

**IN THIS ISSUE**

President's Report.....	Page 2
Now, Just a Minute, the so-called thinking man's column on journalism .....	Page 3
State of the ISWNE.....	Pages 4-5
ISWNEws .....	Page 7
New Members & E-mail Addresses .....	Pages 8-10
Remembering George C. Scott, Would-Be Journalist .....	Pages 11, 16
Annual Dues Statement .....	Page 14
Gene Cervi Award & Golden Quill Nominations .....	Page 15

**REPRINTED STORIES & COLUMNS**

Back to the 1900s and a 'political first'.....	Page 12
'Selling the Baby' leaves emotional baggage.....	Page 13

# The International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors



Visit the ISWNE's Web site: [www.mssc.edu/iswne](http://www.mssc.edu/iswne)

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

# WANTED

## for July's ISWNE conference

By **TONY RICHARDS** • ISWNE Conference Chair

**A**nd if your mind doesn't fit any of the above, don't worry: there will be other things to put your mind to in Victoria, British Columbia, from July 5-9.

At the top our agenda so far is the issue of native land claims. British Columbia is the only Canadian province not to have signed treaties with the native population. One of the first is with the Nisga'a in northern B.C., a treaty that has gained the approval of provincial and federal governments but is regarded with great apprehension by many British Columbians.

A new feature of this year's conference comes from a suggestion from last year's conference chairwoman, Marg Hennigar. Let's bring our best editorial ideas

and exchange them. **What special features, ideas or initiatives did your paper introduce editorially in the past year?** Bring them along. If you didn't have any, come to listen and take some home with you.

Another opportunity for a similar exchange of ideas comes through gathering in the hospitality room for social communion. This isn't a religious exercise but a chance to have a drink and a conversation with someone else who likes good writing and lively newspapers.

### And then there's the scenery.

Butchart Gardens is world-famous for its flowers and summertime fireworks. We'll show you the flowers but you might have to come early or stay late to catch the

- Open, inquiring minds curious as to how a Canadian province will respond to native demands that lay claim to more than 100 per cent of the land mass;
- Fertile minds full of ideas on improving the editorial content and appearance of our newspapers;
- Social minds that will enjoy mixing and mingling with like-minded folk from far and wide; and
- Appreciative minds that will take pleasure in the splendid scenery of British Columbia, including the floral displays of the world-famous Butchart Gardens.

### Internet Web site links

B.C. Ferry Corporation:  
<http://www.bcferries.bc.ca>

University of Victoria:  
<http://mpg.uvic.ca/index.html>

Travel sites:  
<http://www.travel.bc.ca>,  
<http://www.discoverbc.com>  
<http://www.gulfislands.net>

fireworks, depending on the final conference schedule.

But Victoria's not a bad place to be in July so maybe you should plan to come early — and stay late. The capital city of B.C., it is as English

continued on page 10 →

**T**his is a time of year for reflection.

Reflection about the past year.

But this year is the end of the millennium.\*

So this year is special — it is for reflection on not only the past year but of the past millennium.

Many newspapers are doing special millennium issues, so I thought I too would look back on the past 100 years... personally.

As I look back on my life and reflect on how it has changed throughout the millennium, I decided the first thing to do was to decide which century had the most impact on me and the person I've become.

Probably the most important century in my life has been this present one...

Shirley MacLaine not withstanding.

But seriously, friends...

The second most important century in impact to me (but that I didn't actually live through regardless of what my children think) was probably the 15th. That's the time that gave us Johannes Gutenberg who brought movable type to the western world.

That invention may have been the most important invention to happen to news dissemination until the discovery of computers, laser printers, and finally, the Internet.

**\*It's not really the end of the millennium, that's next year and that's another story.**

...

While I joke about reflecting on the millennium, I really did take some time to reflect on my life — both professionally and personally.

Some of the best times of my life revolve around journalism. As a child I watched high school sports

# The President's Report

**By Elliott Freireich**

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



as my dad covered them for the local daily paper.

As I got older, like many of my colleagues, I got to participate in the family newspaper — answering phones, stuffing statements, doing rewrites, etc., etc.

Somewhere along the way I got a chance to attend my first ISWNE summer conference. That was the year Burt was president. We still met at Pere Marquette State Park in southern Illinois.

I remember little about the conference itself, but two things stand out.

That was one of the years of big floods and Landon Wills led a contingent of us down to the river each morning to see how high it had gotten.

The other thing I remember was the hospitality suite, which in those days was a group of editors who got together in somebody's room — Jim Beam or one of his poorer cousins was always there.

...

My memories of ISWNE were brought back as I read the latest *Grassroots Editor* about my friend and mentor, Jim MacNeill.

They were sad and glad feelings as I read and remembered him. Jim was

a man who was strong in his convictions and one who was patient and motivating in his interests in my career.

That column also reminded me of another ISWNE member who made quite an impact on me. Bob Hammes was quite a guy. He was an editor/owner but also a computer programmer who wrote some of the accounting software he used at his Idaho weekly. He was another of the ISWNE members who took me under his wing and counseled me about journalism, newspaper management, and life in rural communities.

...

Journalism and the International Society have been a big part of my life. I lugged in Calgary, I've seen the newspaper I work for win state association awards, I've toured Cheyenne Mountain, I've seen corrupt police chiefs lose their jobs because of our investigations. I've seen what I believe to be a great, long-term impact on our communities due to a strong local newspaper and I'm proud to have been a part of it.

I think I'm much like most of you in that I think there has been a positive impact on my communities because of the newspapers I've been a part of.

And I think ISWNE has had a major impact on who I am as a publisher and what *West Valley View* is as a newspaper. I thank every one of you for the experiences I've had, but especially Landon, Bob and Jim.

**O**K, get out your pencils, pens, modems and hand-held personal assistants. We are going to have a quiz. See how well you know your weeklies. (Answers follow, but no peeking!)

# Now, Just a Minute



The so-called thinking man's column on journalism



**By RAY LAAKANIEMI**  
Bowling Green State University

1. About how many weeklies have won Pulitzer Prizes? Which weekly editor won the most recent Pulitzer Prize?
  2. This editor a few years ago sold America's Largest Rural Weekly in Michigan. He modeled his work after Ben Franklin, once paid \$50 for the city manager's unlisted phone number, and for years sold kits to help other weeklies prosper.
  3. In the 1970s, he ran a D-Day promotion for Don't Smoke, and then reported on the results. His idea was adopted by the state cancer association and then the national and international, puffing up now into the International Smoke-Out. Who is he and where was his paper?
  4. His first job out of Princeton was editor-publisher on a small weekly in Lancaster, Ohio, in the early 40s. He left for World War II where he was badly injured and spent hospital time thinking about his father's business magazine. His son is now running for president. Who is he?
  5. He bought a Maine weekly after retiring as editor of the *Washington Post* and serving as Lyndon Johnson's ambassador to the UN. He often wrote cutlines for Maine coastal wild art in poetry and ran an oxcart against the U.S. mail delivery system. Who is he?
  6. His town became well-known for hosting foreign officials who want to see what life is like outside the Beltway. Who is he and what is his town?
- (P.S. I know there are a lot more outstanding weeklies out there, and I hope I have not hurt any feelings).**

Answers

1. According to a search on the Pulitzer web site at <http://www.pulitzer.org/navigation/index.html> there have been five:
  - 1953: **Public Service** for an anti-KKK campaign, *Whiteville News Reporter* and *Tabor City Tribune*, both in North Carolina.
  - 1965: **Melvin H. Ruder**, *Hungry Horse News*, Columbia Falls, Mt., for resourceful spot coverage of a disastrous flood
2. **Bob Myers**, now retired in Lapeer, Michigan, the *Lapeer County Press*.
3. **Lynn Smith**, *Monticello Times*, Monticello, Minn. You can still read Lynn at [monttimes.com](http://monttimes.com), under Columns/Opinions, Rumbling.
4. **Malcolm Forbes**. Little-known fact, but true.
5. **Russell Wiggins**, *Ellsworth American*, Ellsworth, Maine.
6. **A. J. Pinder**, *Herald-Register*, Grinnell, Iowa.

Email [rlaakan@bgnet.bgsu.edu](mailto:rlaakan@bgnet.bgsu.edu) or write Box 71, East Tawas, MI. 48730-0071)  
Phone (419) 372-2078.

# State of the ISWNE

## Increasing Membership Should Be Our Primary Focus



**By Dr. Chad Stebbins**

ISWNE Executive Secretary-Treasurer  
Director, Institute of International Studies  
Associate Professor of Journalism  
Missouri Southern State College

**I** would welcome you to a new millennium, century, or decade, but someone would surely point out that these time periods really don't start with a "zero" year but a "one" year because there was no Year Zero. Nevertheless, it sure feels like a new millennium, century, or decade after all the hoopla and media hype. How many of you sold "New Millennium" editions to your unknowing subscribers?

Now that the 90s are over, what do we call the next decade, by the way? The Aughts? The Os?

Anyway, this seems like a good time to give a State of the ISWNE message, at least from my perspective. Keep in mind that I became executive secretary-treasurer only in July.

### Membership

The greatest challenge we face, I believe, is attracting new members. Currently, the membership numbers 274, which doesn't include 57 press associations that do not pay the annual dues but receive all ISWNE publications. And I'm sure the 274 includes some folks who at one time were active ISWNE members but who haven't paid dues in several years.

A state-by-state examination reveals there are no ISWNE members in seven states: Alaska, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Montana, Nevada, and Utah. We also could be doing better in such

states as Texas (only four members), New York (only three members), and Kentucky and Mississippi (only one member). Illinois leads the way with 33 members, followed by South Dakota and California with 12 each.

To attract new members, my office at Missouri Southern has been mailing letters and membership forms to weekly newspaper editors and publishers in every state. We've looked through the membership directory of the National Newspaper Association for what we think are good prospects. But despite the hundreds of letters mailed, only a handful have responded. I did receive the following e-mail from Linda Sawyer, editor of the *Mountain Enterprise* in Frazier Park, California: "Thanks for the flier on joining ISWNE. What do you offer us weekly editors that CNPA and NNA do not?"

A good question. I wrote Ms. Sawyer a lengthy response, citing the quality of our publications and offering to send her some sample issues. I also mentioned the networking opportunities with colleagues in other nations, the annual study trips to other countries, the contests we sponsor, the annual conferences that allow members to learn a great deal about a particular region, and the outstanding people who make up the ISWNE.

What did I leave out? What would

you have told Linda? I'd welcome your answers and would share them with everyone in the next newsletter.

I also invited Linda to check out the ISWNE's new Web site at [www.mssc.edu/iswne](http://www.mssc.edu/iswne). If you haven't done so, please visit it and make sure your e-mail address and your paper's Web site (if you have one) are listed correctly.

I suspect that my answer wasn't good enough to entice Linda to spend \$50 on a membership. The personal touch was missing. Most ISWNE members joined because of a personal request coming from a current member, not because of a mass mailing or an ad in a trade journal.

That's where you come in. I'd like to ask all members to recruit at least one new member. (Some of you already have. Bill Haupt recently signed up four and sent me a check for \$80.) Don't forget that if you "sponsor" a new member, he or she (or you) pays only \$20 instead of \$50 for the first year of membership. I'd like to think that the newsletters and *Grassroots Editors* alone are worth the cost of a membership. So share yours with a prospective member.

I have also mailed out an invitation to join ISWNE to all 750 members of the Newspaper Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC). My letter included a flier asking the academicians to submit articles for

*Grassroots Editor.* Again, the response wasn't quite what I had hoped for. So feel free to approach journalism professors you know and explain all the benefits of membership.

### Leadership

I continue to be amazed by the dedication of our president, vice president, and board of directors. They spend considerable time and money out of their own pockets to move the organization in the right direction. The winter board meeting, by the way, is Jan. 28-29 at the Riveria Hotel in Las Vegas.

I can't say enough about Dick Lee's willingness to answer my many questions and keep me on the right track.

### Finances

We appear to be in sound fiscal condition, with a bank balance of \$20,807.52 entering the new year. Marg Hennigar contributed a whopping \$8,913.18 from the Halifax convention. (Marg and Vickie Canfield Peters really should consider copyrighting their formula and selling it to other organizations. From my experience, it's nearly impossible to host a conference and turn a profit.)

### ISWNE MEMBERSHIP TOTALS

Alabama .....3	Indiana.....4	Nebraska .....4	South Carolina .....1
Alaska .....0	Iowa.....6	Nevada.....0	South Dakota .....12
Arizona .....11	Kansas .....2	New Hampshire .....5	Tennessee .....4
Arkansas .....5	Kentucky .....1	New Jersey .....1	Texas .....4
California .....12	Louisiana .....3	New Mexico .....4	Utah .....0
Colorado .....10	Maine.....0	New York .....3	Vermont.....4
Connecticut.....2	Maryland .....5	North Carolina .....3	Virginia .....3
Delaware .....0	Massachusetts .....9	North Dakota .....3	Washington .....9
Florida .....5	Michigan .....4	Ohio .....10	West Virginia .....1
Georgia .....6	Minnesota .....5	Oklahoma .....3	Wisconsin .....11
Hawaii .....0	Mississippi .....1	Oregon .....1	Wyoming .....2
Idaho .....1	Missouri .....8	Pennsylvania .....12	Northern Mariana Islands .....1
Illinois .....33	Montana.....0	Rhode Island .....1	

### TOTAL MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNITED STATES: 238

Alberta .....6	Ontario .....6	Saskatchewan .....2
British Columbia .....1	Prince Edward Island .....2	Yukon .....1
Nova Scotia .....2		

### TOTAL MEMBERSHIP IN CANADA: 20

Australia .....1	Ireland .....3	Scotland .....2
Belize .....1	Northern Ireland .....1	Spain.....1
England.....6	Japan .....1	

### TOTAL ISWNE MEMBERSHIP: 274\*

\*Does not include new members listed in this issue

# ISWNEWS



Send your ISWNEWS to Chad Stebbins at [stebbins-c@mail.mssc.edu](mailto:stebbins-c@mail.mssc.edu) or to Missouri Southern State College, 3950 E. Newman Road, Joplin, MO 64801-1595 by February 11, 2000 for next month's newsletter.

## Richard McCord's 'The Chain Gang' issued as audiobook

**A** recorded version of longtime ISWNE member and former president Richard McCord's 1996 book *The Chain Gang* was issued in November 1999 by Blackstone Audiobooks, the nation's third-largest producer of unabridged book recordings.

The book was recorded in Washington, D.C., in June, with McCord as the reader. The running time for the audiobook is 12 hours, on eight 90-minute tape cassettes. It sells for \$56.95, has a 30-day rental price of \$12.95, and can be ordered from Blackstone Audiobooks, 1-800-729-2665. The hardcover book sells for \$24.95, and can be ordered from the University of Missouri Press, (800) 828-1894.

*The Chain Gang* is a nonfiction expose of the ruthless business practices of the huge Gannett Company, which owns 75 daily newspapers throughout the country. From 1976 until 1989, Gannett owned Santa Fe's daily paper, *The New Mexican*, and competed with the weekly *Santa Fe Reporter*, run by McCord. The clash between the giant chain and the small, local Reporter fills a large segment of *The Chain Gang*.

The Blackstone audiobook, to be marketed commercially, is the second recorded edition of *The Chain Gang*. In 1998, the book was selected by the nonprofit National Library for the

Blind and Physically Handicapped program, administered by the Library of Congress. One of 13 titles in the Media section of the catalog, *The Chain Gang* joined best-selling works by Walter Cronkite, David Brinkley, Ted Koppel, Art Buchwald, Katharine Graham, and other prominent journalists. It was read by Barry Berson, a professional actor.



McCord

*The Chain Gang* was included in Booklist's "Best Books of 1996" selection, and placed second for the Frank Luther Mott/Tau Kappa Alpha award for the year's best book about the media. It is currently in its fifth printing, and a Japanese edition has been published. McCord has traveled more than 150,000 miles speaking about the book, which has been featured on CNN, C-Span, and National Public Radio.

With 1,500 unabridged titles in its catalog, Blackstone Audiobooks is surpassed in size only by Recorded Books Inc. and Books on Tape. Blackstone does not do abridgements.

## Second edition of Ray Laakaniemi's 'Weekly Writer's Handbook' now available

**T**he second edition of Dr. Ray Laakaniemi's *The Weekly Writer's Handbook* is now available for \$43.15 through Brittany Books, Box 71, East Tawas, MI 48730-0071. The price includes shipping and handling, and orders are mailed out the same day they come in.



Laakaniemi

The second edition features an impressive 38 chapters and 229 pages. Laakaniemi has added sections on credibility and newsroom attitude, an extended discussion of civic journalism, 10 pages of Web sites

that can aid weekly reporters and editors in their daily duties, and several key Web sites where editors can look to find reporters.

*The Weekly Writer's Handbook* also contains sections on developing story ideas; news writing basics; writing formula stories; interviewing; covering a beat and meetings, police and courts, education, and local sports; writing budget and finance stories; coaching writers; understanding the law of the press; the basics of photography; and computer-assisted reporting.

"The book is written with the understanding that weekly reporters have little time and so it is organized in the form of a cookbook or a

handbook," Laakaniemi says. "The subjects are designed to be read just before an assignment, without having read the other parts of the book."

The original *The Weekly Writer's Handbook* was published by Laakaniemi seven years ago. More than 2,700 copies have found their way into newsrooms in all 50 states and every province of Canada except Newfoundland.

Laakaniemi is an associate professor of journalism at Bowling Green (Ohio) State University. He has 12 years of professional newspaper experience, and another seven years working in public relations.

## Atkinson featured in December 1999 'American Journalism Review'

**L**arry Atkinson, publisher of the *Mobridge* (South Dakota) *Tribune* is pictured on the cover of the December 1999 issue of *American Journalism Review*. Larry is among five weekly newspaper editors profiled in a lengthy story titled "The End of Innocence." The article by Buzz Bissinger posits that "Voices of grassroots America, weeklies once were insulated from the newspaper industry's big-bucks wheeling and dealing. No more."

Bissinger, who visited Mobridge on a trek across the country, had this to say about Atkinson: "He wants to make money like any businessman, and when times have been good he has made money, enough to put his two oldest children through college and buy a boat (which he later had to sell). But the work goes deeper than that. The lithographic image of Ben Franklin at the printing press in Philadelphia does not dance in Larry Atkinson's conscience as some merely sweet historical footnote. Not is it any accident that when he thinks of what it means to be a democracy,

he also thinks of the role of the printed word. 'I'm here because I choose to be here,' he says. 'It is my community.



Atkinson

Newspapers play a key role in molding communities into what we are. We are the voice of reason. We are the voice of questioning government."

The article mentions that keeping the *Mobridge Tribune* locally owned has stretched Atkinson to the "financial breaking point." He also faces a critical labor shortage; a year ago, an ad for a news editor ran in *Editor & Publisher*, the *Denver Post*, the *Omaha World-Herald*, the *Fargo Forum*, and the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* but drew only three applicants. Equipment woes plague Atkinson as well. He spent \$135,000 on a used press and another \$190,000 repairing it.

But Atkinson appears to be turning the corner. He projects \$1.5 million in revenue this year, which includes a vinyl sign business, a business that produces personalized coffee cups and jackets, and the publication of several regional phone books. The *Tribune* also prints some other weekly papers in the area.

Bissinger writes: "As I watch Larry Atkinson, it is clear to me that he loves this profession in a way that, without getting too maudlin about it, is inspirational, a reminder of what it means to be a journalist, or at least what it used to mean before the Internet made all of us feel like we were counting down to a funeral. The work that he does is a part of his soul."

The December 1999 issue of *American Journalism Review* is available for \$3.95 by calling (800) 827-0771 and charging it to your credit card.

## ISWNE Web site Update

Please note the following changes to the ISWNE Web site:

### ISWNE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Information about the upcoming annual conference in Victoria, British Columbia on July 5-9 has been added to the site, along with an e-mail contact for those needing additional information.

### GENE CERVI AWARD & GOLDEN QUILL AWARD

A page has been added for each of the awards, including nomination information and Gene Cervi Award past winners.

### E-MAIL ADDRESSES & LINKS TO MEMBER NEWSPAPERS

The e-mail addresses and links to member newspapers have been updated according to information you provided on your dues statement. Please check your listings and inform us of any corrections.

### ISWNE NEWSLETTER & GRASSROOTS EDITOR

Each issue of these ISWNE publications that were produced at MSSC have been added to the Website in the form of .pdf files. To view these files, you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer. A link to this free software is posted on the page. To install the software, complete the following instructions:

- Follow the "Get Acrobat Reader" link on the ISWNE Website to the specific page on the Adobe Website where you will download the software.
- Follow each step listed on the Adobe Web page and provide the requested information (version, platform, name, and e-mail address). Click on the red "Download" button.
- Installation instructions are located on the second download page on the Adobe Website.

### To All ISWNE Members

It has taken me this long to get back to figuring out e-mail with the help of a neighbor. Computers are not my thing yet for sure. Don is having to relearn the thing also. In any case, recent weeks have been filled with out-patient therapy for Don and several trips back to the Cleveland Clinic.

He had a heart catheterization on Oct. 27 and it went smoothly. The cardiologist says Don's heart is stable and he recommended just treating it with medication. He wants to see him in a year. Because of the trauma of inserting the breathing tube during the emergency on Aug. 27 so quickly, Don's right vocal chord was damaged and was causing odd symptoms which meant a visit to an ENT specialist. By the second visit that was healing so we go back to that specialist in 6 months.

It has been an interesting 12 weeks. Don has been a super patient, doing everything asked of him by the therapists. He still has some short term and long term memory loss but is so much better than weeks ago. We manage to keep busy and try to get out every day. We take walks, go to concerts, lectures, out to eat, visit with friends. No trips planned as of now but after the holidays we will probably try an Amtrak trip. Thanks for all the messages from ISWNE friends. They mean so much to us. We still talk about our wonderful trip to Halifax. Don sends his best also.

Jeanne Pease

WELCOME

## New Members

**Anthony Longden**, *Uxbridge Gazette Series*, Uxbridge, Middlesex, England

**James Cox**, publisher, *Clarke County Democrat*, Grove Hill, Alabama

**John Conway**, editor, *West Valley View*, Litchfield Park, Arizona

**David Cox**, publisher, *Villager Journal*, Cherokee Village, Arkansas

**David Mitchell**, publisher, *Pt. Reyes Light*, Pt. Reyes Station, California

**Craig Harrington**, publisher, *The Intermountain News*, Burney, California

**Tom Vaughan**, *The Mancos (Colo.) Times Tribune*

**Percy Pascoe**, publisher, *Cuba (Mo.) Free Press*

**Bill Hale**, publisher, *Grant County Herald-Independent*, Lancaster, Wisconsin

**Karl Gutknecht**, marketing director, Wisconsin Press Association

**Mike Mathes**, publisher, *Tri-County Record*, Kiel, Wisconsin

**Tim Lyke**, publisher, *Commonwealth-Press*, Ripon, Wisconsin

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### Dr. Douglas Perret Starr

is a professor of journalism at Texas A&M University. He spent 13 years working for The Associated Press, covering government, politics, and other news in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Florida. He was a general assignment reporter for the *North Baton Rouge (La.) Journal* and the *Opelousas (La.) Daily World* and a copy editor for the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. Dr. Starr has 28 years of experience teaching reporting and writing at Florida State University, the University of North Texas, and Texas A&M. His honors include being part of the team that won the Pulitzer Prize for the *Vicksburg (Miss.) Post-Herald* in 1954. He was named a Distinguished Instructor at Texas A&M in 1998. Dr. Starr and his wife, Mildred, have five children and two grandchildren.

### Kim Estes McCully

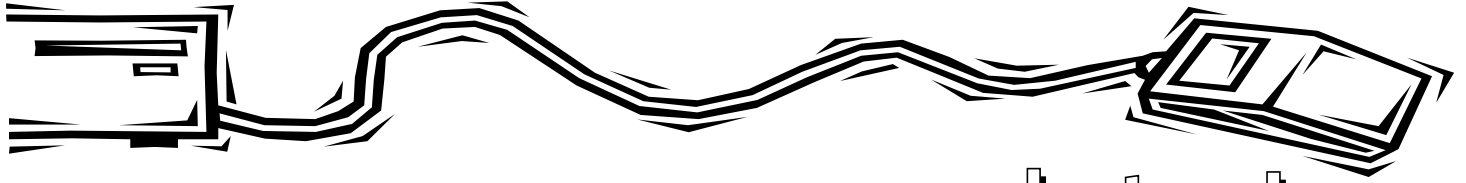
is the managing editor of *The Aurora (Mo.) Advertiser/Marionville Free Press*. A part-time student at Drury University in Springfield, she will receive a master's degree in education, with an emphasis in human services/English, next summer. She coordinates the satellite program for Drury Evening College in Aurora and also teaches English and literature courses there. Kim has an associate's degree in pre-journalism from Missouri Southern State College in Joplin and a bachelor's degree in English from Drury. She became *The Aurora Advertiser's* managing editor in 1987. The most important job held by Kim is that of "mom" to Jacob, who is 9 years old.



**Bollinger**

### Dr. Lee Bollinger,

a native of New Orleans, is currently assistant professor in English and Journalism at Coastal Carolina University in Conway (near Myrtle Beach), South Carolina. In her lifetime, she was a journalist for the *Hampton News & Advertiser*, freelanced for various papers, was director of public relations for a theatre company in New England and then a hospice organization. She has an M.A. in Communication theory and methodology from Cleveland State University and an M.A. in Literature from the University of New Hampshire. Her Ph.D. was garnered at the College of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC. Her dissertation was a case study of the Media Relations department at the University of South Carolina; and she traveled across the state to talk to editors of the dailies regarding their perceptions about PR and media relations.



# electronic mail

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**Charles Gay, of the *Shelton–Mason County Journal*, Shelton, Wash., writes:**

“If you had asked my father to attach a brief description of himself, he would have written something like, ‘Six-foot-five, 190 pounds, graying hair, mustache under big nose.’ But he had been losing it since he was 47 years old. I know that you actually want a biographical sketch. I know this because of the exceptional reporter’s instincts instilled in me by my father and because I won’t turn 47 until next April.

“I am the son of Henry Gay, the longtime editor and publisher of *The Shelton-Mason County Journal* in Washington. His parents had the bright idea of starting a weekly newspaper in Monterey, California, in the middle of the Depression, when they had to trade ad space for goods and services.

He grew up in the newspaper business, and later so did I, at *The Buckley News-Banner* and *The Journal*, one east and one west of Seattle. My father’s editorials made the ISWNE’s Golden Dozen seven times, and he won the Golden Quill

in 1986 for a piece questioning the way society looks at rape. *The Journal* had been criticized for years for covering rape trials the same way it covered all other trials, naming all witnesses and summarizing their testimony.

“So I came by a certain amount of independence from my grandfather and father. I have also inherited some of my father’s writing ability. The bad news is that I have about one-tenth of his talent. The good news is that that makes me average. My father died of cancer on January 3, leaving my mother as owner of *The Journal*, and I stepped into his shoes as the editor and publisher. I knew when I stepped into them that they didn’t fit and that I couldn’t fill them. But I have just enough of my father’s omeriness to try to keep his tradition alive. Our 36-page newspaper is still operating with the belief that a 70-inch web is normal, we still don’t break 50 for our ad percentage, and we’re still getting the kinds of letters like one last week... ‘You Gays are a bunch of cold-

hearted bastards...’ from a 79-year-old woman who didn’t want to pay for a classified ad. My brother is the ad manager; my sister is the business manager. (All of us were born after our parents were married.)

“From the time I left for college in 1971 until I came back to Shelton in 1980, I worked for a number of newspapers, as a reporter for the *Bainbridge Review*, *Tacoma News Tribune* and *Bothell Northshore Citizen* (all in Washington), as the sports editor of the *Lynnwood Enterprise* (Washington) and as editor of the *Scappoose Spotlight* (Oregon). I returned to *The Journal* in 1980 as managing editor and held that position for 18 years under my father until his death. My bachelor’s degree was in economics at the University of Washington, where I held eight positions in four years of work on *The Daily*.

“My father told stories of great friendships made through the ISWNE. I feel an obligation to join the society in his memory.”

## ISWNE Annual Conference

continued from page 1

as Queen Victoria herself ever was. And Victoria’s a good starting point from which to tour the rest of Vancouver Island (Pacific Rim National Park on the west coast of the island, fine beaches in Parksville on the east coast, great salmon fishing wherever you are, and lots more) and the Gulf Islands (Salt Spring Island is one of North America’s best locations for art).

There isn’t space to talk about the rest of the province, but I can recommend a circle tour: drive from Victoria to Port Hardy, take a ferry to Prince Rupert, then drive back down through the Interior to return to the south coast. I can’t say anything more about it because I would finish up convincing myself to go, and then I wouldn’t be able to organize the conference.

**A few other details about the meeting:** the location is the University of Victoria where accommodations are

probably better than a few places ISWNE has seen. The first event will take place Wednesday afternoon; the last will be breakfast on Sunday, unless I find something else to squeeze in that morning.

For transportation, Victoria International Airport is 16 miles north of the city, and ferries run between Port Angeles, Wash., and Victoria and Anacortes, Wash., and Sidney (16 miles north of Victoria). B.C. Ferries operates a regular service between Tsawwassen (just south of Vancouver) and Swartz Bay (20 miles north of Victoria).

The transportation is good, and so are the weather, the food, the drink and the people. Whether the agenda is good will be up to you to decide after you arrive. So there’s neither excuse nor reason not to come.

**See you then!**

# REMEMBERING George C. Scott WOULD-BE JOURNALIST



I was reading *The New York Times Magazine* the other day. It was the issue of January 2, 2000, the annual "Lives They Lived" edition. That's the edition in which a look is taken at some of the noteworthy lives that ended in the preceding year.

Some names you might expect to find profiled are not; some you would not think of are memorialized. The essays, written by noteworthy persons themselves, are fascinating.

Despite the fact that I knew that the persons written about were only some of those who had lived their lives well and that John F. Kennedy Jr. and Joe

DiMaggio and Wilt Chamberlain and Justice Harry Blackmun and Joseph Heller were not included, I was disappointed in one omission.

I had hoped to read about George C. Scott.

Maybe it's because I had known Scott nearly 50 years ago, and because he and I had shared some times together, and we had even shared at one time the same goal — that of becoming a journalist.

When I knew George C. Scott, he was a journalism student at the University of Missouri in Columbia. I was preparing to become one; I was in my pre-journalism days. Then in my journalism days, I actually covered Scott, the actor

with whom I had shared conversations and times in the Union, with whom I had taken the same classes, and with whom I had argued about why become a journalist.

He had described his goals to me, and his dream, using the salty language which was common to him but also using the voice that was to become world famous in all its

variations as he played it like a pipe organ. When he spoke up in class, you never quite knew what to expect. He spoke his mind, gently but firmly, and when I saw the movie Patton, I wanted to yell out several times: "You haven't changed, George."

Much can be — and should have been — written about this man and his years in Columbia. And of his associations.

The head of the drama department

at the university was a man named Donovan Rhynsberger. He was a teacher you never forget. Scott met him at a tryout for a play. He got a part, and he got Rhynsberger as a mentor.

Scott then became a contract player for Stephens Playhouse, the theatre of Stephens College, one of two women's colleges in Columbia. The Playhouse hired men to play the male roles in their offerings, and George was there at a time when one of the truly outstanding women students who performed regularly was Tammy Grimes.

Tammy went on to win Tony awards for Broadway performances in musicals and dramas, most notably, for me, for her title role in *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*.

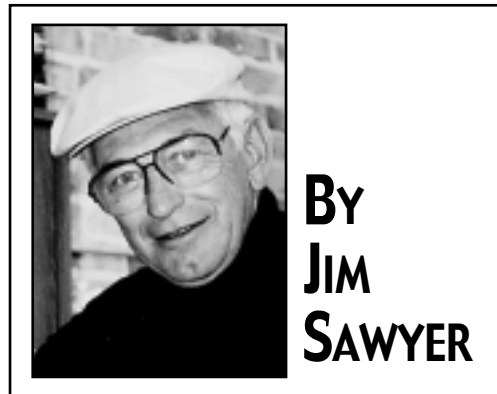
I, in the meantime, had become the play reviewer for *The Columbia Missourian*, and as such I became well acquainted with Tammy and continued my acquaintanceship with George. Both often greeted me when I arrived at the theatre, urging me to be "kind and gentle to them on their opening night." That was no problem. The two shone in everything they did on stage. Theatre-going was a pure delight because of them. The three of us occasionally teased one another about my writing, their acting, and our classwork (including our knowledge of Shakespeare).

Tammy made it clear that her future was in the theatre and that

continued on page 16

**By**  
**RICHARD W. MASSA**  
Retired Communications  
Department Head  
Former Director,  
Institute of International Studies  
Missouri Southern State College

# Back to the 1900s and a 'political first':



## Newspaper carrier Lenny Anderson's 'front-wheel-drive, hind-end-steered' bicycle

**I**n the 1950s in an Iowa burg straddling the Missouri border, Elmo and Lenny, the Anderson brothers, were busy pumping out great inventions.

Even at that time I was convinced that when the next century rolled around there would be dancing in the streets because of their unique and daring feats — especially Lenny's revolutionary front-wheel-drive bicycle, which was steered with one's hind end.

But when the 1999 clock struck midnight and 2000 rolled in, I was disappointed. Missing in the revelry was any recognition of the Anderson brothers' significant contributions to the 1900s, which is an absolute shame. I think it's nothing less than sinful that our last memories of the 1900s include home-stored canned goods and power generators, but nothing about them.

Their philosophy was that if it moved to start with, it could be made to move better, and where they lived was a shrine to American ingenuity. With a hodge-podge of machinery, it included modified cars, trucks, tractors, bicycles, motorcycles, motorscooters, motorbikes, haybalers and anything else that moved.

So, Elmo and Lenny, wherever you guys are, this is my tribute to you for what I feel were some things overlooked that can traced directly back to your workings — things that have helped the overall advancement of mankind, at least

when it comes to moving objects. And maybe even politics.

Back then, Elmo, barely of driving age, already was a force in local "hot-roddery." Lenny lacked a few years. I was in between. But I was amazed and captivated by both of them. Elmo could tear down "flathead" Ford V-8s and put them

back together so quickly it would make your head swim. In the process, he would "port and relieve" them and do his "Elmo thing" to the carburetors. He would grind away at the exhaust ports of the engines to relieve the build-up of back pressure, which ultimately resulted in more power.

Whatever he did to the "carbs," no one ever knew, and Elmo wouldn't tell. But as a result, cars housing Elmo's engines would run circles around anything else on the highways. By the way, the "flathead" meant that high-falutin "overhead valves" hadn't come along at that point.

Lenny was just as ingenious as Elmo, but his ideas linked with his big brother's mechanical ability made the two fearsome. Lenny had a newspaper route. You'd always see him out there on his bicycle in all kinds of weather with that bulging

sack hanging off his shoulder and with Lenny hurling papers with the timing of an orchestra conductor. And I might add that he wore his ball cap backward, for functional reasons, long before "hip" was ever heard of.

One time Lenny got this bright idea to put the bike's back-wheel sprocket onto the front wheel,

just to see if it would give him a little more speed in getting the newspapers delivered. But knowing that it would be impossible to turn the front wheel without breaking the chain, he had Elmo weld the front fork so the bike wouldn't bend.

To tackle the steering situation, the two devised a couple of "bending joints" on the post that the

seat was attached to. It worked beautifully. Lenny rode his revolutionary front-wheel-drive bike, throwing newspapers with the greatest of ease and steering the mechanical marvel by using, instead of the handlebars, nudges from his hind end to turn left or right.

As far as I can tell, lots of politicians have been using that method ever since. But so far they haven't given Elmo and Lenny an ounce of credit.

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**Their philosophy was that if it moved to start with, it could be made to move better, and where they lived was a shrine to American ingenuity.**

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**T**wo more family papers sold. Two more editors who probably are going through a grieving process as intense as losing a member of the family. Maybe you know someone who is confronting the same topsy-turvy emotions. Maybe you are the someone.

Two recent announcements caused me to revisit the emotions I felt after we sold the *Littleton Independent* almost two decades ago.

In November the mail brought a tearsheet from the *Clear Creek Courant*: Cary Stiff and Carol Wilcox were selling the lively Idaho Springs (CO) paper they had founded 26 years earlier.

And in December we received a card from John Smail, editor of the *Southern Reporter*, an outstanding weekly in the Borders area of Scotland. Smail wrote that he and his brother had decided to sell the company to a newspaper group. Nothing unusual in that — except that John is the first generation of his family to edit the *Reporter*. He and his brother are the eighth generation in the family business, Tweeddale Press Group.

Cary Stiff wrote, “Naturally, we have had terribly mixed emotions during the last 18 months, while the negotiations were under way. After all, the paper we had started in the old billiard hall in Georgetown had been our ‘baby.’”

“It was like a fourth child that we had raised and nurtured and shaped and encouraged, and now here it was, grown up and ready to leave the nest. And we’ve been feeling the pangs all parents feel when their kids grow up.”

John Smail’s note said, “The moment when I had to tell our staff on the *Southern* about the deal was the most difficult of my life. It’s been a very difficult call to make, but having looked at all the angles, I do think it is the right one.”

Like Cary and Carol, the Smails have sold their “baby.” I think neither editor will regret the decision. But they will feel the pain.

The poignant notes from these editors freshened my memories of our decision to sell the *Independent*. Houston

BY  
GARRETT  
RAY



# ‘Selling the Baby’ leaves emotional baggage

Waring, my mentor and predecessor, had sold us his child; 15 years later, I was doing the same. I’m still ashamed that I could not bring myself to tell him about the sale until the day before the public announcement.

It was the hardest day of my professional life. The day six months later, when I told the staff that I was leaving the paper, was almost as hard. Then I became super-critical, brooding over every tiny mistake the new editor and her staff made. I finally quit reading the paper till I could take a more realistic view of the transition.

Selling the *Independent* was the right decision, personally and professionally as well as for the paper’s eventual health and growth. Almost two decades later, I’m still glad we did it.

It’s not my nature to spend much time regretting anything, personally or professionally. But I have three lingering regrets that might be instructive for other family newspaper owners who decide to sell.

First, the new owner became overextended in shifting economic times and went bankrupt. Many years and thousands of dollars in legal fees later, we got most of our remaining money, but it was a discouraging process. We should have protected ourselves better in the negotiations — or even insisted on all the cash up front.

Second, I’m sorry that I didn’t share

the proceeds in some way with our staff. It would have meant a lot to staff members, especially longtime employees, if we had given each of them something significant to say, “Thanks for so many good years.”

The most important and lasting regret is that we sold the *Independent* to the wrong guy. Our relationship with him and his with the community was a disaster. He was a brilliant and creative entrepreneur, but his understanding of community newspapers could not have been more different from ours. The paper went through some painful years before it moved into the caring hands of another family. (It is now part of a chain — the almost inevitable trend.)

What are the lessons for other would-be sellers? They’re pretty obvious: Don’t count on money you don’t have, and do everything possible to protect yourself financially if things don’t work out. Remember the people who helped you through the late nights and hard times. And if you’re going to sell the baby, try to sell to someone who shares your philosophy of raising children.

Even then, it will be one of the toughest decisions you’ll ever make.

*This column was first printed in the Publishers Auxiliary on January 10, 2000.*

# Statement

Due by January 31, 2000

# The International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors

January 1, 2000

**2000 ISWNE Dues .....\$50**

(The general ISWNE membership voted to raise the ISWNE dues to \$50 at the July 1997 Flagstaff conference.) With the ISWNE membership, you will receive a monthly newsletter and *Grassroots Editor*, a quarterly journal.

**You may wish to do one of the following:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Be a Sustaining Member at \$100

\_\_\_\_\_ Make your editor-friends members of ISWNE at a special price of \$20 per year. If you do, please list their addresses on the back of this statement.

\_\_\_\_\_ Contribute to:

Greenslade Bursary to fund the conference visit of a British Isles editor:  
Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

H.R. Long/Houstoun Waring Scholarship for conference:  
Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Hazel Brannon Smith Scholarship for conference:  
Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

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## If You Are A New Member:

Please attach a brief description of yourself for the ISWNE Newsletter if you are a new member. A mug shot would be appreciated.

**Mail To:** Dr. Chad Stebbins, ISWNE, Missouri Southern State College,  
Department of Communications, 3590 E. Newman Road,  
Joplin, MO 64801-1595

Questions: Phone: (417) 625-9736 Fax: (417) 659-4445 E-mail: [stebbins-c@mail.mssc.edu](mailto:stebbins-c@mail.mssc.edu)

# ISWNE 2000 award competition

## The 25th Annual Eugene Cervi Award

The **Eugene Cervi Award** was established by ISWNE to honor the memory of Eugene Cervi of the *Rocky Mountain Journal*, Denver, by recognizing a newspaper editor who has consistently acted in the conviction that "good journalism begets good government."

The award is presented not for a single brave accomplishment, however deserving, but for a career of outstanding public service through community

journalism and for adhering to the highest standards of the craft with the deep reverence for the English language that was the hallmark of Eugene Cervi's writing.

The award also recognizes consistently aggressive reporting of government at the grassroots level and interpretation of local affairs.

**Cervi Award Nominations should begin with a letter of nomination**, which should include the writer's reasons for making the nomination. The nomination also should have other letters about the nominee, clippings demonstrating the criteria for the award and a biographical data sheet giving basic facts about the nominee's career.

**Nominations are open only to editors of newspapers of less than daily frequency.** Daily is defined as at least five days per week in frequency. (Note: Since the Cervi Award covers a journalistic career, supporting materials are not limited by chronology. Clips can be made from any point in the nominee's career.)

**Nominations should be sent by Feb. 1, 2000**, (materials may follow by end of month) to:

**Chad Stebbins, Department of Communications, Missouri Southern State College, 3950 E. Newman Road, Joplin, MO 64801-1595. Please mark the envelope: CERVI AWARD ENTRY.**

## The 40th Annual Golden Quill Award

The first **Golden Quill Award** in 1961 went to Hall DeCell of the *Deer Creek Pilot*, Rolling Fork, Miss. Then as now, the award recognized good opinion writing.

### Eligibility:

All newspapers of less than daily frequency (published less than five days per week) are qualified to enter. Entries must have been published between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 1999.

**Entries must be postmarked by Feb. 1, 2000.**  
**Please mark the envelope: GOLDEN QUILL ENTRY.**

**Send to: Chad Stebbins,**  
**Missouri Southern State College,**  
**3950 E. Newman Road, Joplin, MO, 64801-1595.**

You may also nominate an editorial or signed opinion piece by sending the information above with a copy of the article in the format indicated. Please enclose a letter telling ISWNE that it is a nomination.

### How to Submit:

Select up to four best editorials or signed opinion pieces from your newspaper. Two is the maximum number of entries permitted from each individual. Mount each entry on 8 1/2-by-11-inch white paper. Please use glue or mounting material that does not bleed through newsprint. Golden Dozen articles (ISWNE selects 12 finalists from which the winner is chosen) will be photocopied in their original form for publication in the **Grassroots Editor**, ISWNE's quarterly journal.

On each page on which the entries are mounted, the following should appear in the upper right-hand corner: Name of newspaper, full mailing address of newspaper, date on which the entry was published, and full name and title of the person who wrote the article. Please mail the entries flat in appropriate envelopes.

**GOLDEN QUILL and EUGENE CERVI AWARD winners will be invited guests of ISWNE for a presentation during the Society's annual conference at Victoria, British Columbia. Each award includes a plaque, conference expenses, and travel expenses up to \$500.**



# George C. Scott

continued from page 11

she would perform on Broadway. There was no doubt in her mind. George, on the other hand, while having become infatuated with acting was still not sure about it as a lifelong career. He still thought of himself as a future journalist.

I confess. I breathed a sigh of relief when he said he had decided against journalism and in favor of acting. It was not that he could not be or would not be a great journalist. It was that he was such a great actor in those early years of the 1950s.

When he died last year, I felt a tinge of remorse for what journalism might have lost — a “no-holds-barred, tell-it-like-it-is” kind of reporting that might have shocked and jolted and angered readers in the 1950s.

But the greater realization was thinking back to other classmates of those years and others with whom I came in contact at the university or at the two colleges in town, and realizing the talents that existed among the journalists and the journalists-to-be. Among the journalism students I knew there were talents which, for many, have been sublimated over the years by the necessity of meeting deadlines, informing readers accurately, and keeping alive the traditions of the press.

I would wager that among the readers of this newsletter right now are novelists, playwrights, athletes, chefs, painters, sculptors (and many others) who have forgone those talents and skills, or who have used them as avocations and for pure, personal enjoyment.

I would wager that some of these readers took time on December 31, 1999, to take a measure of their lives and what they had accomplished and what dreams and ambitions they still have. Some dream of the day they will, indeed, write that novel or be able to devote time to their other loves.

But right now, they are serving the cause of journalism, and that’s a mighty tall accomplishment.

George C. Scott was a man who lived life to its fullest, but his successes as an individual are matched and surpassed by many who never achieved his fame.

## 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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