

Viewpoints

Winter 2004

Vol. 11, No. 1

The official newsletter of the Visual Communication Division of AEJMC

Looking toward the Toronto convention

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

Greetings in the New Year. I hope this issue of *Viewpoints* finds you re-invigorated after the holiday season and energized for the new semester.

Back in December, while many of you were making out final grade lists and checking them twice, Jean Trumbo, Michelle Seelig, and I were in Atlanta at the AEJMC Winter Meeting. We are very pleased with the array of panels that were scheduled for the Toronto convention.

When you are making your travel plans, be sure to arrive early enough to join in our pre-convention, **Teaching Design Basics for New and Old Media**, which is happening at 1 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 3. And also watch out for panels on **Digital Storytelling** (with the Newspaper Division), **Picturing Class: The Role of News Imagery in Reinforcing or Challenging Perceptions of Social Class** (with Minorities and Communication), and **Mini-Me: Design and Research Issues Related to Miniaturized Media Formats** (with Communication Technology and Policy). The complete schedule of sessions is on page 7. If you have recommendations for speakers for any of the sessions, please contact Jean Trumbo (jmtrumbo@earthlink.net) or Michelle Seelig (mseelig@miami.edu). A multitude of thanks — and rounds of cheer — go to Jean for all of her efforts in planning, organizing and soliciting ideas for our programming.

One of the amazing things about the VisCom Division is the number of refereed competitions we sponsor. There are plenty of opportunities for peer review of the projects that you are working on. Consider submitting



photo courtesy of the Toronto Tourism

Nathan Philips Square is located in the center of Toronto. The site features concerts, art exhibitions and a farmers market during the summer months.

your research, scholarship or creative work to our competitions — and urging your colleagues and students to do the same. Also, if you are teaching a class that involves design projects and/or have talented student designers in your program, let them know about the logo competition. You'll find calls for each competition on pages 4-5.

Mid-Wintering at Rutgers

Rutgers University is hosting the **AEJMC Mid-Winter Conference** Feb. 27 to Feb. 29, 2004. Although the deadline for submissions has passed, it is not too late to register to come to the conference and join in discussions with members of the VisCom Division, Communication Technology and Policy, Civic Journalism, Media Management and Economics, Entertainment Studies, Science Communication, and the Graduate

Education. The program will be posted on the conference website (<http://www.scils.rutgers.edu/jri/aejmc-w2004/>) in late January, and information on hotels and conference registration can be found there already. The registration fee for faculty is only \$15 and for graduate students \$10, if paid before Feb. 13. And yes, some meals are included in that price. Many thanks to Michelle Seelig (mseelig@miami.edu) who is organizing the VisCom Division's participation this year!

Inside

3 Double Standard?

What are students learning about the types of photography stories that are worth telling?

4 Call for Entries

Submit your work for peer review.

Fast facts about Toronto

Travel to Toronto in August for the 2004 AEJMC convention and discover the bustling city of Toronto. Situated 566 feet above sea level on the northern shore of Lake Ontario, Toronto is one of the southernmost cities in Canada. In fact, it has the same latitude as northern California.

◆ Home to more than 100 cultures, Toronto is a world within a city.

◆ With a population of 4.2 million, Toronto is Canada's largest city and the fifth-largest city in North America, after Mexico City, Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago.

◆ As the capital of Ontario, Toronto is the seat of government for Canada's most populous province and is the industrial and business center for the country.

Toronto's languages

There are two official languages in Canada — English and French. In addition to these official languages, the top five languages spoken in Toronto are Chinese, Italian, Tamil, Portuguese and Spanish.

The best of the best

◆ Ranked #1 in *Destinations* magazine for "Canadian City with the Most to Offer Groups"

◆ The most popular choice for U.S.-sponsored association meetings outside the U.S.

Ontario Place is made up of three manmade islands along Lake Ontario.



Architecture

The city boasts at least 22 different architectural styles and includes both historic gems and contemporary landmarks. Styles range from the neo-classic elegance of Union Station and the neo-Gothic campus of the University of Toronto to the modern works of Germany's Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (Toronto Dominion Centre), Canada's Arthur Erickson (Roy Thomson Hall) and Finland's Viljo Revell (Toronto City Hall).

For the record books

Two buildings stand out on the Toronto skyline: the CN Tower and the SkyDome. The Tower ("CN" stands for "Canadian National," one of Canada's founding railway companies) is the tallest free-standing structure in the world, standing at 553 m (1815' 5").

The adjacent SkyDome is a multi-purpose entertainment complex, best known as the world's first stadium with a fully retractable roof. Both the Roman Coliseum and St. Paul's Cathedral could fit comfortably inside the Dome.

That is one long street

Yonge Street, Toronto's main strip, is the longest street in the world at 1,900 km. It stretches from the lake at Queens Quay to Rainy River a mining community in northern Ontario, near Thunder Bay.

— from *www.torontotourism.com*

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Viewpoints is the official newsletter of the Visual Communication Division of the Association for the Education in Journalism and Mass Communication and is published three times a year. Articles and letters to the editor are encouraged. Opinions expressed in all submissions belong to the authors and not the Viewpoints editorial staff, the officers of the Visual Communication Division or the officers of AEJMC. Please e-mail submissions to Renee Martin Kratzer at kratzerr@missouri.edu.

Winning pictures and pictures worth making

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

We photojournalists send mixed messages when we talk about what we do and what we value most. “It’s not just about the pictures, it’s about the story,” we say, and yet images of a small list of subjects are repeatedly rewarded as the best in photojournalism. Our audience claims it’s tired of seeing the same stories again and again, and critics charge that photojournalists most often document subjects from the same stereotyped perspective without offering insight or a context for understanding or a point of view that might reveal something we didn’t already know. But dramatic pictures from stories with repetitive themes still win the contests.

Powerful images of international suffering make strong competition each year just as contest judges insist that photographers should look for more stories in their own backyards. But the photographer who shoots complicated community stories and daily assignments rarely encounters subjects with a potential for drama and emotion. Is it possible for more than a handful of photographers to make a living and — at the same time — make photographs that are valued and rewarded as being the best in our field?

Michael Lutzky, staff photographer at the *Washington Post*, described conversations with colleague Jahi Chikwendiu as they edited Chikwendiu’s winning entry for the Atlanta Photojournalism Seminar competition.

“Jahi photographed children in Africa who were orphaned because of AIDS. ... His pictures showed them sleeping, preparing food, doing everything they had to do to take care of themselves.” The pictures were strong, Lutzky said, but “If the contest judges didn’t look at the captions, the importance of the pictures would be missed entirely.” If



photo by Loret Gnivecki Steinberg

Nancy Andrews, director of photography at the Detroit Free Press, talks with a group of students at Cleveland’s National Press Photographers’ Flying Short Course.

Chikwendiu was entering the photographs for competition, Lutzky suggested that he submit images that would grab the viewer directly, even if they weren’t as important to the story itself.

Sue Morrow, assistant managing editor of visuals at the *St. Petersburg Times*, told a group of student photographers that they should be better journalists when they’re looking for stories. One young woman asked her what kinds of stories she should look for. Morrow replied, “I’ll tell you what I *don’t* want to see. I’m tired of seeing stories about the disease of the week, boxing, strippers, drag queens. They’re too easy. The stories we see too often are the ones that are visually easy. We already know those stories. The stories we need to tell are the ones that are harder to put into photographs.”

Yes, it’s important to show the struggle to recover from a serious injury. But how many newspapers and TV stations routinely rely upon this kind of story as their essay of the month or quarter? How many students look for stories like these for

their portfolios because they’re more “important”?

Recently, CNN ran a story about a young boy who had no legs or forearms but had learned how to bowl. Clips of friends and family describing his tenacity were interspersed with repeated shots of the boy hobbling toward the alley, tossing the ball and falling forward — strike! Sometimes there was no strike.

It was a classic “disability” story and a cliché — the kind many people with disabilities condemn as the “supercrip story.” (Check out the winter 2003 issue of the National Center on Disability and Journalism News. In its cover article Jack A. Nelson describes seven stereotypes in stories of people with disabilities.)

Why was the CNN piece a story? It’s easy to see and easy to tell. The young man is gutsy and we’re given about 10 seconds of interview to see that he’s likeable. We learn nothing more about him. The story frames his life entirely around his disability and his bowling. We have to assume that the rest of his life isn’t a story.

4.01.04
DEADLINE
4.01.04

Call for Papers

By Edgar Huang
University of South Florida
Research Chair

The Visual Communication Division of AEJMC invites faculty and students to submit research papers reporting investigations into visual communication topics for presentation at the association's annual convention in August 2004. The division encourages submission of papers that investigate any aspect of visual media, including photojournalism, advertising, television, film, multimedia and web design, propaganda images, visual images and culture, the visual aspects of political campaigns, etc. Sessions will be devoted to theoretically based studies of visual communication and to issues concerning the professional practice of visual media production. Both qualitative and quantitative research in media history, law, policy, effects, processes, use and ethics are welcome.

All submissions will be blind refereed by a panel of independent readers. A \$100 award will be given to the top student contribution, and the top three faculty papers will be recognized in the AEJMC annual convention program.

Work previously presented or published, or work under consideration by a scholarly journal, by another AEJMC division, or by another scholarly or trade organization is ineligible and should not be submitted.

The deadline for paper submissions is **April 1, 2004**. Authors will be advised whether their paper has been accepted and will receive a copy of reviewers' comments by May 15, 2004. At least one author of an accepted paper must attend the convention to present it.

Send papers to:
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huang@stpt.usf.edu



March 1 deadline for Best of Web Design

Submissions for the Best of the Web Design Competition, co-sponsored by VisCom and Communication Technology & Policy divisions, are being accepted.

The competition aims to recognize academic work in the design of websites that advance education or research in journalism and mass communication.

Entrants must be faculty members or graduate students who work for or attend an ACEJMC-accredited institution or are current AEJMC paying members. Entries may be submitted in one of these categories: departmental/school sites, teaching, journalism, or creative.

Entries will be peer-reviewed. First-place sites will be presented at this summer's AEJMC convention and will be awarded \$50 cash prizes.

Entries must be submitted online no later than **March 1, 2004**. Visit www.jou.ufl.edu/aejmcweb/index.htm for an entry form or to learn more about the competition. Contact Justin Brown (jbrown@jou.ufl.edu) or Regene Ann Radniecki (radnieck@mnstate.edu) with questions.



photo by John Freeman

Have your creative projects peer reviewed

If you're an educator involved in visually creative work that isn't traditional research, consider the VisCom Division's Creative Projects competition. It's an excellent opportunity to have your efforts recognized by peers. Accepted projects will be presented to AEJMC colleagues at the national convention in Toronto this August.

The format is non-restrictive. An entry could include graphic design projects you've done, original photographs you've taken or information about an innovative class project you've coordinated. Written works that might not be considered appropriate for the traditional research category also are welcome if you have visuals that relate.

Accepted projects in the past have included collaborative web projects, photo exhibits from summer activities, videos shot for public service, lessons learned about teaching advertising overseas, books of sports photographs and

This image was part of John Freeman's 2002 creative project winning entry called "On the Road Again: Photographs Across America." He used a point-and-shoot Olympus to prove that decent images can be made with simple cameras.

commentaries about teaching effectiveness supported by innovative student work.

Your material should include an explanation of the project, stressing its significance to the study of visual journalism. Did you receive a grant? Does the work examine cutting-edge technology? How does this project fit in with your own interests?

Package your entry so it can be easily viewed by the three judges. For example, an 8 x 11-inch folder with laser prints would be better than sending a dozen 20 x 30-inch graphic design posters. All submitted projects will be re-packaged for blind review and ranking. Last year there were about 15 submissions, and five were accepted for the 90-minute session.

Send three copies (without identification attached) to: Assoc. Prof. John Freeman, 3070 Weimer Hall, P.O. Box 118400, Gainesville, FL 32611-8400. Include, on one separate sheet of paper, a 75-word abstract with your name, title, university address, e-mail and phone numbers.

The postmark deadline is **April 1, 2004**. Winners will be notified by May 15. Questions should be emailed to John Freeman at jfreeman@jou.ufl.edu. Good luck!

Encourage students to enter logo competition

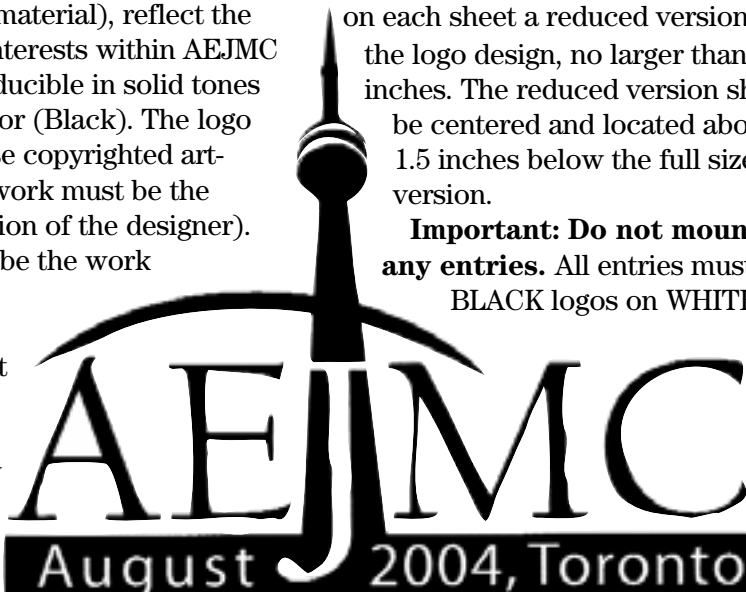
By Shawn McKinney
University of Texas at Austin
Logo Competition Chair

The logo must include the letters "AEJMC" and the words "August 2005, San Antonio." The logo must be adaptable to multiple uses and sizes (i.e., program book cover, name tags, promotional material), reflect the diversity of interests within AEJMC and be reproducible in solid tones using one color (Black). The logo should not use copyrighted artwork (all artwork must be the original creation of the designer). Entries must be the work of students enrolled in classes taught by AEJMC members. Students may submit multiple entries, but

entries are limited to 10 per school.

Each logo design should be submitted on a separate, white, letter-sized sheet of paper (8.5 x 11 inches), vertical (portrait) format. Each logo design should be centered on the sheet and be no smaller than 4 x 4 inches (24 x 24 picas). Also, include on each sheet a reduced version of the logo design, no larger than 1 x 1 inches. The reduced version should be centered and located about 1.5 inches below the full size version.

Important: Do not mount any entries. All entries must be BLACK logos on WHITE



paper. On back of each sheet, include: student's name, mailing address, email address, school and faculty sponsor.

Submission

Mail entries to:
AEJMC 2004 Logo Competition
Attn: Shawn M. McKinney,
University of Texas at Austin
School of Journalism
1 University Station A-1000
Austin, TX 78712-0113
512.232.5986
smckinney@mail.utexas.edu

Deadline

Entries must be postmarked by **Friday, April 16** to be considered.

Left: The 2004 winning logo was designed by Thanita Pakjamsai of Hawaii Pacific University. Brian Cannon of HPU was Pakjamsai's sponsor.

Try assessment as a learning tool

By Ken Heinen

Ball State University

Teaching Standards Chair

In academic parlance, assessment is a method of evaluating student performance that usually results in grades. While most teachers employ it as a way to quantify what the students have learned, assessment can be a valuable learning tool for both the teacher and the students. Here are three techniques that put the emphasis on using assessment for learning.

Weekly quizzes can measure if students are grasping the material. Instead of moving right into new content immediately after a quiz, there is good review benefit in going over the quiz with the class. This provides an opportunity to reinforce concepts and let the students ask related questions. The students will know almost instantly how they did on the quiz and the teacher can note areas that need fortification or clarification.

Another way to turn assessment into a learning process is to ask the students to write a one-minute essay

at the end of class. Let them choose either to explain what they saw as the most important point of the day or to ask a question that came to mind during the lecture, but did not get asked.

Sometimes students may feel uncomfortable interrupting the lecture or they may be too shy to ask questions. This exercise presents a chance for the students to have some input and for the teacher to discover what the students are thinking. It is important that a few minutes be spent during the next class period to answer the questions and to clarify important points.

A third way to use assessment as a learning tool is to review assignments during class. This technique works especially well in photojournalism courses. While holding up or projecting pictures, request the students to evaluate their peers' work. The students can visually see how their own work compares to others in the class and the teacher can observe how the students are progressing.

Explore online courses, degrees at new website

Louisiana State University's Manship School of Mass Communication has announced a new website with information about existing online courses and degrees in journalism and mass communication. The site, www.lsu.edu/jmconline, includes information from 37 colleges and universities that currently offer online courses and degrees.

For the study, two of the school's faculty members, Billy I. Ross and Nicole E. Smith, surveyed more than 500 journalism and mass communication programs in the United States.

Dean John M. Hamilton said the School plans to inventory all the schools annually and update the listings on the site. Findings from the study will include trends and growth of online education in journalism and mass communication.

The study is supported by the Manship School's Reilly Center for Media and Public Affairs. Ross can be contacted at bilross@lsu.edu and Smith at nsmith8@lsu.edu.

DANCING TREES

Two evergreens appear to perform an intimate dance as their curved trunks create the illusion of movement for passing motorists on the road from Troy to Kendrick, Idaho.



VisCom Division's Summer 2004 Conference Schedule

By Jean Trumbo, Program Chair
University of Nevada, Reno

Tuesday, August 3 1-5 p.m.

Pre-conference Session: Teaching Design Basics for New and Old Media

This pre-conference session will address the issues facing many visual communication educators: How do we teach fundamental visual design principles in a way that provides a foundation for traditional media while also enriching our students with the potential of interactive multimedia?

Educators who have addressed these issues in curriculum development and teaching will share lectures, syllabi, and techniques for training and educating students to work in new media/old media professions. This pre-conference session will provide an opportunity to share challenges, review approaches, and develop solutions for providing the educational opportunities and experiences that our students need. Practical advice and critique of curriculum proposals will be offered to participants.

Wednesday, August 4 10-11:30 a.m.

Digital Storytelling: Jumpstarting a Research Agenda Panel

Co-sponsored panel: Newspaper and VisCom
Online news professionals, schools of journalism and journalism think tanks have all urged journalists and future journalists to move beyond "repurposed" news stories (i.e., print versions of stories that are dumped on the Web) and to exploit the unique features of the Internet. One untested assumption: stories on the Web will provide readers with desired interactivity. This panel will address questions associated with these assumptions: What constitutes digital storytelling? How can fluency across media formats and theories of visual literacy inform digital storytelling? What are the implications for the journalist as storyteller?

11:45 a.m.-1:15 p.m. Research Session

1:30-3 p.m.

Visualizing the "Other": Cultural sensitivity in photojournalism and design

Co-sponsored PF&R panel: VisCom and Religion
What are the implications for photojournalists and designers in fairly portraying cultural difference? This session will address issues relevant to international photojournalism, as well as the challenges relevant to photojournalism in closed societies. In addition, the role of the designer in communicating cultural differences will be addressed. What unique skills or sensitivities are necessary for designers and photojournalists?

*5-6:30 p.m.
Research Session*

Thursday, August 5

8:15-9:45 a.m.

Research Session

11:45 a.m.-1:15 p.m.

Picturing Class: The Role of News Imagery in Reinforcing or Challenging Perceptions of Social Class

Co-sponsored research panel: VisCom and Minorities

Mainstream media play a role in reinforcing or challenging audiences' perceptions and opinions about social groups. This panel explores newspaper news imagery as a form of artifactual evidence that can be stored in subconscious memory. What kinds of artifacts do news images provide about social class? What is the potential for such "remembered image evidence" to affect how people view and behave?

1:30-3 p.m.

Scholar-to-Scholar Research Session

3:15-4:45 p.m.

Visual Voyeurs: Sex in Advertising
Co-sponsored PF&R panel: VisCom and Advertising

We seem to "know it when we see it," but today sex in advertising is more than the scantily-clad model or romantic couple. Images of homoeroticism, multiculturalism, beefcake, and cute-girl-as-power-figure are as likely to appear in ads as is the bikini-clad bimbo. Similarly, most of what's known about "sex in advertising" is based on the information-processing "sex-as-attention-getter" paradigm. Such a viewpoint fails to consider the meaning of sexual images and the multi-functionality of message variables and the variety of ways emotion-evoking stimuli such as sexual content influence persuasion. This panel's purpose is to update and advance sex in advertising research with theoretical discussions of both representation- and effects-based research.

5-6:30 p.m.

Best of the Web

Co-sponsored competition: Communication Technology and Policy and VisCom

6:45-8:15 p.m.

VisCom Business Meeting

8:30 p.m. to whenever

Off-site Social

Friday, August 6

7-8 a.m.

VisCom Executive Committee Meeting

8:15-9:45 p.m.

Sparking Creativity and other pointers from top advertising professionals

Co-sponsored PF&R panel: Advertising and VisCom

11:45 a.m.-1:15 p.m.

VisCom Luncheon

1:30 to 3 p.m.

Mini-Plenary: Media Convergence in Visual Communication Teaching

Co-sponsored by VisCom and Community College Journalism

3:15-4:45 p.m.

Creative Projects — Visual Communication

5-6:30 p.m.

Mini-Me: Design and Research Issues Related to Miniaturized Media Formats

Co-sponsored by Communication Technology and Policy and Visual Communication

6:45-8:15 p.m.

Visual Communication Research Methods
Co-sponsored research panel: VisCom and Minorities

Approaches to visual analysis will be presented from a number of perspectives. What are appropriate methods to analyze visual communication in the media? What approach is the most useful: iconology (iconography), symbol theory, semiotics, content analysis, visual anthropology, cultural studies, etc.?

Saturday, August 7

10-11:30 a.m.

The Eye In The Middle of The Storm: Do people read differently online than they do in print?

Co-sponsored research panel: VisCom and Magazine

As online news takes on increasing importance as a source of information, it is time to take a closer look at the relationship of the reader to online content. This panel will explore how people read on the computer screen and how journalism can more effectively engage the reader's attention.

continued from page 3

The bowling is easy to tell, but a lot of life isn't so easy to show. Ask a photographer to do a story on housing and lead abatement or a community's attempt to find out why test scores in schools are low or on two neighborhoods with equally valid yet opposing interests in a proposal to widen a road. Then watch the response. A yawn? Panic? Excitement? Ask them if photographs of these subjects will go into their portfolio or a contest entry. As educators, do we know how to show students why these stories are important and how they can make meaningful pictures on such topics?

Do we give students a double message? It's not just about the picture. But we *know* what the really awesome pictures look like.

Lutzky describes the current environment: "I don't think there's ever been a time when the industry has been so self-critical. Pictures not only have to communicate to the commu-

nity, but they have to represent the best of our field." And yet most rewards for excellence in photojournalism "have little to do with the realities of the work." Lutzky and some friends have devised a tongue-in-cheek contest with categories such as "eye candy" and "oops" (for unpublishable images). "Hard News" ("no aesthetics, please, the harder the better") includes separate categories for crash & burn, guns drawn, spot news under \$500 damage and spot news over \$500 damage. The "Portrait" category includes separate judging for full face only and for people in front of computers.

Picture space in most papers is shrinking every year. Young photographers are told that they need to make the kind of effective, powerful, communicative photographs — the kind that will not likely be seen but will win prizes while the simple, graphic singles or the familiar, uplifting or cute stories run.

They hear us push them to go

beyond the "big punch" photograph and build a story that has depth and feeling, yet the big punch images are the ones that establish a photographer's reputation.

Can we show our students why the *other* stories are important and how to convey them in meaningful pictures? Can we teach them to make the pictures that haven't been made yet? Can we make compelling photographs of the subjects that are frequently missed because they're not obviously visual, dramatic or "important"?

And how do we look at the focus of the profession's system of contests, awards and promotions? It's confusing that we aspire to one kind of photojournalism but most often make a living from another kind of picture. If it's a good story, can't it be a powerful picture, too? And if we're not publishing the photographs our profession celebrates, how do we prepare young photojournalists for the field?