Iowa

“Alphonse Marie Mucha: Posters, Panels ... and Comic Books?”

*Brandon Bollom & Shawn McKinney,
University of Texas*

“The Effect of Visual Continuity in Television News: The Filmic Code, the Journalistic Code, and the News Viewer”

Susan Zuckerman, Indiana

Winning logos chosen for San Antonio convention

By **Shawn M. McKinney**
University of Texas
Logo Competition Chair

This year's AEJMC Convention Logo Competition attracted a total of 30 student entries from eight different schools. The designs varied widely and reflected the rich vein of history and myth associated with San Antonio, Texas, site of the 2005 AEJMC Convention.

Interestingly, the blind review judging process awarded first and second place to the same student - Christine Longboy, from Hawaii Pacific University. Students under the supervision of Longboy's sponsor, Assistant Professor Brian Cannon, also fared well in last year's competition.

Longboy's winning entry uses two highly legible typefaces set in all caps. Add a dominant color (black) and a meaningful shape (a spur) and the association with the San Antonio Spurs, the city's pride and joy, is obvious. Her similarly evocative second place entry features a distinctive out-

line that people are sure to associate with the city's primary architectural symbol, the Alamo. The design includes a simple five-point "lone" star and informal script letterforms that echo the city's festive and relaxed atmosphere.

Third place went to Rachel Rosen Wyatt from the University of Texas at Austin, sponsored by Assistant Professor Shawn M. McKinney. Wyatt turned a horseshoe icon on its side to function as the "C" in "AEJMC," while rope-like letterforms and a "lone" star make additional references to the Old West.

This year's panel of judges included several Texas design professionals: Diana Guentzel, art director for the American Heart Association; Christian Helms, designer for Chaos Design; David Holston, director of the Design Center, University of Texas at Austin; Anne-Charlotte Patterson, art director for Holt, Rinehart and Winston; and Adam Fortner, art director for Texas Architect Magazine.



Top creative projects to be showcased in Toronto

By **John Freeman**
University of Florida
Creative Projects Chair

The creative projects will be presented at 3:15 p.m. Friday, Aug. 6. The following five projects were selected for presentation.

Design Interactive (Highest award)

Jennifer George-Palilonis, Alfredo Marin-Carle & Pamela Leidig-Farmen, Ball State

"Design Interactive" is an interactive textbook that offers an introduction to graphic design concepts as they relate to visual communication. Based on the course content for the introductory journalism graphics course at Ball State, "Design Interactive" is comprised of seven units to engage students visually, interactively and non-linearly.

Living On: Portraits of Tennessee Holocaust Survivors and Liberators

Robert Heller, Tennessee

"Living On" is a documentary project that includes photographic portraits of all survivors, liberators, hidden children and refugees from the Holocaust currently living in Tennessee. Their stories, voices and faces are being documented. Through exhibition and publication, they will live on.

Digi-Fest Short Film and Animation Festival: Best of the Fest DVD

Jon Hyde, Saint Michael's College

This project is the organization of an annual student film festival and the creation of a companion DVD of festival highlights, "Best of the Fest at Saint Michael's College 2003." The project blends teaching objectives in visual storytelling with the promotion of student filmmaking by showing digital films and animation projects.

Season of Sharing

Jackie Bell, University of Missouri

Students in a staff photojournalism class worked on a project to raise awareness and support for community agencies and the people they serve. Each photographer chose an organization and profiled a person or family. The students learned that there is a place for advocacy journalism.

Blurring the Lines: Indigenous Cultures of Latin America

Jackie Bell, University of Missouri

For 10 years I have documented indigenous cultures of Latin America. These images of street life show the merging of the Indian and Latin cultures and the changing way of life.

Students struggle to document reality through a lens

By Loret Gnivecki Steinberg
Rochester Institute of Technology
PF&R Chair

For the past 10 weeks, I've been co-teaching a course with Professor Janet Zandy, a colleague in RIT's Liberal Arts program. We designed "Documentary Studies in Narration and Photography" for photographers and writers who wanted to work together, examine shared traditions and contemporary concerns, and develop a dialogue about documentary work that could go beyond the confines of our normal practices.

My own teaching of documentary work begins with a mental picture — entering a subject's life and environment ready to accept without judgment what the subject is willing to share or reveal. Zandy offers a wonderful complement to this picture that more clearly expresses its content: "respectful not knowing."

This approach asks us to examine whether we see our subjects through the same filter. Do we see them for who and what they are, or do we make the same pictures of seemingly similar subjects again and again?

This question is central to the ethics of documentary photography and photojournalism, and it has been addressed in contemporary philosophy, as well.

The French philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas argued that since god is absolutely incomprehensible, what he asks of us is simply to allow him to shape us. Lévinas extends this notion of the absolute otherness of god to our experience of everyone; we can't actually comprehend anyone on their own terms, so our acts of understanding are nothing more than misrepresentation, which succeed only in reducing them to our own frame of reference.

The ethical stance is not to "understand" the Other, but to open ourselves to the transformations within us that flow from the encounter. From the point of view of a docu-



One of my students, Steven Brahms, documented developmentally disabled adults in their living environments. Throughout the project, Steven reflected on how he was representing his subjects. Steven took the picture above after he began to see Ken not only as a person with disabilities, but also as a man who is reflective of his life and who enjoys creating his own space.

mentarian, we can't really show anything meaningful unless we are willing to be transformed.

But how can I, as a photographer, allow myself to be changed by my subject? How do I manifest that in my pictures so that some of that transformative power might work upon those who view my work?

We might take some hint from the Lévinas's translator, the American philosopher Alphonso Lingis, who writes narratives of his encounters with people he meets on his travels. What results in these intense, often troubling stories is a brief revelation, a disclosure of something that opens on a different life and a different world, and which illuminates Lingis as much as the person he meets.

There are other parallels between ways of being a fully engaged photographer and ways of being ethical. Mencius and other Confucian sages

challenge us to be fully engaged in the process of being and becoming throughout our lives, in contrast to analyzing individual situations as separate and distinct encounters.

In engaging subjects to be photographed, photographers have to connect with them in a more meaningful way — not as vessels to carry whatever is put into them, but as people whose challenging and disruptive otherness makes us different, too.

One of the pitfalls of photojournalism is how one can photograph several assignments in one day and maintain an approach of openness and sensitivity to the lives that are lived in front of a camera. Perhaps we can't connect with every subject at the same level of engagement. It seems important, though, to recognize when we're not connecting or

continued on page 8

VisCom members active at Mid-Winter Conference

By Michelle I. Seelig
University of Miami
2nd Vice Head

This year's Mid-Winter Conference, which took place at Rutgers University Feb. 27-29, was a success. The Visual Communication Division participated with full vigor in the 22 sessions scheduled. Our division held a panel discussion about "Visualizing the Digital Dystopia." We took the lead on two research sessions — one about the changing world of students and professionals and another on visual cultures. Presenters also participated in the poster session.

The VisCom Division also joined forces with the Communication Technology Division to present research on science and technology. All in all, the conference was fun and educational. As always, our members had an opportunity to share their research and ideas. The majority of presenters were graduate students, which is always encouraging. As expressed last year, our division is reaching out to graduate students, and based on the number of presenters at last summer's Annual Convention in Kansas City and the Mid-Winter Conference, we are on the right track. I hope this trend continues in Toronto. Thank you to all who participated. I look forward to seeing everyone in Toronto!

VisCom Online

To learn more about the division, visit the VisCom website at
<http://jmc.ou.edu/viscom>

Subscribe to the VisCom listserv by following the instructions at
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vis-com>

Visual Communication Quarterly

Division input needed on journal's future

By Julianne H. Newton, Editor of
Visual Communication Quarterly

Visual Communication Quarterly celebrated its 10th anniversary this year by publishing its largest issue, a 32-page volume in the April 2004 *News Photographer*. The accomplishment not only manifested the continuing dream of those who began the journal, but also our ability to weather publishing challenges.

As most of you know, VCQ began in 1994 as the official publication of the Visual Communication Division with generous support for printing and distribution by the National Press Photographers Association. Keith Kenney of the University of South Carolina was founding editor. James Kelly of Southern Illinois University was editor for 1997-2001. I became editor in fall 2001.

The journal has thrived over the past 10 years because of the efforts of many individuals. Jim Gordon, long-time editor of *News Photographer*, helped found the journal and arranged to pay for printing VCQ out of *News Photographer's* budget. Ken Kobre of San Francisco State University has unfailingly written his Positive/Negative column for every issue of VCQ. Kimberly Bissell of the University of Alabama began editing VizBib, our annotated listing of important work in visual communication, in 2001. Patsy Watkins serves as book review editor. And our dedicated group of jurors continue their wise review of an increasing number of submissions.

Last year, we achieved an important benchmark by establishing an acceptance rate below 25 percent, a measure of credibility important to promotion and tenure committees. We are listed in the Iowa Guide and have been working to establish better visibility in scholarly index systems.

Several other changes affecting publication of VCQ have occurred.

First, Jim Gordon retired and Donald Winslow succeeded Gordon as editor of *News Photographer*. Then, NPPA determined that it could no longer pay for printing VCQ because of severe financial difficulties. To further complicate matters, Gray Printing, the long-time Ohio printer of *News Photographer*, experienced a labor dispute, which led to a strike, the closing of the shop, and a somewhat complicated move to Herald Printing in a nearby community.

Thanks to generous funding support from the School of Journalism and Communication at the University of Oregon and the VisCom Division, we celebrated the 10th anniversary of VCQ with a double issue in April. We are especially grateful to Tim Gleason, University of Oregon journalism dean, and Kimberly Sultze, VisCom Division head, for their ongoing support.

I am exploring additional funding possibilities ranging from foundations to commercial publishing ventures. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates has expressed interest in publishing the journal, and I am in the process of drafting a proposal to LEA. We have a number of creative ideas for continuing to fulfill our mission of getting key research about visual communication to the people who can most use it — working professionals in photojournalism and design. We also expect to undergo a redesign as we transition into our second decade of publishing.

I expect to present a full, detailed report and recommendations for the future of VCQ to the membership at the Toronto convention.

I welcome your comments and suggestions about the future of Visual Communication Quarterly. E-mail me at jhnewton@oregon.uoregon.edu or call (541) 346-2167. Write me at the School of Journalism and Communication, 1275 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 9403-1275.

continued from page 6

when we begin to see subjects the same way we've seen others before them.

Photographers who are more aware of their own history, cultural perspective and understanding of the world will be more sensitive to decisions and judgments that affect the ways that a subject is seen and represented for an audience.

Photojournalists who cultivate a broader range of experiences and thinking in their own lives will see beyond a surface representation of any subject and become more sensitive to visual manifestations that can better represent the subject.

Some of our young photographers have been confused about the idea of "capturing" a subject — as if the subject is out there to be snared with a camera instead of engaged, understood as best as possible and then thoughtfully represented so a viewer will be engaged as well. Some photographers have indicated through their work that simply having eyes

and a camera will be adequate preparation for doing documentary work. For the past few weeks, a recurring question has emerged — do we make the pictures to make the pictures or do we make the pictures to understand and experience the subject?

Our class has examples of both ends of this spectrum. One student, who had his first internship at a mid-sized city newspaper last summer, recently described an assignment: "We knew what story we wanted to tell, but we needed to go out and get the facts." As he continued relating how he had photographed and how the writer had interviewed, I wrote on the board what he had said. Later he admitted that he had almost immediately asked himself, "Did I just hear what came out of my own mouth?"

Another student, Steve Brahm, has been photographing developmentally disabled adults in their living environments. All are fairly independent, some are married or have a partner, some live in group homes. Steve has been trying to learn as much as

he can about the quality of his subjects' lives in their own terms. He doesn't want to make photographs that stereotype what a person without disabilities might see or think from their own perspective, but to make photographs that reveal what his subjects think about their own lives.

He doesn't want to fantasize or criticize the people he's photographing. Steve has been wrestling with the idea that there's no way he can get entirely out of his own experience, but wants to make photographs that connect more with the reality of his subjects' lives. "It's really difficult," he says. "How do you enter their space and try to see from a perspective that doesn't apply your own judgments on their lives?"

In documenting, Steve is trying to assume a vantage point of "respectful not knowing" and has allowed the people he's been working with to show him what he has previously not known. In his encounter, this young photographer is being transformed.