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The International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors



Published by the Department of Communications, Missouri Southern State College, Joplin, MO

ISWNE selects Missouri Southern as new headquarters

[Editor's note: This is the release that was mailed to press associations in all 50 states and Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and Saskatchewan.]



"The school has been mandated by the Missouri legislature to fulfill an international mission and has already established contacts in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. This offers the distinct potential to expand the international component of ISWNE."

Missouri Southern State College in Joplin has been selected as the new headquarters of the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors (ISWNE). The society's board of directors announced the move at the ISWNE's recent conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

South Dakota State University has been home to the organization since 1992. The ISWNE was founded in 1954 at Southern Illinois University to promote high standards of editorial writing and to foster freedom of the press in all nations. There are currently 300 members in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Japan, and India.

Dr. Chad Stebbins, director of the Institute of International Studies and associate professor of journalism at Missouri Southern, is the new executive secretary-treasurer of the ISWNE. He and his students will produce a monthly newsletter for the ISWNE

and *Grassroots Editor*, the society's quarterly journal.

"One of the intriguing aspects of the relationship with MSSC is that the institution already has a strong international component," said **Elliott Freireich**, ISWNE president and publisher of the *West Valley View* in Litchfield, Ariz. "The school has been mandated by the Missouri legislature to fulfill an international mission and has already established contacts in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. This offers the distinct potential to expand the international component of ISWNE."

Freireich and vice president Tim Waltner, publisher of the *Freeman* (S.D.) *Courier*, led an ISWNE headquarters selection team that visited Joplin and the University of Oklahoma in May.

"Missouri Southern made us feel at home — a small school with a great community journalism program and a campus newspaper that any member of ISWNE would be proud to call his or her own," Freireich said. "I think ISWNE and the students of Missouri Southern will benefit greatly from our new association."

They have the Stupid Motorist Act in Arizona. I don't know if this law exists because we have more stupid motorists than other places, but I love the name of this law.

During July and August there is a change in the normal weather pattern; winds flow from the Southwest bringing moisture from Baja California. We call it a monsoon. This results in heavy rainfall which floods the normally dry washes. Sometimes these washes flow bank to bank with muddy "boiling" water. Sometimes the local authorities even put up barricades to stop people from trying to drive through. But people still try to drive across. Sometimes they make it. Sometimes they don't and make the 6 o'clock news instead. There are firefighters and helicopters with ropes and ladders to pull out the victims. Then the Stupid Motorist Act is invoked, which allows the victims to reimburse the costs of the rescue.

If you're looking for relevance, there isn't much. But it is a lesson in desert survival and meteorology.

The Halifax conference was another good one. The Hennigars and Murrays put on quite a show. It marked the end of one era as well as the beginning of another. South Dakota State University turned over the reigns of ISWNE to Missouri Southern State College.

Dick Lee has finished his official duties, but we still will see him around and hear of him continuing to talk up ISWNE with journalists he meets. Dick has served the organization well and brought many new members into our ranks. For that we thank him.

The President's Report

By Elliott Freireich

Publisher, *West Valley View*,
Litchfield Park, AZ



Chad Stebbins takes over and I think that by the time you see this you will see that there are changes not only on the horizon, but right now, as evidenced by the changes in the newsletter.

Halifax was another large conference with more than 90 attendees. There were many new faces and many others that were unfamiliar because they were old faces who have stayed away too long.

A couple of the new members were Harry and Carol Hix. I met the Hixes through our search committee to find the successor for Dick Lee. Harry teaches community journalism at Oklahoma University and Carol works in the field as well. They had owned and published weeklies before "going straight."

One of the great things that came out of the search is that while we were unable to choose both finalist schools, we were able to make good friends and strong partners with the Hixes and OU. Harry told me he would help spread the word to weekly publishers in his area.

And while others didn't come to the conference, we have continued to make contacts at other schools which will help us get the word out about the mission and kinds of people in ISWNE.

Is this an infectious bunch or what? Tommy McGraw was enlisted by Goodloe Sutton and joined us for the first time in Halifax. He already was trying to figure out what kinds of things he and Goodloe could find to educate us about the South — possibly pondering a future conference.

I got back home with a full plate awaiting me. *West Valley View* published one of its largest editions, 72 tab pages. There have been our annual summer staff migrations to solve, and last week my department heads and I participated in a future planning session. It was an all-day affair that we did off-site.

I think that this type of session is critical for businesses to take a step back from the day-to-day grind and try to identify the problems, strengths, weaknesses and goals of the company. Then one can attempt to identify strategies for how to get where one wants to go. After eight hours, the *View* managers had identified some problems and come up with strategies to overcome the immediate ones, but we still had not even gotten to the long-term part of the equation.

I had hired a facilitator to assist

us to get through that first day. Now we will attempt to take some of the things we touched on and address them more fully before we have the facilitator back. Bringing in an outside facilitator was important in keeping the meeting on task. He posed questions designed to allow us to come up with answers without his influencing the outcome. While there is so much more to do, this session was extremely valuable in starting to identify a direction for the company that is shared by the entire management team (and later to be shared with staff).

While *West Valley View* is larger than some newspapers in ISWNE, only the very smallest don't need formal planning sessions. How does this relate to ISWNE? One of the groups which gave us a proposal to host the headquarters is a group headed by Tonda Rush. Tonda is an attorney and former head of the National Newspaper Association. One of her perceptions after talking to me and a number of other members and board members was that there was not a clear sense of direction for ISWNE. Not everybody thought of it as the same organization and each had his/her own idea of what our goals were or should be.

While I think Tonda's assessment is somewhat accurate, I don't think the problem is as serious as she thought. But Tonda's recommendation is that ISWNE hold a planning session to determine what its mission is, what the goals and objectives are, and how do we obtain them.

The board and I have briefly touched on this and will talk some more about it. With all the changes that have just occurred, I think it is important to first get our feet back firmly on the ground, make sure Chad gets the support he needs from the board and the membership before we take on anything of this magnitude. But at some point in the future, we need to sit down and find out where we want to go.

**I will work hard
to ensure that the
transition to MSSC
is as smooth
as possible.
Chad and the board
have identified a few
immediate goals
for the organization
including
recruitment of
new members,
retention of
old members,
redesign of the
publications as well as
publishing on a fixed
schedule (imagine,
a newspaper group
actually making
deadline on a
publication), and
starting a Web site.**

* * *

One of the places ISWNE has decided to go (nice transition, huh) is to allow me to serve a second term as president. I appreciate the trust that you have shown and I will work hard to ensure that the transition to MSSC is as smooth as possible. Chad and the board have identified a few immediate goals for the organization including recruitment of new members, retention of old members, redesign of the publications as well as publishing on a fixed schedule (imagine, a newspaper group actually making deadline on a publication), and starting a Web site. One of my goals was to build both a directory of members and a directory of members' email addresses. The beginnings of the email list are printed here for the first time.

While the reasons for re-electing me seem to be primarily to continue work with the transition, I see that it took me nearly six months to figure out what I was supposed to do, only to have just six more months left in my term. This year you have a president who knows what he is supposed to do (or thinks he does). I also intend to attempt to share enough of this perceived knowledge with Tim Waltner so that he is fully up to speed when he takes over. So far it has worked since we do work well together and bounce things off each other much of the time. So when you see things that were done right by me, Tim was involved and is owed half the credit. But when you see things that are terrible, those are the things I assigned Tim to do on his own and he deserves all the blame.

* * *

If you have comments or suggestions, give me a call or drop me a note, (623) 535-8439 or ElFreireic@aol.com or at **West Valley View, 200 W. Wigwam Blvd., Litchfield Park, AZ 85340.** If you have complaints, Tim's email address is freecour@iw.net.

Getting to Know & your new headquarters & secretary-treasurer



By Dr. Chad Stebbins

Director, Institute of International Studies
Associate Professor of Journalism
Missouri Southern State College

When I read in Elliott Freireich's February/March "President's Report" that the board would begin searching for a new headquarters for ISWNE, my mind began to race with the possibilities. I immediately sent a long letter to Elliott suggesting the board consider Missouri Southern State College as the new home of the ISWNE. To me, it seemed like a natural partnership.

Missouri Southern, an undergraduate college of 5,500 students, is located in Joplin in the southwest corner of the state. Joplin is the fourth-largest metropolitan area in Missouri and serves as the hub of a four-state region that includes Kansas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. Founded in 1873 as a lead mining town, Joplin now has a population of 42,000 and serves more than 400,000 people in the four-state area. The city is only 200 miles from the geographical center of the country, making it an ideal transportation hub. Joplin is home to four major trucking companies that employ more than 6,000 people.

Three years ago, Missouri Southern was designated by the

state as the one institution in Missouri that would establish international education as a distinctive theme of its mission.

As a result, we have developed new majors in International Studies, French, and German; established an Institute of International Studies, an International Language Resource Center, and an International Trade and Quality Center; and created the Gockel International Symposium for the discussion of major international news events.

Our journalism program has received a Title VI grant from the U.S. Department of Education to internationalize our curriculum. I have traveled to France, Germany, Austria, Russia, Senegal, and the Ivory Coast and have secured

partnerships with journalism programs in those countries. We have started an international magazine that features the writings of students from around the world and are developing a World Press Center for Journalism Students, to be located at Missouri Southern. Students from other countries would attend conferences and workshops on American journalism techniques, serve internships at community newspapers, and work with our own students on special projects.

In June 2000, Missouri Southern will host a week-long conference on intercultural journalism — using communication to achieve

a greater understanding between cultures. This conference also will be used to launch our World Press Center.

I've been an ISWNE member since 1997. I have a deep-seated interest in weekly newspapering and have tried to build a community journalism program at Missouri Southern. In 1992, when I began writing a syllabus for a new course in community journalism, I wrote to nearly every major journalism school

around the country asking for their input. The typical response was that they thought such a course was a great idea, but they unfortunately had long since disbanded theirs or never even had one.

As you are probably aware, most journalism programs have concentrated on the metropolitan

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press while ignoring the fact that the United States has 7,500 weekly newspapers that provide an excellent training ground for new graduates. I think the tide might be turning, however. Kansas State University, Pennsylvania State University, the University of Oklahoma, South Dakota State University, and Oswego (N.Y.) State University all now have strong community journalism programs. And the University of Missouri School of Journalism is even adding an endowed chair in community newspaper management.

I viewed Missouri Southern's partnership with the ISWNE as the perfect way to enhance both our community journalism program and our international mission. We, in turn, can use our international contacts and vast resources to help the Society grow. It's truly a symbiotic relationship. I think you will see some amazing results in the years to come.

A little more about me: I have advised Missouri Southern's weekly campus newspaper for the last 15 years. In 1995 and 1996, *The Chart* was named the Best All-Around Non-Daily Student Newspaper in the nation by the Society of Professional Journalists. I have a Ph.D. from Bowling Green (Ohio) State University, where I studied community journalism under Ray Laakaniemi. My book, *All the News Is Fit to Print: Profile of a Country Editor*, was published by the University of Missouri Press last year.

My wife, Debbie, is an R.N. in the newborn nursery at one of the hospitals in Joplin. We have four sons, ages 11, 7, 4, and 2. Debbie's uncle, Larry Dennis, is a weekly newspaper editor at the *Mansfield (Mo.) Mirror*. I'll have to work on him becoming a member of the ISWNE.

Three individuals are going to provide me with a lot of help in meeting the challenges of all that's required of the ISWNE secretary-treasurer. Genie Undernehr, one of my former students, has been hired by Missouri Southern to be the assistant

newspaper adviser. She'll design some publications for the Institute of International Studies as well as the ISWNE newsletter and the *Grassroots Editor*. Genie previously was publications coordinator for the Missouri Department of Higher Education. Richard Massa, who retired June 30 as the director of the Institute of International Studies and head of the communications department, has been rehired by the college as a consultant. He's been a good friend for the last 20 years and can be counted on as needed. He's even broached the idea of writing a history of the ISWNE to coincide with the Society's 50th anniversary. And finally, Marta Kovacsofsky, the secretary to the Institute of International Studies, will handle the dues, subscriptions, and mailing lists.

I must thank Dick Lee for all of his assistance during this transition period. He's been very, very helpful. Dick has had nearly a 40-year affiliation with the Society, dating back to when he was H.R. Long's graduate assistant at Southern Illinois University. Although he has a full plate at South Dakota State University, Dick will remain active in the ISWNE in the years to come.

Please call me at **(417) 625-9736** or email me at **stebbins-c@mail.mssc.edu** with your ideas

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ISWNEWS



Send your ISWNEws to Chad Stebbins at stebbins-c@mail.mssc.edu or to Missouri Southern State College, 3950 E. Newman Road, Joplin, MO 64801 - 1595 by Sept. 17 for next month's newsletter.

After working with the *Freeman* (S.D.) *Courier* as a contributing writer/photographer since high school, **Jeremy Waltner** joined the staff as news editor in May.

Vickie Canfield Peters of *The Albion* (Pa.) *News* offers this bit of advice: "If you're looking for some part-time composing room help, try your high school computer lab. We found ourselves in a jam this summer and took a chance on a high school senior recommended by a former employee. With just about 15 minutes (no kidding!) of training, this young lady has strengthened our staff. The relationship has been good for all involved."

Al Seiler of Pittsfield, Ill., made his fourth trip to Italy this summer. He was headed next to the U.S. Golf Senior Tournament in Des Moines, Iowa (as a spectator, not a participant). Al is busy otherwise with his duties on the county board, trying to preserve fiscal sanity.

After a 24-year hiatus from column writing due to political involvement, **Don Pease** is now writing weekly editorial page columns for two Ohio dailies, the *Elyrea Chronicle* and the *Medina Gazette*.

Michael Cleveland of the *Milford* (N.H.) *Cabinet* reports that the paper found an intern through Northeastern University. "Actually, she contacted us looking for six months' work as part of the school's work-study program. It is a paid position but not expensive for us." The intern is Emily Zimmerman, who joined the *Cabinet* on June 21.

Bruce and Shirley Murray of Advocate Printing in Pictou, Nova Scotia, write: "We thoroughly enjoyed having you visit our seaside province. We hope you had as much fun as we did! Do come back again!!!"

Meeting began at 9 a.m. (Arizona and MST), 11 a.m. (CST), 12 p.m. (EST). After some discussion, the board unanimously approved the visitation committee's recommendation to accept Missouri Southern State College's offer to serve as new headquarters for ISWNE, with Chad Stebbins as executive secretary. The motion to award the job to MSSC was made by Richards, seconded by Harper.

Freireich agreed to send a letter/memo of understanding notifying Stebbins of the board's decision and summarizing some of the job requirements with regard to such things as publications and membership. Stebbins will also be asked to acknowledge in writing that he accepts ISWNE's terms as outlined in the letter.

Minutes



International Society
of Weekly Newspaper Editors

Board of Directors Meeting,
June 12, 1999

In Attendance
(via conference call):

Elliott Freireich	Clyde Wills
Tim Waltner	Nancy Slepicka
Tony Richards	Bill Haupt
Amy Harper	

Bob Trapp could not participate because he was "out mending fences" (whether literal or figurative was unclear).

The board unanimously approved a motion (Haupt/Slepicka) to hold the next board meeting in the fall at MSSC, pending its formal

acceptance of ISWNE terms. Haupt suggested discussing how MSSC will be paid (all at once or in installments) at that meeting.

The board also unanimously approved a motion (Haupt/Slepicka) to recognize Dick Lee for his service as ISWNE executive secretary by covering the cost of his and Mary Jo's registration fee for the 2000 conference in Victoria, B.C. and also providing a \$500 travel voucher for that conference. Also approved was an expenditure for a gift for Dick; Waltner will try to find an appropriate gift.

Meeting was adjourned around 10 a.m. (Arizona, MST), 12 p.m. (CST) and 1 p.m. (EST).

Submitted by Amy Harper

Meeting was called to order by President Elliott ("I did not have sex with that woman!") Freireich at about 9 a.m. Attendees included board members Bob Trapp Sr., Bob Trapp Jr., the Von Trapp family singers, Nancy Slepicka and Bill Haupt. Other attendees included Dick Lee, Marg Hennigar, Ralph Hennigar and Bruce Murray.

- Haupt/Slepicka to make the presidency a two-year term retroactive to 1998. This would also make the past-presidency a two-year term. **Unanimous.**
- Vice President Al Gore, disguised as Tim Waltner, arrives at 9:50 a.m.
- Hennigar reports that the finances for the Halifax conference look encouraging. Marg estimates a profit of about \$3,000 Canadian, or about \$75 U.S. (actually, about \$1,800 U.S.). Marg said 92 had registered for the conference and that the Pub Aux ad drew one couple from Georgia.
- Board agreed to reconvene at 2:30 p.m. Friday to meet with new executive secretary Chad Stebbins.
- Trapp Jr./Trapp Sr. to accept minutes

from January 16, 1999, held amid the desert palms of Toronto, Canada. **Unanimous.**

- Lee said he would provide complete membership information to Stebbins.
- Future conferences:
 - July 12 – 6, 2000 in Victoria, British Columbia
 - June 27 – July 1 in Madison, Wisconsin
 - 2002 – undecided
 - 2003 – undecided
 - 2004 – Southern Illinois, with Nancy and Clyde co-hosting (reminds us of the old Mike Douglas show)
- Dick Lee said he thought our first conference was actually held in 1955, although the idea for the group probably germinated in 1954, making the 2004 conference our 50th anniversary since germination. (This is the same logic used in the abortion debates, isn't it?)
- Regarding the establishment of a foundation for ISWNE, Elliott said we're already a not-for-profit group and therefore don't need to seek special tax exempt status. Board agreed to discuss the aims of this effort with Chad. Dick suggested that we enlist Tonda Rush as a

Minutes



International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors

Board of Directors Meeting, June 30, 1999

Halifax, Nova Scotia

In Attendance

Elliott Freireich
Bob Trapp, Sr.
Bob Trapp, Jr.
Nancy Slepicka
Bill Haupt

Dick Lee
Marg Hennigar
Ralph Hennigar
Bruce Murray
Tim Waltner

possible facilitator for this effort.

- Our current board composition is not accurately reflected in the bylaws. Waltner/Slepicka that the board should consist of 10 members including a president, vice president, executive secretary, past president and six directors each serving 3-year terms. **Unanimous (Dick, Tim, Elliott, Nancy, Bob Jr., Bob Sr., the Von Trapp family singers, and Bill.**
- Meeting adjourned.

Minutes submitted with occasional humorous deviance by Bill Haupt.

President Elliott Freireich called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. Others attending the meeting were Tim Waltner, Chad Stebbins, Bruce Murray, Clyde Wills, Bill Haupt, and Nancy Slepicka.

1. The board authorized Stebbins to open an ISWNE checking account in Joplin, Mo. A separate accounting of scholarship monies and general ISWNE funds was suggested.
2. It is unclear as to which members pay dues and which ones do not. It was estimated that 15 percent of the members do not pay dues, such as spouses of deceased members, and that 50 to 60 press associations do not pay dues. Murray suggested billing the entire membership list in late October. Haupt suggested requesting members, on the dues form, to send their newspapers to Missouri Southern on a regular basis.

Minutes



International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors

Board of Directors Meeting, July 2, 1999

Halifax, Nova Scotia

In Attendance

Elliott Freireich
Tim Waltner
Chad Stebbins
Bruce Murray,

Clyde Wills
Bill Haupt
Nancy Slepicka

3. The ISWNE brochure should be reprinted and sent to all members.
4. A motion was made to place the ISWNE vice president in charge of the editorial critiques at the annual conferences. Waltner pointed out that this needs to be coordinated with the conference planner, and that the vice president may not have the necessary contacts in the

host city. The motion was amended to have the vice president coordinate the critique for the next year, and it passed.

5. A motion to allow Haupt to spend up to \$1,500 to place ads in two publications passed. Murray suggested placing an ad promoting the Victoria, British Columbia, conference in the Canadian Community Newspaper Association's publication in January or February
6. Freireich suggested including a deadline for submissions in each newsletter.
7. Regarding the next board meeting, the directors will decide the date and location at a later date.

Submitted by Chad Stebbins

The meeting was called to order by President Elliott Freireich at 1 p.m.

1. The minutes of the July 11, 1998, meeting were approved.
2. Freireich explained that Missouri Southern State College had been selected as the new ISWNE headquarters. The University of Oklahoma had also received strong consideration.
3. Bob Horowitz moved and Phoebe Baker seconded a motion to amend the bylaws so the president, vice president, executive secretary-treasurer, immediate past president, and six directors at large would constitute the board of directors. (The ISWNE's constitution, as amended in July 1991, calls for only four directors at large.) After discussion over whether the executive secretary-treasurer should have a vote, the motion passed.
4. Marcia Wood moved and Frank Manley seconded a motion that another amendment to the bylaws — increasing the president's term to two years — would be voted on at next year's general membership meeting. The past president's term would also be increased to two years. The motion passed.
5. Freireich, Tim Waltner, and Bob Trapp Sr. were approved for another term as president, vice president, and past president, respectively. Bob Trapp, Jr. was approved for another term on the board of directors and Bruce Murray joined the board, replacing Amy Harper. Chad Stebbins was approved to be the new executive secretary-treasurer.

6. The dates of future conferences were discussed. Next year's conference will be in Victoria, British Columbia July 12-16. The 2001 conference will be held in Madison, Wisconsin, June 27 to July 1. The 2004 conference will be held at Southern Illinois University.
7. Dick Lee, the outgoing secretary-treasurer, reported a balance of \$16,528. It was suggested that a simple balance sheet be presented to the membership at next year's meeting. Lee also reported 290 memberships to ISWNE, including free ones, and 700 subscriptions to *Grassroots Editor*.

Open discussion

1. Regarding a mission statement for ISWNE, it was decided that Article II of the constitution and bylaws actually serves this purpose. There is no need to write a separate mission statement.
2. Members cited a need for additional time to critique the papers at the convention. It was suggested the papers be sent to the critiquers in advance of the convention. When it was pointed out that the paper critique is left to the discretion of the convention planner, Larry Atkinson said that this person has enough responsibility without this added task. He suggested that the procedure be the same every year to ensure uniformity. Freireich said the board would consider the matter.
3. Bill Haupt applauded those members who visited Missouri Southern State College and the

Minutes



International Society
of Weekly Newspaper Editors
General Membership Meeting,
July 2, 1999
Halifax, Nova Scotia

University of Oklahoma May 14-15: Freireich, Waltner, Vickie Canfield Peters, Jim Sawyer, and Al Seiler. (Seiler only went to Joplin.)

4. Members wished to send Mary Jane Schneider best wishes on her upcoming wedding.
5. Members wished to thank Marg and Ralph Hennigar for planning and hosting this year's conference.
6. Members wished to thank Dick Lee for his years of service to ISWNE.
7. Waltner felt it gratifying that the University of Oklahoma and Missouri Southern have community journalism programs and an interest in ISWNE. He hopes this interest extends to other colleges and universities.
8. Freireich announced that there would be no Eugene Cervi Award this year. He said the membership must submit nominations. Bob Trapp Sr. said only two nominations had been received this year. It's important that nominees have a strong record of service to the community and the profession over a number of years.

Submitted by Chad Stebbins

The Key Word is COMMUNITY



By
**JEREMY
WALTNER**

[Editor's note: Jeremy's editorial appeared in the *Freeman (S.D.) Courier* on July 7.]

Last week, our commitment to community journalism was affirmed.

In renewing our commitment, we re-established our goal in providing accurate information — we like to think of it as the truth — to our readers in every situation relative to the well-being of your community and the public's right to know.

A newspaper cannot exist without its community. And, in theory, a community cannot exist without its newspaper.

The **International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors** met for its annual convention in Halifax, Nova Scotia last week. Newspaper editors and publishers came from the U.S., Canada, Japan, England, and Ireland.

In the four days we gathered, we discovered some of the history and traditions of Halifax and Nova Scotia. But more importantly, discussion took place on issues relative to the important roles that community newspapers play and have in common.

Ideas were shared, notes were compared and stories were exchanged. And it prompted us to again gain perspective on what it is we do. Gained perspective is what ISWNE is all about. The group doesn't meet to discuss computers, ad rates or yearly budgets, who's losing and who's winning and why. The objective of the organization, as stated in its bylaws, is to encourage and promote wise and independent editorial comment, news content and leadership in community newspapers throughout the world.

The key word is community.

Simply, ISWNE re-affirms the value of newspapers — especially small newspapers that focus on the stories that get ignored by larger media but so important to small-town living. They're valuable because they separate fact from fiction. They're valuable because they provide a public forum for people to express their thoughts on anything. Anybody on anything. They're valuable because they act as the vehicle that serves the public's right to know about issues that could so easily — and often times do — get overlooked. They're valuable because they are for you and nobody else. They're valuable because they uphold your right to know, in every situation and at every cost. They're valuable because — and this is the tricky part — they tie everything together every week. At least they should.

The key word is community.

ISWNE is about courage. Two Pulitzer Prize winners have come from the group for their bold and courageous writing. Other examples of the courage exemplified by the group include two of its current members; one of whom is fighting the courts' attempts to force a reporter to release his notes while another is standing up to death threats because of his reporting of a corrupt sheriff.

ISWNE, too, reinforces some basic ideas about journalism. Admitting when we're wrong. Seeking out in cracks and corners stories that have merit, and otherwise might never be told. Taking unpopular stands. Being the clearest — and fairest — voice.

A newspaper cannot exist without its community. And, in theory, a community cannot exist without its newspaper. Last week, our



Tragedy of Swissair Flight 111 touches small communities

It was a
**& Dark
& Stormy
Night**

But this was, unfortunately, not a fictional account. About 10 minutes before 11 p.m. Sept. 2, 1998, Vernon Oickle, editor of the *Bulletin*, a weekly newspaper published in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia, answered a phone call.

His reporter Mark Roberts was in his car, calling on his cell phone. "I'm on my way to a plane crash," he said. He didn't know many details except that he had been told it was a passenger plane with 50 to 80 people aboard.

Roberts had been on the phone at his home on the South Shore coast of Nova Scotia south of Halifax that night when his wife heard a loud bang. Moments later his pager went off alerting him that the local fire department had been called to a plane crash.

It didn't take long for word and details to spread ... literally around the world.

The plane that had crashed into the Atlantic ocean was Swissair Flight 111. It had left New York at 9:18 p.m. bound for Geneva. At 10:22 the crew reported smoke in the cockpit. Two minutes later the crew declared an emergency. It was the last transmission from the airplane. At 10:31 the McDonnell Douglas MD-11 carrying 215 passengers and a crew of 14 fell from the sky into the waters off the coast of Nova Scotia.

Official statements held out a glimmer of hope, but "you knew they knew they weren't going to find anyone alive."

The sobering truth was that no one survived.

The nearby South Shore coast, about an hour south of Halifax, is dotted with small towns and fishing villages.

Fellow *Bulletin* reporter/photographer Lisa Brown got the call from Oickle after he got the call from Roberts. His instructions were "go find it." She packed her camera, notebook and cell phone in her car and went looking; at that point it was still unclear if the plane had gone down on land or in the ocean.

"I went looking hoping I wouldn't find it," she recalls.

Her search ended when she saw the flashing lights of the emergency vehicles near the community of Blandford confirming something bad had indeed happened.

The outpouring of concern — from the initial search for survivors to the consoling welcomes for the victims' families — from the small fishing communities along the south shore coast was overwhelming.

The plane had gone down in the ocean about eight miles off the coast, she discovered.

"There were crashing seas that night," she recalls, but hundreds of fishing boats headed into those seas looking for survivors. It's the expected response. "We're used to losing people at sea."

A growing crowd formed as rescue workers, community residents, volunteers, law enforcement and media gathered to learn more details ... and hopefully, good news.

In the early hours, "the mood was expectant and hopeful," Brown recalls.

Hopes were raised when an ambulance headed toward the hospital. But then came the news that it was transporting a rescue worker needing medical attention. Soon word began to spread that there may

well not be any survivors.

And quickly, the mood began to change, Brown says.

Official statements held out a glimmer of hope, but "you knew they knew they weren't going to find anyone alive."

The sobering truth was that no one survived.

The staging area was moved from Blandford to Peggy's Cove, the popular tourist site now associated with the crash. That site was chosen in large part because access could easily be limited to non-essential personnel.

In the weeks that followed, the *Bulletin* reported on the crash, focusing primarily on the local aspects, which were generally ignored by the national and international media.

The outpouring of concern — from the initial search for survivors to the consoling welcomes for the victims' families — from the small fishing communities along the south shore coast was overwhelming.

They were the officials, rescue workers and volunteers, who immediately responded to do whatever they could.

STORIES BY



**JEREMY
WALTNER**



**TIM L.
WALTNER**

[Editor's note: Jeremy and Tim dedicated an entire page to Nova Scotia in the July 14 issue of the *Freeman Courier*. Two of the stories pertained to Swissair Flight 111.]

Facing the grim reality of Swissair Flight 111

The *Bulletin*, the weekly newspaper serving the community near the spot Swissair Flight 111 went down in the Atlantic, received a national award for its reporting of the tragedy. But the newspaper also received some criticism for including details of the recovery effort some readers felt were far too graphic. It came in a story about one of the fishermen who unwittingly became part of the search.

The *Bulletin* reported:

"Mr. Duffney said: 'I didn't know a thing. We went out mackerel fishing and saw all the boats. I turned on the radio to see what happened and heard all this so I just started picking up a bunch of stuff. I was only about 100 feet from them (searchers) when I saw them pick up a body.'

"He didn't return home until 4 p.m. after running out of fuel.

"The scene cannot be described in words. He found three scalps and the belly of a woman for example. 'The stomach parts were burnt. You should have seen the little bits of flesh. You couldn't pick them up with a gaff. You needed a dip net. I gave them all to this guy. I had them all in a bucket.'"

Managing Editor Marg Hennigar strongly defended their reporting in an editorial titled "Reality Sucks."

She wrote:

"Some readers have complained about our coverage of the crash of Swissair Flight 111. They objected to one paragraph in one small story in nine pages of heart-wrenching news our staff worked so hard on last week.

"Unquestionably, the paragraph was disturbing. However, it did not, as one caller suggested, turn us into a *National Enquirer*. It couldn't. It was the truth. As disturbing as the truth can be for many people, we felt it was an integral part of a terrible tragedy that needed to be told. Everyone knew the crash killed all 229 passengers and crew on board Flight 111 on Sept. 2, but far from everyone understood the depth of this disaster.

"Thank God most of us were spared the gruesome sights the search crews had to face, but no one can hide from the truth. If some people can bury their heads in the sand and make it all go away, good for them, but for us, refusing to face or acknowledge reality does not change anything.

"Those volunteers who can share with others some of what they saw are less likely to suffer future problems than those who cannot talk about it.

"Unfortunately, the latter group may have to struggle with their demons for a very long time.

"Most of us either know personally, or we know of, a search and rescue volunteer. We need to fully appreciate what those people have gone through if we hope to empathize with them and give them the support and understanding they will need in the future.

"'Reality sucks,' a reporter here remarked this morning. Yes, it does, and the truth sometimes hurts but refusing to accept it can make things worse for the very people this kind of deceit is intended to help. Shielding readers from the truth will not help them. Shielding readers from the truth will not help them to help the volunteers still courageously working to recover the wreckage of Flight 111.

"Knowing what the search and rescue volunteers did for all of us here on the South Shore makes us proud indeed to call them friends and neighbours and prouder still to call ourselves Nova Scotians."



Tim Krochak / Halifax Herald Photo

ABOVE: Emergency workers remove a body and debris from the Atlantic Ocean south of Peggy's Cove, N.S. Thursday morning after the crash of Swissair flight 111.

RIGHT: Seabright, Nova Scotia volunteer firefighters stand vigil in front of the lighthouse at Peggy's Cove, Nova Scotia, Thursday morning.



Tim Krochak / Halifax Herald Photo

That helping spirit lasted in the days, weeks, and months that followed.

Boats and crews usually in the Atlantic in search of fish were instead assisting the collection of debris from the explosion.

The *Bulletin* also emphasized the need for community residents and rescue and recovery crews to seek counseling. "We encouraged people who would never think of counseling to get counseling," Brown said.

The story went away for a while, Brown says. "It became unreal. I'm not sure it ever was real."

The upcoming anniversary will bring the pain of the crash to the forefront once again. With the first-year anniversary in

September, Brown believes the people of the region will try to put the tragedy behind them. "They're ready for this to be over."

"No one will ever forget it, although I'm not sure anyone would ever want to remember it," she says.

NOVA SCOTIA could sing DIXIE

BY GOODLOE SUTTON

[Editor's note: Goodloe's column appeared in *The Democrat-Reporter* of Linden, Ala., on July 8.]



Waves crashing rhythmic against the huge rocks on the foggy Atlantic coast below the historic lighthouse at Peggy's Cove, the nearest land to where the Swissair jet plunged into the sea last year, are like the pictures we see in magazines and on television.

Early morning jackets are comfortable as the gawking tourists bend and wiggle and strain to spy the lighthouse in the fog as they snap their shutters, and the fog will whiten the pictures and maybe an image of a coastline and the beacon building will be visible. The postcards in the trap house (trap houses are souvenir shops) are taken by camera bugs who spend a lot of time and money to get "picture perfect" scenes. Postcards came to Alabama in the suitcase rather than drag a cameras along.

Haligonian Nova Scotians are heavily imbued with Irish blood, we suppose because they can sing better. They are very nice, polite, friendly, helpful, and are uniquely tweaked about the concept of lobsters and grits, after a lengthy explanation of grits. Instead of the porridge-like concoction, they prefer their corn steamed on the cob with the freshly steamed mussels, lobsters, and clams, and brew.

Thinking because this is north of Kentucky, the people might be the same as they are in Illinois and

New York, but they are not. They speak in response to a smile and a hello. They converse about the weather and our origins. In New York or Detroit, a smile and "Good morning" brings startled "Are you a gangster" looks, then a sullen retreat.

Besides being nice and friendly, the Nova Scotians we encountered for four days had good humor and absolutely no fear of losing status by being helpful and courteous. None had a keen understanding of the cultures in the South, but we funned with them about stuff like grits and moonshine and charmin' young ladies of the finest families. When the 85-degree heat wave swept through, we offered a visit where the heat rises to 100 with 90 percent humidity. There were no takers, not even on a freebie.

They dress normal with conservative fashions and drive with a wonderful sense of courtesy — waving each other ahead of themselves at intersections and parking lots. It was contagious. When we hit the highway in our rental car, the speed limit was 100 ... kilometers per hour. And road signs placed cities and towns kilometers apart. It wasn't bad. The people in the South could learn the system in a couple of days. Everybody would love hitting 100 kph across the country. New York would never learn, although it is much closer to good folks from the northern lands. With no roses, the

New Englanders cannot stop and smell them along life's journey. One Halifax direction-giver told us to go to "Soothe" Street to get to a hotel which was hosting a meeting, but it was only South Street. We soothingly thanked him.

Halifax hosts the Tattoo, which means "lasting impression," and not body mutilation. Besides kilted bagpipers skirling in march time, the precise rap-a-tap drummers from Germany along with brassy Japanese military bands and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (impressive), there were acts involving tumbling, singing, and precision drills. Ringling's show is cheap and flashy compared to the Brits and Highlanders. The swagger of the German bandmaster was oozing dominance. The Japanese were polite and orderly, like Tommy McGraw's suite-mates for four days in our residence hall. Norio Tamura stood five feet high at the most, his wife less. First night introductions were a mix of bowing and hand-shaking and "Hi, y'all." Tamura, grinning readily acknowledged his wife Ayako "didn't speak" . . . meaning our language. McGraw fell out when we responded, "Could we hire him to teach our wives likewise."

The little bayside village of Mahone Bay had stuff like we see in TV productions, tightly fitted stores on narrow streets with homes butting the sidewalks, also tightly fitted. The people were most gracious, the churches' spires dominated the landscape, and the Anglicans served a hundred or more lobsters to 90 conventioners in their church fellowship hall. They also knew how to steam salt water mussels, which are not unlike those in the Tombigbee, maybe a little. The inch-thick pink salmon fillets the hotel baked and served in the cream sauce was also delicious to us visiting Alabamians. Vintners flourish and their charges are reasonable.

Breads were different and definitely not corn. Shopping malls are blended into the city landscapes. The village on the cove had specialty

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[Editor's note: Bob's column, "Perambulating," appeared in The Lakeville (Ct.) Journal on July 8.]

HALIFAX, Nova Scotia — A tattoo, I naively used to think, was a figure etched on the forearm or biceps or other part of the anatomy with needles and pigment, often at carnivals, and seldom mentioned in polite society. How wrong I was!

We have just attended the Nova Scotia International Tattoo at the handsome new Halifax Metro Center. A more colorful and elaborate assemblage of military bands, kilt-clad bagpipers, choruses, gymnasts, dancers, gun crews and other performers I have never seen or heard. People from all over Canada and also the United States and other countries have thrilled at the three-hour extravaganza. Lamentably, the U.S. Marine Band was not here this time because of a requirement that American armed forces bands not be out of the country on July 4.

The 250th anniversary of the founding of Halifax, Canada's "warden of the north," formed the backdrop for a meeting of the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors, using facilities of Dalhousie University and the Technical University of Nova Scotia. Traveling in our camper with our youngest granddaughter, 10-year-old Abigail Carroll, we have been chatting with old and new friends from the United States, Canada, England, Ireland, and Japan.

WHAT I HAD not fully appreciated was the martial tradition in Canada. Although I frequently visited it as a correspondent, I had come to think of Canada as a highly civilized country where dedication to peacekeeping and other international service had displaced the previous military

August 1999

The Tattoo

in Halifax

is Something Different



**BY
BOB
ESTABROOK**

emphasis. But Halifax of course was the chief port in two world wars during which she sustained far more casualties proportionately than the United States. Before then, Halifax was the focal point of defense efforts against what was viewed as a predatory neighbor to the south. When a Belgian vessel collided with a French munitions ship here in December 1917, 2,000 persons were killed in the resulting explosion that blew most of the water out of the harbor.

But the tattoo has embraced more than a proud tradition. It is evident from the crowd here that Canadians old and new have inherited or acquired the British love of pomp and circumstances. The scarlet tunics, the formidable headdresses, the carefully rehearsed maneuvers all contribute to the show. You know why people here love a parade.

YET BY NO MEANS all we have encountered has been show. We

have had a thoughtful discussion with Chief Justice Joseph Kennedy of the Nova Scotia Supreme Court. A Media-Judicial Liaison Committee here seeks to promote more accurate coverage by making the courts more friendly to reporters. "You are more powerful than we are," Justice Kennedy said, "because you influence what the public thinks."

Canada is experiencing many of the same problems as the United States with drugs and mindless violence committed by young people. "The reality is," Justice Kennedy commented, "that we stopped raising kids about 30 years ago" and for there to be any improvement there must be social change. More young people are in prison than ever before. The problem must be addressed by other means than simply locking up more young offenders.

A panel discussion on coverage of last fall's Swissair disaster, which

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A Breath of Fresh Air from Nova Scotia

[Editor's note: Anthony, editor of the Uxbridge Gazette Series, attended the International Society of Newspaper Editors' annual conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia, as the Greenslade editor. He wrote this column for the Society of Editors on July 19.]

ISWNE was founded in 1954 by Prof. Howard Long of Southern Illinois University, with the aim of pulling together editors of local weekly newspapers who wanted something beyond the usual trade association meetings. They sent editors "back to college," bringing in knowledgeable and provocative speakers to provide background on current public policy issues, and the emphasis was on discussion and debate, with lots of questions.

The organization enjoyed close links with the Guild of Editors, and every year awards the Greenslade bursary, in memory of editor David Greenslade, to a British weekly newspaper editor who attends the annual conference. The organization now has members all over the world.

Two key elements of the ISWNE

conference in Halifax stand out in my memory. The first was a deeply moving account of how a local newspaper team covered the

To say Cpl. Skidmore was a breath of fresh air is an understatement. British editors would give their eye teeth to have him cloned and attached to local police forces all over the UK. The most striking thing was his total understanding of both his role and that of the media covering the crash.

unspeakable tragedy of the Swissair Flight 111 crash on Sept. 2 last year. The second was an address by the chief justice of Nova Scotia, Joseph Kennedy.

Both were fascinating to the ear of a British local newspaper editor, and both threw into sharp relief the very real differences between the free societies of North America and this country.

Hosts for the conference were Marg, Ralph, and Lynn Hennigar, who run Lighthouse Publishing on the south shore of Nova Scotia. The company publishes *The Bulletin* and *The Progress Enterprise*,



By ANTHONY LONGDEN

reaching more than 29,700 people in Lunenburg County, and *The Lighthouse Log*, which covers Lunenburg and Queens counties with a circulation of 60,242.

A question and answer session involved members of *The Bulletin's* editorial team, faced with the grim task of covering the Swissair crash which claimed the lives of 229 people.

For the British observer, the most telling element was the presence on the panel of a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Cpl. Skidmore, who joined editor Vernon Oickle and reporters Lisa Brown and Mark Roberts. To say Cpl. Skidmore was a breath of fresh air is an understatement. British editors would give their eye teeth to have him cloned and attached to local police forces all over the UK. The most striking thing was his total understanding of both his role and that of the media covering the crash.

"The media aren't aliens to the community," he told the

conference. "They are part of it, and have every right to report on what is going on."

At 10:14 p.m. on Sept. 2, Flight 111 was en route from New York to Geneva when its crew reported smoke in the cockpit while passing over Nova Scotia. At 10:31 p.m. Flight 111 plunged into the Atlantic with a force that registered as a slight tremor on the seismic scale.

Bulletin reporter Mark Roberts was telephoned at home by a contact in the fire service. All he knew was that an aircraft had crashed and a very approximate location. He took to his car and headed off in search of it, pausing long enough to alert editor Vernon Oickle. From talking to many editors at the conference, I learned it is not unusual for reporters to carry fire service beepers or have radio links in their homes, in order to keep up with events.

The airliner had exploded over the water, its grisly debris raining down from 30,000 feet. Local fishermen had been drafted in to help recover remains and search for survivors. There were none. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police had, from the outset, anticipated the needs of the media. When the press corps arrived in force, the position was explained, and police officers acted as go-betweens, finding key personnel for interviews.

Large areas were cordoned off, but police took great pains to explain to journalists exactly why this was done. The result, according to Cpl. Skidmore, was orderly coverage of a tragedy, and he had no bad words for the world's media covering the incident. The RCMP, a bilingual force, even went to the lengths of arranging a Russian interpreter when it knew a Russian crew had turned up. It is hard to imagine this level of cooperation should a comparable accident happen on the British mainland.

Cpl. Skidmore was questioned at length by the 90 or so editors at the conference, but it was abundantly clear he and his police force have no doubt as to the media's right to information for coverage of local events — it would never occur to them to attempt to obstruct its release.

Cpl. Skidmore's presence on the podium with local journalists spoke volumes, and there is a lesson there

for all of us on the other side of the Atlantic. Quite apart from the police angle, the experiences of the journalists suddenly thrown into the midst of a gruesome tragedy was equally absorbing.

North American newspapers are heavily geared toward photojournalism. They consequently have smaller, multi-skilled staffs. In the case of Flight 111, even the editor was out in the fray, taking picture for the next edition — a normal occurrence.

The emotions felt by *The Bulletin's* staff is best summed up by Vernon Oickle writing in his Sept. 16 edition.

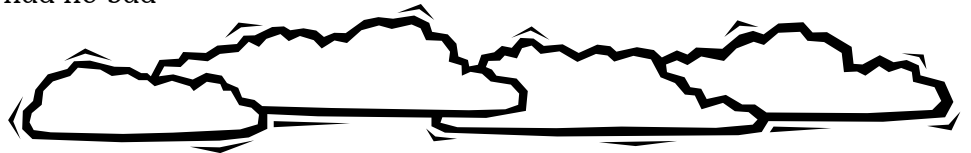
"It will take months, or years, to assess the full impact of this disaster. It may take even longer to find out why the plane crashed near our coast that stormy night. Over the past two weeks, our emotions have been stretched to the breaking point

as we tried to cope with such a terrible loss of life. As reporters covering the tragedy, we have tried to be sensitive, but as sometimes happens with such a story, the truth can seem

sensational, particularly to those on the outside critiquing everything we do."

It was clear just how close the paper was to its community.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police had, from the outset, anticipated the needs of the media. When the press corps arrived in force, the position was explained, and police officers acted as go-betweens, finding key personnel for interviews.



"Some things get in your head and they stay there. This tragedy has left behind many heart-wrenching images. I saw one young woman, a grieving family member, pass her infant to a man standing next to her, then try to throw herself in the cold Atlantic near the Peggy's Cove lighthouse.

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A Breath of Fresh Air

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"And I will never forget the tortured cries of an elderly family member screaming: "My God! My God!" as he was carried away by stretcher. He had collapsed on the rocky shore while visiting the site not far from where his loved ones died."

For me at least, this was an excellent example of how weekly papers can find themselves at the sharp end — and rise to the occasion.

Joseph Kennedy, chief justice of Nova Scotia, provided yet another blast of fresh air for the nostrils of a journalist used to the musty aroma of British legal matters. Mr. Kennedy believes the British system, with a few caveats, to be the best in the world. A staunch defender of the jury system, he was deeply perturbed when I told him of the government's attempts to limit its application.

An interesting element of his talk was the revelation that Nova Scotia boasts a Media Judicial Liaison Committee — a forum for judges and media representatives, that can iron out a myriad of problems.

As a result of the enlightening work of the committee, journalists are now able to take laptop computers into court and make tape recordings in lieu of notes — definitely not for broadcast.

Pictures are also made available of exhibits in trials.

Mr. Kennedy said the exercise had been extremely valuable. "We complain about each other, and as a result the committee has been enlightening and beneficial for judges and the media. We are trying to become media-friendly."

A more recent development has been allowing television cameras into the Supreme Court — but not into trial courts.

"The one thing we have learned from this is just how boring it can really be," Mr. Kennedy said.

The Supreme Court is dealing specifically with debates on points of law. There are no plans to follow the example of televising trial court, mainly because there is widespread concern about lawyers becoming actors instead of legal representatives.

There are more similarities than differences between North American papers and their British counterparts. The differences,



however, can be vast. For example, most North American weekly papers do not have sub editors, and many of the editors I spoke to were impressed with the idea of experienced reporters handling copy, instead of Mac operators. The concepts of newspaper design are also radically different.

The strength of North American weeklies is their editorialising — huge, well-presented and argued leader columns. Their weakness is poor layout and use of typography. ISWNE is keen to improve its members' titles, and an integral part of the conference is the critique session where editors bluntly rip each others' titles apart in the quest for perfection.

A Tattoo is Something Different

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occurred a few miles south of here, brought praise for the efforts of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to be helpful to the press although one editor warned that the police still seek to control information and release only what they want publicized. Separately a British editor spoke ominously about encroachments on coverage brought on by the excesses of a few sensational papers. Public apathy encourages politicians to suggest dangerous legislative curbs.

LAST WEEK'S HEAT wave in the Northeast followed us all the way to New Brunswick where a dense

ensuing fog shrouded St. John from view. We could hear whistles from ships and a railroad freight yard at our campsite above the harbor but all was visually obscured. The entire three-hour ferry crossing up Digov, Nova Scotia, was in a fog.

The mist lifted enough for us to see parts of the lovely Annapolis Valley along Nova Scotia's north shore, and we visited a couple of picturesque fishing villages. At Harbourville a bystander dispelled any belief that the agricultural prosperity visible inland extended to the coast. The Bay of Fundy, he said, remains fished out, and cod are

[Editor's note: Nancy filled almost an entire page in the July 10 issue of *The Montgomery County News* (Hillsboro, Ill.) with her travel notes. We are reprinting part of her observations.]

My five days in Halifax, Nova Scotia, last week was a blend of daytime sessions on a variety of thought-provoking topics, a visit to fishing and tourist villages on the southern coast, and constant camaraderie with old and new friends, all editors like me.

It was my annual trek to the summer conference of the **International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors**, a friendly group of writers from the U.S., Canada, Great Britain and Japan, plus many spouses and several children.

My parents, Bob and Pat Bliss, attended the conferences for decades after the Society was founded in 1954 at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

They've curtailed their travel adventures in recent years, and I've attended the last three conferences, 1997 in Flagstaff, Arizona, 1998 in Erie, Pennsylvania, and this year's in Halifax. To cut down costs, the conferences are held on university



campuses. We sleep on dormitory beds (short and narrow) and eat together in dining halls. This year we were at Dalhousie University, just a short walk from downtown Halifax.

Fellow editors host each conference, arranging speakers, entertainment and usually an all-day bus trip to local points of interest. Our hosts were Marj and Ralph Hennigar, who live in the postcard scenic village of Mahone Bay and publish weekly newspapers there and in nearby Lunenburg and Bridgewater. I'm not a diary keeper, but I do have some notes from this enjoyable get-away that I'd like to share.

not returning. The one bright spot is lobsters, which still seem to be relatively plentiful. But the newest threat comes from scallop diggers that scrape everything off the bottom and leave nothing for the food chain.

Yet people continue to live here, somehow, and perhaps their children will learn other occupations. We watched a bookmobile from the Annapolis Valley Regional Library pull up on its monthly visit. One woman and her daughter had borrowed 130 books on the previous visit. You hope that here at least kids are resisting the numbing influence of TV.

WE NOW PLAN to drive north to Cape Breton Island to show Abigail the reconstructed French fort at Louisbourg, the fabulous Alexander Graham Bell Museum at Baddeck, and the wild scenery of the Cabot Trail around the highlands. We hope the weather will cooperate.

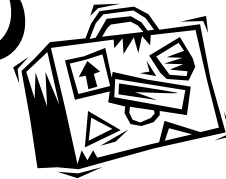
Meanwhile, we revel in what we have learned. When visiting German and Japanese bands at the tattoo joined in playing "There'll Always be an England," we knew World War II was really over.

And a resident of Halifax is not a Halifaxsimile, but a Haligonian.

Halifax '99 Travel Notes



BY
**NANCY
SLEPICKA**



SWISSAIR FLIGHT 111

What became the most tragic and biggest story that three small-town newspaper reporters had ever covered started with a pager call from the local volunteer fire department at 10:50 p.m. Sept. 2, 1998. An airplane had gone down — where and the size of the plane was unknown.

Vernon Oickle and Lisa Brown grabbed their cameras and started driving along the coast. It wasn't long before they discovered what was soon to be broadcast worldwide — Swissair Flight 111, while heading to make an emergency landing at Halifax, crashed into the Atlantic off the coast of Peggy's

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Travel Notes

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Cove and Blandford, killing all 215 passengers and 14 crew members.

What happens to a small, close-knit community when its residents are suddenly players on such a horrific, international stage? Telling the stories of the rescue workers and countless volunteers — the reporters' neighbors — became the mission of the Lighthouse Publishing news staff, for days, weeks and months.

That first night and next day, Brown recalls seeing lines of local residents standing on the rocky coast holding blankets, ready to warm any survivors. Instead, the villagers spent hours every day picking up body parts, pieces of clothing and shattered personal items like combs and toothbrushes.

Even though none of the crash victims were from the local area, the village residents mourned with the families as they arrived from 15 countries of the world. These have been fishing villages for generations, and everyone who lives here has experienced losing a loved one at sea, Brown explained.

The victims' families were so touched by the villagers' consuming involvement in the recovery effort and the sincerity of their grief that many have stayed in contact. And friendships formed during this tragedy will be renewed when family members return for a first anniversary memorial service this September.

A LOBSTER DINNER

Ugly, yes, but tasty.

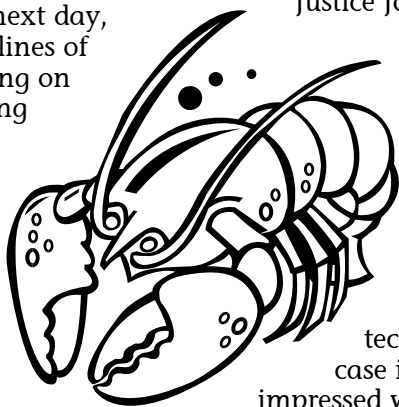
The kitchen crew at the Anglican Church in Mahone Bay introduced me to fresh mussels and lobster. The mussels were palatable to my taste

buds thanks only to the melted butter dip. However, the lobster — even its green liver — was delicious.

We were served fresh seafood three nights in a row, a real treat for this Midwestern tourist.

JUSTICE KENNEDY

"Juries almost always do the right thing, and if they don't, you know why."



That's the belief of Chief Justice Joseph Kennedy of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia, who has spent most of his legal career as a criminal trial lawyer and now trial judge. Kennedy said that regardless of how complicated or technical (or boring) a case is, he is always impressed with the sincerity of jurors to perform their duties.

"Juries are wonderful," he said. "I've watched them come together on difficult issues. I've watched them physically deteriorate under the stress of an extended trial. I've watched them listen intently to instructions from the judge."

He advises the public to be wary of calls to abandon the jury system in favor of "qualified" professional jurors.

"To be tried by your peers is a basic right we must protect," Kennedy said.

The chief justice — who in Canadian court is addressed with "your lordship" rather than "your honor" — lays no claim to infallibility. In defending some of the decisions he's had to admit, "It seemed like a good idea at the time."

Kennedy's message to the editors was the critical role the media play in the judicial system.

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Nova Scotia could sing Dixie

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shops which were more negotiable for the pedestrian. We detected little difference in hinterland folks and city dwellers. Most were good-natured Irish, Scotch, and Scandinavian with some British. Even the 6-foot-plus blond females were soft-spoken and friendly. Danes, Swedes, and Norse — jealous lips pouted, "Vikings."

Most of our conversations were with newspaper editors from various parts of the world. Despite their acumen in other areas, there is still a deep-seated feeling by a few people in Canada that the slave trade still exists in the South and murder is commonplace. We politely explained they were simply ignorant. Only one person failed to understand why we didn't mince words about things which are true. Discovered later the lady may have been "one of those," which used to be whispered about now that Bill Clinton is gaily leading our country's pride. Tried not to get within 10 feet of her from then on.

At the meetings where our papers were critiqued, this gentleman from another state saw the problem with our schools and racial misunderstandings like we do. The government of the United States has done little to bring the poor people to levels where they won't be poor unless they are lazy. We did get praise, which was humbling. We explained it to all that the people in our area of Alabama, for the most part, are good, honest, hard-working, caring, and Christian. It is for these people that we do our job, and that is to report the news, truthfully — not politically sensitive!

We truly had a halavah good time in Halifax.

Travel Notes

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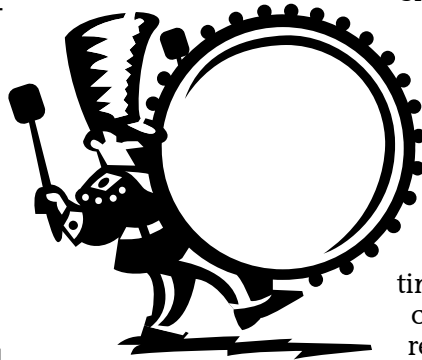
"The judiciary has no power base other than the power of public confidence and the acceptance of the rule of law. We cannot tell the public what to think. Public confidence in the judiciary depends on the media."

THE NOVA SCOTIA INTERNATIONAL TATTOO

I'd never heard of the Tattoo, and now I don't know how to do it justice in print. Imagine being in the Kiel Center in St. Louis as more than a dozen military Bands, bagpipe and drum corps, plus a 100-voice choir and 50-voice children's chorus — nearly 1,000 musicians in all — perform in unison "There'll Always Be An England." That was just one of the goose-bump moments in this three-hour extravaganza of music, colorful costumes, dance, acrobatics, and slapstick humor.

The Nova Scotia International Tattoo, held annually in late June through the first week of July, featured more than 2,000 military and civilian performers from 10 countries.

The show was choreographed to a constant flow.

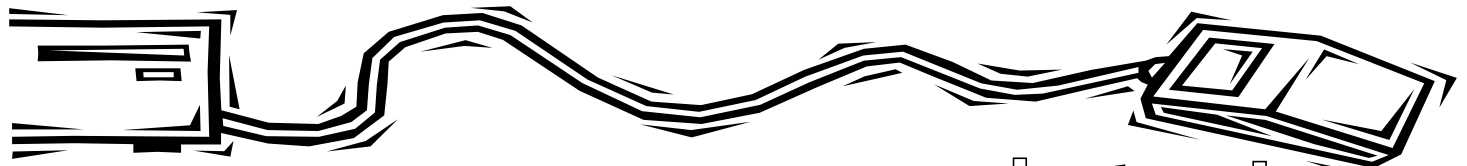


As one band marched off the arena floor to the right, still playing music, another entered from the left. Or the darkened hall would turn light to reveal the huge Tattoo Choir and a half-dozen bands performing in concert from their perch on the upper left bleachers.

Bands, in all colors and stripes of costume, included the Central Band of the Swedish Army, the German Heeresmusikkorps 4 Regensburg, Central Band of the Japan Air Self Defense Force, The Calgary Stampede Show Band, Air Command Reserve and Composite Pipes and Drums, and the Woods Manufacturing Company Brass Band, to name a few.

Spirited interludes were performed by Halifax's Flying Grandpas (in striped singlets) and Super Kids tumbling groups. We also watched military units compete over physically challenging obstacle courses and a timed race in which they disassembled large cannons, transported them across the floor and reassembled them.

The sound of so much music in one place is hard to describe and impossible to duplicate. Though I've tried — I bought the CD of this 20th anniversary Tattoo, and even by turning up the volume, I can't recapture the experience.



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WELCOME

New Member

Harry L. Hix Jr. is the Engleman/Livermore Professor of Community Journalism at the University of Oklahoma, a position he has held since its establishment three years ago. He came to OU from Millington, Tenn., where he and his wife, Carol, had owned and operated *The Millington Star*, a weekly newspaper, and the *Shopper's Aid*, also a weekly publication, for 16 years. Before that his experience included being a reporter and photographer, news bureau editor at a small state university, managing editor of a small daily, and publisher of two group-owned weeklies. He has a B.S. in journalism from Oklahoma State University and an M.S. in journalism from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, where he attended ISWNE meetings as a graduate student.

Harry and Carol attended the recent ISWNE conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

ABOUT THE ISWNE

The International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors (ISWNE) was founded in 1954 at Southern Illinois University (SIU) by Howard R. Long, then chair of SIU's Department of Journalism at Carbondale, and Houston Waring, then editor of the *Littleton (Colo.) Independent*. ISWNE headquarters were at Northern Illinois University at Dekalb from 1976 to 1992, at South Dakota State University in Brookings from 1992 to 1999. Missouri Southern State College in Joplin became the headquarters in 1999.

ISWNE's purpose is to help those involved in the weekly press to improve standards of editorial writing and news reporting and to encourage strong, independent editorial voices. The society seeks to fulfill its purpose by holding annual conferences, presenting awards, issuing publications, and encouraging international exchanges. There are ISWNE members in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Japan, and India. There are subscribers to *Grassroots Editor*, the society's quarterly journal, in still more countries.

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