

## Charter Building Forum, Phase I Archive

These discussion topics from the Phase I web forum held in December, 2002.

1. Help Form the Mission Statement
2. Help Establish the Society's Goals
3. Help Establish the Society's Philosophical Foundation
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## The PJNet Web Forum Charter Building Forum, Phase I Archive

### **1. Help Form the Mission Statement**

This is a charter for an association of journalists and journalism educators interested in journalism and democracy. The association embraces citizens and scholars concerned with public life as its partners. The association exists to explore and strengthen the relationship between journalism and democracy in several ways. It will:

- Support conversations that can enrich and transform journalistic practice.
- Encourage studies of and experiments with journalistic practices.
- Encourage studies of and experiments with democratic practices.
- Spread promising ideas and practices so others can test or adapt them.

DISCUSSION STARTERS: Is this the right target membership? Is the idea of embracing citizens and non-journalism scholars as partners OK? Do we need to spell out what partnership means? Are these the right activities -- conversations/discourse, studies and experiments, spreading what seems to work? Is it OK to consider democratic practices that affect journalism? The last bullet does not encourage anyone to ADOPT ideas and practices, only to evaluate them or mess with them on their own. Is that OK? -- Cole Campbell

**Leonard Witt - Nov 19, 2002 9:03 am (#1 Total: 24)**

Add Reaching into Communities

I would add another bullet point to Cole's list

Help journalists to reach deeper into the communities they serve and to help communities work more closely with the journalists who serve them.

So far civic journalism has been working hard at teaching journalists how to reach out to communities. But that is only half the battle. We have to provide communities empowerment tools so they can make their voices and ideas heard by journalists.

**Griff Wigley - Nov 19, 2002 10:34 am (#2 Total: 24)**

System Admin

Community empowerment tools

Len wrote: We have to provide communities empowerment tools so they can make their voices and ideas heard by journalists.

Len, can you point/link to any examples of this happening?

**Leonard Witt - Nov 19, 2002 10:57 am (#3 Total: 24)**

Building Community Empowerment Tools

Part of my mission at Kennesaw State University is to help communities build empowerment tools.

Most of the movement in that direction is coming from progressives:

Charlotte Ryan at Boston College -- Media Action Research Project  
[http://www.bc.edu/bc\\_org/avp/cas/soc/mrap/default.html](http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/cas/soc/mrap/default.html)

Thom Clark in Chicago -- Community Media Workshop  
<http://www.newstips.org/us2.html>

Robert Bray and Holly Minch in San Francisco --The Spin Project  
<http://www.spinproject.org/>

Maybe other folks know of other groups working in that direction.

**Cole C. Campbell - Nov 19, 2002 11:40 am (#4 Total: 24)**

Journalism is a community empowerment tool

It seems to me that journalism that regards citizens as political players -- that treats them as the people who can make decisions and contribute to political life -- is by itself a powerful form of empowerment. When citizens see themselves in that light in news media depictions, it builds their sense of political effectiveness and encourages them to act as they see fit.

**Cheryl Gibbs - Nov 24, 2002 7:28 am (#5 Total: 24)**

Yes, include folks from other disciplines

I think the inclusion of non-journalism scholars in our conversations is extremely important. Journalists and journalism scholars can isolate themselves from other disciplines as effectively as they can isolate themselves from citizens (although hopefully, the latter isolation is no longer as great as it once was). Conversations with folks who bring ideas from other disciplines about how media affect public life are the thing I've been most grateful for since I had the good fortune to meet up with other journalists and journalism educators interested in public/civic journalism. Currently, because of a shift in institutional priorities, I have the opportunity at Earlham to explore how journalists might benefit from ideas from the area of conflict resolution. It's very invigorating!

**Cole C. Campbell - Nov 25, 2002 11:06 am (#6 Total: 24)**

Which disciplines? Which scholars or practitioners of these disciplines?

Cheryl mentions the conflict resolution discipline as a fertile source of ideas for public journalism.

What other disciplines might we seek out? And who among the scholars or practitioners within these disciplines might we invite into our conversation?

**Cheryl Gibbs - Nov 26, 2002 2:54 am (#7 Total: 24)**

Other disciplines

Other practitioners/disciplines that would be fertile sources would include those in law who are familiar with restorative (v. punitive) justice, which in this country would probably be folks from Indian tribal courts and/or diplomats from some African countries (I just read a great article by Christian Science Monitor writer Helena Cobban comparing the effects of using each form of justice in post-genocide recovery/reconciliation efforts in several African countries -- fascinating!), linguists (like Deborah Tannen, whose book "The Argument Culture: Stopping America's War of Words" offers some stunning commentary on the media), peace negotiators like Landrum Bolling (who was a war correspondent during World War II) ...

**Kathy Campbell - Dec 2, 2002 7:02 pm (#8 Total: 24)**

Public Participation and Conflict Resolution

In 1999, I had the opportunity to make a presentation on the idea of public journalism at a conference of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) in Banff. These professionals in "public participation" were fairly shocked to find out that the "media" might not always be plotting to sabotage their efforts at every opportunity. The next year I was part of a panel on public journalism at a conference of the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution (SPIDR) in Albuquerque. Again, the shock was palpable. These two professional groups would be good partners for our conversations. Franklin Dukes' book, "Public Conflict Resolution: A Transformative Approach" is a good resource. I have an unpublished paper (I think I may have done something at AEJMC one year with it) on the connections among the ideas of civil society, public conflict resolution and public journalism that has a decent bibliography, which someone might find useful. My point here is that I think, and have thought for some time, that this is fertile ground! So I'm excited about following these threads!

And where else should we look? Back, for sure! David Nord's new collection of updated essays\* about "defining public communities through the medium of print," as Maureen Beasley put it in her review for JHistory, should be valuable. I've not read it yet, but I'm familiar with many of the essays previously published.

And we should look sideways to the field of urban and regional

planning. Marcia Caton Campbell at the University of Wisconsin is quite interested in the links between public journalism and planning. The whole HUD-supported neighborhood movement is an important piece, too.

And then there's the study of social networks . . . maybe the sociologists would like to chat with us! Who knows what miracles might be wrought!

Kathy

David Paul Nord, *Communities of Journalism: A History of American Newspapers and Their Readers*. Urbana, Ill: University of Illinois Press, 2001.

**Jan Schaffer - Dec 3, 2002 9:50 am (#9 Total: 24)**

Journalists are "Hinkey "

Over the years, I have been deluged with people from other interest groups who find a lot of common ground with the concepts of civic journalism.

But I've learned to steer clear of formal partnerships with non-journalism groups or advocacy groups -- no matter how wonderful the things they were advocating for. I've always included them in mailings and responded to emails. Occasionally, they have have come to workshops. They are always invited to luncheons or seminars.

I've found that journalists are really hinkey about partnerships of any sort -- even partnerships with other media. And they will avoid any workshops if they feel they will have to navigate among special interests, who invariably want to tout their particular causes.

Now, you can argue whether this is right or wrong. But I find it's just the way it is.

So, I'm for making the CJ Group membership restricted to journalists and journalism academics. Any conflict resolution folks, drug treatment folks, communitarian folks, civil liberties folks might qualify for an affiliate -- or 2nd tier -- membership. But, I fear, you will lose your core group of journalists if you include too many non-journalists.

**Ana María Miralles - Dec 3, 2002 1:20 pm (#10 Total: 24)**

PROPOSED MISSION STATEMENT

IAPJ is a professional association that promotes the study, practice and research on public journalism in order to strengthen its main objectives and methodology to build democracy and participation from civil society through journalism

**Kathy Campbell - Dec 3, 2002 10:50 pm (#11 Total: 24)**

Finding public partners

Jan's point is well taken and I'm inclined to agree. Clearly my choice of words, "good partners for our conversations," set off some well-

founded alarms. But I've been thinking about this in terms of the "what do we call ourselves" discussion as well. How DO we include citizens (including those active in other, possibly complimentary, professions) as anything other than audiences if they are excluded from the center of things?

Kathy

**Leonard Witt - Dec 4, 2002 10:25 am (#12 Total: 24)**

We Need Citizen Involvement

I agree with Jan Schaffer that journalists are hinkey about mixing with citizen groups.

However, when I began thinking about this society I wrote, "Civic journalism can never reach its full potential without a strong citizen base, which actively helps develop the movement. Until now, civic journalism has been better at bringing citizens into journalism projects than it has been at incorporating their ideas and support into the development of its theoretical and practical operating base."

I understand concerns about independence and autonomy. So in the beginning we form the group with journalists and journalism oriented academics, but from the outset we say we will do everything in our power to incorporate the ideas of the citizens.

To exclude them reminds me of doctors and police who want to push the people they serve to the fringes. Most journalists think the police and doctors are wrong when they do it, but think it is okay for their profession. But is it?

**Robert Chaney - Dec 4, 2002 11:40 am (#13 Total: 24)**

Police and doctors

Len wrote: "To exclude them reminds me of doctors and police who want to push the people they serve to the fringes."

A couple years ago, my community had a wrenching experience with the police and the public it served: Hundreds of officers were brought to town to monitor a Hells Angels convention. While the HA's were relatively well-behaved, many local residents bridled at the law enforcement tactics. We ended up with a near-riot, with pepper spray, body armor, lawsuits, etc. Then we had the city government post mortem.

I bring all this up because it was an in-depth case study of the split between professional decision-making (from the police) and public perception and participation (local government and angry citizens' groups).

The same split exists between journalists' day-to-day coverage decisions and the interests of the local community. As the military likes to say, a battle plan rarely survives its first contact with the enemy. Civic journalism's efforts to change or expand newsroom/community relationships should keep that in mind. There's a huge gulf between long-term, community-building projects and crisis-

managing decisions that force a newsroom into sudden action.

I suspect a big part of journalists' hesitation toward civic journalism is this sense that it could turn into a dragging weight of academic or committee-based dithering.

At the same time, I see great value in grafting some principle of civic journalism onto the traditional "5-W" baseline of news coverage. Looking at issues with a goal of arousing community participation as well as interest is a legitimate interest of journalism. The sticky point is deciding how to share the driver's seat.

**Cole C. Campbell - Dec 5, 2002 12:31 pm (#14 Total: 24)**

Other "public movements"

Robert,

Your post reminds me that there are a number of other professions that are wrestling with their relationship to citizens and the public sphere. Public journalists can learn much if we engaged pioneers in these areas, much as we have learned from pioneers of civic engagement in the realm of community politics.

The community policing movement, which I'm sure must have its pros and cons, and community-oriented prosecutions are examples. I have not done much research, but I've read a couple of articles about prosecutors who go into communities and ask citizens for input on the kinds of offenses they would like to see given prosecutorial priority. That sounds a lot like public journalism asking citizens for input on the kinds of issues they would like to see given priority in political discourse.

Robert Archibald of the Missouri Historical Society is a pioneer in "public history" (my term, but I think he would be comfortable with it). Archibald has worked for years to close the gap between professional, museum-based historians and the communities they serve, bringing in citizens -- especially from marginalized African American neighborhoods -- to consult with historians on how to tell the stories of their communities. He's had to design courses at the University of Missouri at St. Louis to train historians in how to engage citizens and learn with them.

There is a "public sociology" movement that stresses writing in public terms and a "public writing" movement that teaches undergraduates to use communication skills to move about the public sphere.

All these areas move from the foundations of democratic theory, civil society and the public sphere and move toward new practices on the street (or in the classroom).

**Leonard Witt - Dec 9, 2002 2:42 pm (#15 Total: 24)**

My Vision: This Society One Year From Now

We are asking all the participants and lurkers to come back one more time and help us envision what this society might look like one year from now. Who will be its members, and what will that membership be

doing?

You can give a complete vision or just a tiny piece of a vision. We can knit all the pieces together.

So here is my try:

I want a society that will actively try to improve the state of journalism.

First some of the premises:

Journalists do a good job of episodic reporting on communities and institutions, but too often don't understand the complexities of the institutions or communities.

Since the media are basically middle-class to upper-class institutions, the poor and disenfranchised communities are often the least well understood.

The result is stories that don't reflect the realities of these communities or institutions.

It is not only a disservice to these communities and news audiences, but often bad public policy results that further punishes these communities.

So a year from now I would like to see a society working to help journalists better understand the communities they cover and one that provides techniques and tools to help get the job done.

Furthermore, on the academic side I would like to see a society that helps academics prepare students who will do a better job of understanding these complexities.

**Cole C. Campbell - Dec 9, 2002 3:54 pm (#16 Total: 24)**

My Take: This Society One Year From Now

Len, I'm comfortable with what you just posted. These are some things I would add, I guess.

The society would serve as a FOCAL POINT for conversations and work about journalism's relationship to politics, public life and democracy. Society officers (or staff?) would be frequently quoted in articles dealing with journalism, much the way the folks at Poynter are quoted in stories about journalism and ethics or diversity and Tom Rosenstiel and Bill Kovach are quoted in stories about journalism and anything bad.

Society representatives would ATTEND EVERY MAJOR JOURNALISM CONVOCATION/conference/convention and several outside of journalism, to foster conversations about journalism's work in a democracy.

The society would HOLD ITS OWN CONVOCATIONS face to face a couple of times a year, so members could think out loud together, think up or review experiments. It also would maintain A WEB FORUM AND RESOURCE

SITE.

A string of UNIVERSITY-BASED CENTERS, programs, curriculum pioneers, etc., would explore the same issues in conversation with the society.

Journalists across the country and the globe would begin to see the RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOURNALIST AND CITIZEN, and thus between newsroom and community, AS THE ESSENTIAL RELATIONSHIP to be attended to in order to re-enliven journalism and our work. Discussions of diversity, ethics, craft and other hot topics would speak to this relationship, and the journalism trade/academic press would stop bashing the notion of taking citizenship and democracy seriously and start exploring it.

**Griff Wigley - Dec 9, 2002 4:36 pm (#17 Total: 24)**

System Admin

The Society on the moon

Len and Cole, you guys are very practical. I also think there's room here to take a whack at a bigger vision. Let's hear that too. Big or small we want them both.

Also, I think a vision works best when it contains a compelling image, an inspiring view of the future that you prefer to see, something that people can carry in their hearts as well as in their heads. Example: NASA's determination to get a man on the moon by 1969.

So if the Society engages in the variety of activities over the course of the next year that you describe, what might be a significant event that could happen because of it?

"Mainstream media empires including the New York Times and CNN decide to ....?"

**John X. Miller - Dec 9, 2002 7:02 pm (#18 Total: 24)**

The Practical

The discussion about where this organization hopes to be in a year and the hopes of what it'll evolve into must include practical and specific ways to help journalists and non-journalists understand and then use PJ in reporting, editing, photojournalism and engaging citizens.

I think it's critical to link up the underlying ideals of American journalism, the waning interest of citizens in public life, the growing separation between journalists and the public, and PJ research in an urgent way.

We need a vision and a start to this effort that inspires and informs from Day 1, something that compels journalists and others to think deeply about current circumstances, then to act.

Someone mentioned the fervor and focus of IRE journalists at conferences. I believe that comes from a hunger for self-improvement, craft improvement and a focus on ground-breaking journalism. These can be very strong catalysts.

**Dan Suwyn - Dec 10, 2002 7:05 am (#19 Total: 24)**

One year out

We hosted the IRE regional conference and the SND annual workshop this year in Savannah. What makes those groups so influential is that they give journalists standards and templates which they can aspire to, emulate and break. Yes, it leads to some "copycat-itis," but devices like the IRE story database and the SND annual book are prototypes for what a civic journalism society could do to forward its mission.

As an editor I often tell reporters to show me, don't tell me. Well, this may not be a "lofty" one-year goal, but in terms of impact, I think creating either a database or annual book would be the quickest route to spreading the message.

**Leonard Witt - Dec 10, 2002 5:45 pm (#20 Total: 24)**

Don't Forget Contests

John and Dan, let's not forget both the IRE and SND run contests. The contests accomplish several goals. They make journalists think about their work, they produce a body of great work that can be used as examples, they help generate income to show that work, and they bring attention to the organization running the contest.

So let's add a contest to our vision for the society.

**Jay Rosen - Dec 11, 2002 10:14 am (#21 Total: 24)**

One Year From Now?

Here are my suggestions for how to envision the Society a year from now:

- 1.) Do not try to do too many worthy things; pick a few that you know to be doable at the start.
- 2.) Do not dilute the group by trying to be a good "includer" of everyone.
- 3.) Try for an ultra-simple, high clarity mission statement. Like this: "For smart people who want to keep the experiment in civic and public journalism going." Then elaborate, add, qualify that telegraphic remark in a longer statement about missions and themes.
- 4.) One year from now I would want to have concentrated on perhaps one, maybe two and at the most three "parts" of the Society to design, build, test and get rolling. No more.
- 5.) It is more important to build up a small constituency of people who know what the group is about and who want to participate, than it is to recruit far and wide.
- 6.) New organizations routinely over-estimate the commitments in time and labor that even the most enthusiastic "members" and supporters can

and will give. Make it easy to participate a very little, and people will participate a lot.

7.) The two most important things to make first are an active and engaging web-based discussion and information-sharing forum, as we are in now; and some kind of annual event where the "tribe" can gather. I would secure, support and and refine those two before launching new and ambitious program parts.

8.) Warning: it is easy to think up new, exciting and much needed things to do. We could make a list of 100 in less than an hour. Another reason for starting slow and small with two or three items is that ideas need time to settle. Too many things look too good too early.

9.) I think it is critical--all important--that this be defined as an international organization at the start. Others have said so, and to me we should make it a founding commitment. I voted to keep working on a name because it seems to me that International (or World) might have to be the first word. International Forum on Civic Journalism (IFPJ). World Society for Public Journalism. Global Fourm on Public Journalism. All seem good to me. If we're international, translation problems with "civic" might be fewer with "public."

10.) That would be my third "project" in priorities list, which reads: 1. Go all out in creating a top-of-the-line effective web forum for ideas and spreading new knowledge; 2. do one annual event like an IRE gathering but with our twists; 3. make sure this society is international from the start and meaningfully so.

11.) Start searching immediately for a partner--think tank, foundation, professional group, university--who can host the first overseas meeting of the society: Europe, Australia, South Africa...

Cheers

**Leonard Witt - Dec 11, 2002 11:27 am (#22 Total: 24)**

Jay's Priorities; The International Piece

Jay and everyone else who might be reading this. First I love Jay's list of priorities.

Second, we have three civic journalists/academics from Japan, Colombia, Finland with solid published records on doing civic journalism who want to attend the Charter Meeting. It would be an excellent start for our international society. However, they don't have the budgets to make it possible. Kennesaw State University is willing to defer some of the costs. Anyone know other funding sources.

**Leonard Witt - Dec 12, 2002 9:52 am (#23 Total: 24)**

A View from Africa

This is being posted by Len Witt for:

Mburu Mwangi, Investigative Reporter, Nation Media Group, Nairobi.

Mwangi writes:

My experience in a small media house and a large one shows me that to engulf a whole continent like Africa, only a very small spark needs to be ignited and the civic journalism fire will spread all over.

The main problem in Africa has been the people's ignorance of which is their entry point in the media. Once they know this, the rest is automatic.

Recent examples are the introduction of private radio stations which have helped to widen the scope of civic journalism in the country through showing the people the entry point.

As a print journalism, I regret that fairly big newspapers like the Daily and Sunday Nation which I work for have not opened up to the common people. It is still regarded an elitist paper although it would do better than this using its Kiswahili daily due to the country's low literate level. But still, to monitor the progress of the spread of the fire of civic journalism we need to keep it small, otherwise it may be a runaway project. Let' have a pilot project and set the stage.

**Hideya Terashima - Dec 12, 2002 6:14 pm (#24 Total: 24)**

Message from Japanese journalist

Please let me allow introduce myself. I'm Hideya Terashima, a Japanese journalist for a regional newspaper "The Kahoku Shimpo" (locating at Sendai city, 400km north from Tokyo, with circulation of half a million copies for morning edition, 12 thousands copies for evening edition ), for which I 've been a editor and writer for 23years.

At present, I'm researching Civic Journalism as a Fulbright scholar at Dewitt wallace Center for Communications and Journalism, Duke University, NC. And I pay best regards for works of my colleagues in US because of their new initiative and experiment renovating regional media with unique and diverse methods of interactivity.

We regional newspapers of Japan faces the big challenge which might happen in America in 90's, such as demographic change of community with decline of traditional readers, and increase of Japanese "Generation Y" who much prefer information from internet. Still more long recession have hit hard management of newspaper companies, as well as even people's expenditure for newspaper. Some regional newspapers have given up issuing evening edition for cutting cost, however it's not lead to recovery. We haven't find out breakthrough yet.

But now in America, I've found that your Civic Journalism could be our beacon. "In this day and age, people can get news information from anywhere they want" - words of Ms Jeannine Guttman - "There's only one reason they buy your paper, because they have a relationship with your paper"- awoke me impressively. And so did Ms Jennie Buckner's words "We are in connection making business", "start where the citizen starts". Yes, it was not readers who detached, but us, media. Every problem exists inside ourselves, so does future.

"Interactivity" with community or citizen is one of the word I'm learning from Civic Journalism. Its notion (not only reporting but also

working with people for solution) is close to what I have practiced in several projects in my region. But we have not had chance or place to express, organize and share the idea with other editors or reporters beyond boundary of "Kaisha"(company), partly because "world of crafts" is still our tradition, without any school of journalism.

So we could not even have get information of what colleagues of regional media in American media think and practice. For example, you've been inventing new methods combining web-site or computer technology with traditional reporting effectively. And for the goal, they don't hesitate to work with other media, even rivals in same region as "media partners". It have never happened in Japan so far.

It's my pleasure that you discuss about new organization which would also think much of "internationality". Your experience of Civic Journalism would be rich resource of new initiative and possibility also for us. I hope your new organization could be bridge which enable journalists of America and foreign journalists to connect with ane another and work together for common issues, all the more because we share the time of globalization and relevancy.

#### **The PJNet Web Forum Charter Building Forum, Phase I Archive**

### **2. Help Establish the Society's Goals**

The association aims to:

- Participate in every substantial conference of journalists, scholars and citizens that addresses - or ought to address - the interplay of journalism and democracy.
- Direct significant intellectual and material resources to studies and experiments with ways to improve the interaction of journalistic and democratic practices.
- Post, publish, broadcast, convene symposia about and otherwise focus attention on examples and studies of promising practices and ideas about journalism and democracy.

DISCUSSION STARTERS: These goals attempt to match the four "purpose" activities (listed in the Mission Topic). Do they? Are key terms like "substantial," "significant," "otherwise focus attention" and "promising" too insubstantial, insignificant, unfocused - or promising too much? Will the association raise money to "direct significant intellectual and material resources" or to "post, publish, broadcast, convene symposia," etc.? Will it become a clearinghouse? A grant-maker on the PCCJ model? A convener of meetings or an eager guest at others meetings? -- Cole Campbell

**Cole C. Campbell - Nov 19, 2002 11:44 am (#1 Total: 10)**

Pew Center reprised?

These goals sound a lot like what the Pew Center on Civic Journalism has been doing -- and it has had a chunk of money to do it with. Can this be the work of a member-driven professional society? Or will the society have to take on fund-raising activities to do these kinds of activities?

**Tanni Haas - Nov 25, 2002 9:54 am (#2 Total: 10)**

## Creating a Public Philosophy for Public Journalism

In an article which recently appeared in "Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly," Brian Massey and I offered a critical review of 47 evaluative studies on public journalism. We concluded that, contrary to what appears to be the conventional wisdom, public journalism has not had substantial impact on the attitudes and behaviors of journalists and citizens.

In the very last paragraph, we note that public journalism's greatest impact may be more heuristic than practical. By that we meant to imply that public journalism's most important contribution may have been to ignite a discussion on the role and responsibility of journalism in a democratic society rather than to enhance citizen involvement in democratic processes.

That said, there have been too few efforts to develop a comprehensive and nuanced public philosophy for public journalism which clearly articulates wherein the "publicness" of this journalistic conception lies or ought to lie. The literature on public journalism is divided into very general thought pieces, reports on empirical studies of particular initiatives, and anecdotal narratives and self-evaluations by practitioners.

What we need, and this ought to be one of the primary goals of the Society, is much better interplay between theory, research, and practice. To develop a public philosophy for public journalism, the Society should fund studies which, based on theoretically guided definitions of publicness, attempt to criticize and improve upon the practice of public journalism as well as fund studies which, based upon reviews of particular public journalism initiatives, attempt to develop and/or refine such definitions of publicness.

Put differently, the future of public journalism does not depend simply on creating forums where both scholars and practitioners can participate, but rather on creating opportunities for scholars and practitioners to learn from one another. A viable public philosophy for public journalism ought to be both theoretically sound, empirically well-grounded, and practically feasible.

**Cole C. Campbell - Nov 25, 2002 11:02 am (#3 Total: 10)**

A learning society, not a learned one

Tanni,

I have perused your article and find it quite stimulating; new to this kind of research, I'll need to re-read it a couple of times to absorb its full value.

I am delighted that a substantial part of your answer to the empirical problems of research into public journalism is a return to the theoretical work of conceptualizing what public journalism is, with an emphasis on a philosophy of publicness. I would add to that articulating a philosophy of journalism: What is it that journalism is supposed to do? (I'm working on these questions in my own reading and

writing.)

I would say that there is very little public journalism being produced -- that what we call public journalism to date is in fact a downpayment on public journalism, or a series of early foundation stones being laid upon which public journalism, fully realized, can be erected.

So we need a public philosophy for public journalism -- and we need public practice of public journalism. A society in which scholars and practitioners learn from each other ought to advance both theory and practice.

**Jan Schaffer - Nov 26, 2002 4:35 pm (#4 Total: 10)**

Documenting citizen impact...

Lew Friedland and Sandy Nichols at the Center for Communication and Democracy, U-Wisconsin, recently completed a two-year analysis of 650 civic journalism projects the Pew Center had collected through 2001.

Their conclusions can be found at [www.pewcenter.org](http://www.pewcenter.org). They benchmarked each effort with a "civic ranking" and they chronicled specific civic outcomes -- outcomes beyond the journalism.

It is the only study I know of that really worked directly with the journalism, the journalists' reports about their journalism, and the outcomes.

They concluded there was significant impact in the community and, if you look at editors' self-reports, it would appear that the journalism had notable impact on the journalists.

I find their report particularly interesting because the pool of projects was "polluted" -- if you will -- by a lot of enterprise, public-affairs projects (ie: non-civic) hoping to win a Batten Award.

All of these efforts will be available for further research by year's end at the Wisconsin Historical Society, home to the nation's largest collection of mass communications history documents -- and now home to the Pew Center's archives.

**Lew Friedland - Nov 27, 2002 10:45 am (#5 Total: 10)**

The Impact of Public Journalism

Have been reading the posts under Tanni's "Creating a Public Philosophy," and I have a few brief thoughts. First, I haven't had a chance to read his and Brian's review article yet and look forward to it. I'm a little surprised at their initial characterization though, as represented in the post. I have just finished examining, with Sandy Nichols, almost 650 cases of civic journalism in the U.S. since 1993. Each was coded for specific types of impacts on local communities, from increasing deliberation to civic problem solving. Without getting too far into our methods here, there were some weaknesses. The two greatest were that our data was essentially self reported (and therefore we can assume biased towards the positive), but this was countermanded by the inclusion in the population of a moderately large number of self-

described civic journalism projects that, in fact, were not, but were traditional investigative and enterprise reports seeking prizes. The upshot is that the mass of data suggests a clear positive relationship between the practice of civic journalism in these cases taken as a whole and over time, and specific civic outcomes. The relation between civic journalism practice and newsroom change was weaker, but clearly identifiable. This suggests that civic journalism, where it was practiced at all seriously over a period of time, had positive impacts on civic life in local communities, but that newsroom reception was uneven, depending on many factors including newsroom culture, ownership, and leadership.

Before the data analysis was completed, Carmen Sirianni and I published a long chapter on civic/public journalism in our *Civic Innovation in America*, which looked at both civic impact and newsroom change. This was based on in depth comparative analysis of ten cases of fieldwork, conducted by myself or my grad students. In seven of the cases, (Charlotte (twice), Wichita, Binghamton, Norfolk, San Francisco, Madison, Colorado Springs) I personally spent time in newsrooms and on city streets doing hundreds of interviews with journalists and citizens. We found a messy picture of innovation, as all such pictures are, with many early false starts and mistakes, but also a rising learning curve over the roughly ten years that we examined.

So we have Tanni and Brian's picture, and ours. I'm not sure how to square them (if possible) until I read their piece. But I do want to say that Carmen and I found that all civic innovation is difficult, complicated, and takes a very long time. Embedded institutions don't change very quickly. Ten years is a beginning. We have found cycles of civic innovation in community development for example that date back 40 years to the early sixties.

Having said that, I too think that going back to the beginnings, and thinking about public journalism's philosophy is worthwhile. But I would also urge \*(although this is a different discussion) that we be careful about how we approach that task. It is not too difficult to overlay a normative public philosophy over journalism and find journalism wanting. The question is what kind of critical approach is mostly likely to lead to further innovation in the kind of journalism that is done and the relation between journalists and citizens. Put oversimply, there is still much to learn from Dewey here. He understood that old habits and routines and their difficult transformation are the starting points for change. And that change is always embedded in institutions.

**Ana María Miralles - Dec 3, 2002 1:22 pm (#6 Total: 10)**

#### THE GOALS

As I see, the goals must be connected to the following ideas: Practice of PJ, research and academical production about PJ, experiences to be promoted and permanent forums and discussions. I think one of our goals must be to participate in international colloquiums with PJ papers. I wonder why in the Social World Forums of Porto Allegre (Brazil) anybody has been there talking about PJ. In my case this is because we have no money for travel expenses. But I think we have to much to say in forums like that.

**David Kurpius - Dec 4, 2002 12:36 pm (#7 Total: 10)**

Internal and external innovation

I want to pick up on Lew's comment about old habits and routines embedded in organizations and the difficulty of establishing meaningful innovation. I tend to think about civic journalism as both an effort to change structures INTERNAL to the journalism organization and as an EXTERNAL force in public life. Since most of my work has looked at the internal side of this I will start there. I apologize ahead of time if this is too basic or too long, but I want to both add to the conversation and state some of the basic elements I see as being at the core of civic journalism.

Tanni and Brian are correct that civic journalism has started important discussions of current practices in journalism. As Lew points out, there is evidence that civic journalism has done more than elevate the level of conversation. There are changes that we can point to in both newspapers and television. There is evidence that routines do change. The question is what routines should be altered and for what purpose?

At a basic level it starts with developing a different understanding of the role of journalism in democracy - moving from a quality information dump that is devoid of context to an engaged development of information that is connected to the questions, concerns and aspirations of citizens and the communities where they live, play and work. The connection helps improve relevance and context and depth of reporting and helps bring citizens into an ongoing conversation rather than simply telling them about isolated and disconnected events. This connected form of journalism includes developing stories using a bottom-up or community approach to define the core issues, common-ground, trade-offs and potential solutions. Journalists rarely spell out these elements in their stories preferring the frames of conflict, political image and strategy to issues. It is also about asking who and what are missing from the coverage and then developing a SYSTEMATIC way of filling the gaps in understanding and coverage. This leads to a greater diversity of people and ideas in the conversation, which ideally improves the quality of the deliberation and potential solutions. It also forces journalists to begin looking at the layers of civic life. This works against the present focus on officials to include community leaders (official and unofficial), third places, incidental and even private sources (this is spelled out well in the Tapping Civic Life booklet).

My research (in the next JQ) showed television civic journalism also improved racial diversity and gender diversity among sources. Civic mapping takes this a step further to add context and alternative positions to coverage. For example, the Tampa Heights coverage by WFLA and the Tampa Tribune used mapping techniques to report that residents wanted redevelopment block grants for abandoned houses not the city practice of bulldozing the properties.

As civic journalism develops it often requires new beats that recognize the importance of monitoring and covering communities as well as city hall. I think of these as altering the starting points of enterprise story development. Possibly the most visible changes in journalistic

routines at television stations is found in the redevelopment of editorial meetings to focus less on structuring the daily coverage and more on discussing and framing the issues that will be covered. Many stations that have done civic journalism work have changed their meeting structure to have more conversations, more focus on community enterprise development and a greater diversity of sources. They have also invited outsiders to participate in a variety of ways in informing the editorial process.

Civic journalism, particularly at television stations, has been hobbled by a lack of diffusion of understanding and even discussion of civic journalism within newsrooms. These efforts tend to be housed in special project units where only a select few are involved. It also l

**Cole C. Campbell - Dec 4, 2002 5:55 pm (#8 Total: 10)**

Connecting conversations

Ana, I think you are so right that the society should find ways to get people knowledgeable about public journalism into conversations among others, such as the Social World Forums, who have an interest in the same issues regarding democratic practice, civil society, mass media in politics, and so on.

And David, taking a systematic approach to understanding public journalism's internal and external dimensions -- and then filling in the gaps -- also seems exactly on point.

**Jay Rosen - Dec 4, 2002 6:19 pm (#9 Total: 10)**

Missions and goals

Thanks, David, for telling us how things look from your perspective as analyst and researcher. You isolate a few key accomplishments that help explain what kind of "shift" is involved in the movement as labor shifter and thought developer in newsrooms. Learning to "map" the local community in a different way, for example, is both an important kind of work generated by civic journalism, and another way of thinking a journalist must learn, assimilate, grow comfortable with.

I realize upon checking in with this forum that the mission most helpful to me is exactly what we are doing now, in a fumbling, half-organized but pretty intelligent way: creating an intellectual forum among those who care about continued development of the "thing" generally known as civic or public journalism.

I mean such simple pleasures as having a place to reflect on lessons and learnings with people who have a stake in the conversation and know the history. Hearing colleagues with their own distinctive knowledge report in, and exchange ideas. Getting reactions to my latest thinking. Puzzling through key problems that ought to be shared puzzles. Re-telling the story of progress and failure. Re-describing what public journalism is really about.

Plus, with Len and Griff distributing highlights, Cole there to sharpen and monitor discussion, a regular group of writers gathering, plus floating participants who speak when they have something special to

say, and lurkers no doubt keeping tabs, the beginnings of an online, low-cost, ad hoc, informal but well-focused intellectual community are already being seen. This is itself a fine initial agenda and mission for the organization: creating and building such a Net space, this way, easy for all to access, not too burdensome but busy enough to be worth checking.

I would add that an online research and reflection tool and discussion space is inherently international. This is, after all, a World Wide Web platform. But it could be made much more so. All we need do is begin explicitly inviting academics, journalists, observers from other countries who are aware of public journalism and its spread as practice overseas. Len, Griff: you might consider how to devote some labor to this.

A simple, "tell us what you are doing...." board (whether it's doing research or doing journalism) puts us way ahead, since there is no one place where that information collects, internationally or in North America. Added value is high for the relatively small cost in dollars and labor.

Start with a simple mission and agenda: Work on the idea, development of the practice worldwide, must continue. The Kinnesaw Forum may just ensure that it does.

**Leonard Witt - Dec 5, 2002 9:51 am (#10 Total: 10)**

The Web Forum & The Society

Thanks Jay for the kind words about this web forum. You wrote:

Len, Griff: you might consider how to devote some labor to this.

A simple, "tell us what you are doing...." board (whether it's doing research or doing journalism) puts us way ahead, since there is no one place where that information collects, internationally or in North America.

I think we could definitely make this happen. Do we want to keep this web site centered around public journalism or do we want to devote it-- and perhaps the whole society -- to being a clearinghouse for all ideas and applications that improve the quality of journalism?

I am thinking about Cole Campbell's list of new frameworks for journalism:

Journalism v. media  
Attentiveness v. attention-grabbing  
Civil society v. mass society  
Inquiry v. "news and information"  
Public life v. private interest  
Diversity v. dominant culture

All of these frameworks are elements of public journalism, but they can encompass much more. So are we: the Public Journalism Society -- PJS?

Or are we reporters, editors, academics, devoted to improving

journalism everywhere?

**The PJNet Web Forum Charter Building Forum, Phase I Archive**

**3. Help Establish the Society's Philosophical Foundation**

- Citizens are at the center of democratic self-rule.
- Professions, crafts, institutions, associations and officials act as agents of citizens or serve to increase the direct agency of citizens.
- Therefore journalism derives its authority from acting as an agent of citizens or increasing the agency of citizens.

DISCUSSION STARTERS: Are these premises legitimate? If not, what are the legitimate premises for journalists and journalism educators to study the relationship between journalism and democracy? Are other premises missing? Do most journalists accept these premises? Do they have a shared understanding of what it means to act as agents of citizens or increase the agency of citizens? Do we have a shared understanding of what these terms mean? Does the argument spelled out by these premises subvert the "professional" standing of journalists? If so, does it subvert it in a good way or a bad way for democracy? For engaging journalists in conversation? -- Cole Campbell

**Cole C. Campbell - Nov 19, 2002 11:51 am (#1 Total: 4)**

You can argue that special interests are at the center of democratic self-rule

In fact, many do. The proponents of the pluralist model of democracy say democracy is all about special interest groups clashing over limited resources. The best a citizen can do is sign up with an interest group, cheer on a favorite or sit out the battle and get on with his or her own life untouched by interest-group politics. In this view, the best thing that journalists can do is keep a spotlight on the interest groups, particularly if they are trying to operate under the radar or behind the scenes or [insert your own cliché for sneakiness] so citizens at least (at best?) know the score. This approach may not produce empowered citizens, but it can produce savvy citizens instead of dupes. What's so bad about that?

**Cole C. Campbell - Nov 25, 2002 11:09 am (#2 Total: 4)**

Cross-reference

Check out Tanni Haas' posting Tanni Haas "Help Establish the Society's Goals" 11/25/02 9:54am for the connection between empirical research and philosophical premises.

**Ana María Miralles - Dec 3, 2002 1:26 pm (#3 Total: 4)**

PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION

I think we can build the philosophical foun~~ds~~ of Public Journalism over three ideas:

1. Public journalism is in the context of the relations between Media

and democracy and goes directly to the main idea of the impact of journalism building public sphere-

I would say that to build public sphere through journalism is the objective more related with philosophical foundations of public journalism. For that, to define Public Sphere is crucial for this new Association IAPJ. We have to distinguish two concepts: the public as public sphere and the things (news) to be published. This has been a matter of confusion in journalism for years.

2. After that, other principle that runs parallel to this philosophical foundation is the idea of citizen participation with a citizen agenda in the public space in order to participate more seriously in the competence to have a public agenda which have the inputs of more traditional sectors like policy makers and the media itself. (Wolton)

3. Deliberation extended to the common people as described by Anthony Giddens in Beyond the left and right. Deliberation is a central idea in public journalism and the key to make a difference in building public sphere. Here we can think in recover Habermas (after receiving critics about his first version of Historia y crítica de la opinión pública), Nancy Fraser (whom I think is one of the philosophers that is closer to our idea with her concepts about several public spheres (weak and strong)).

The most serious authors of Public Opinion and Political Communication Theory must be our basis.

**Cole C. Campbell - Dec 4, 2002 5:59 pm (#4 Total: 4)**

Ana, you have named some impressive sources and authors who offer a lot to this conversation. Another challenge will be to make these thinkers accessible to working journalists who have little patience with the elaborate expositions of philosophers.

**The PJNet Web Forum Charter Building Forum, Phase I Archive**

#### **4. Help Name the Society**

DISCUSSION STARTERS: What name conveys the essential purpose and work of this association? What asset value does "public journalism" or "civic journalism" have in general? In locating this work in an historical or research-literature context? What liabilities do these terms have? Should they be embraced or avoided? Why? What name would you give the society and why? -- Cole Campbell

**Cole C. Campbell - Nov 19, 2002 12:05 pm (#1 Total: 31)**

Civic v. public

"Civic journalism" has had two great drivers as a term -- the Pew Center on Civic Journalism and the Civic Journalism Interest Group of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. There has been no institution with "public journalism" in its name -- Jay Rosen, who along with Buzz Merritt promulgated "public journalism," directed the Project on Public Life and the Press.

That said, I prefer public journalism because it taps into a deep and

rich discussion of what constitutes a public, what constitutes public action, that dates back to ancient Greek democracy and blossoms in modern philosophy, feminist discourse and other interesting places. And it reinforces the ties between robust journalism and robust public life.

There is a civic turn to public journalism, and civic mapping is a very useful construct. But civic is a much more limited descriptor.

**Buzz Merritt - Nov 20, 2002 11:32 am (#2 Total: 31)**

more civic v. public

To no one's surprise, I favor "public" if we must call it something-- and I guess we must. Jay and I first talked about "banana" as a non-limiting possibility but rejected it. One reason beyond some small claim of paternity for "public": virtually all the books on the subject use that term. Certainly, we have to settle on one. Ten years of confusion is quite enough. I would hope that this discussion might lead us to a bright new term that nevertheless encompasses the old, but I haven't been able to come up with it.

**Griff Wigley - Nov 22, 2002 10:12 am (#3 Total: 31)**

System Admin

Communitarian Journalism

Buzz wrote: I would hope that this discussion might lead us to a bright new term that nevertheless encompasses the old, but I haven't been able to come up with it.

It's not new, but a Google search on the phrase "communitarian journalism" produces some interesting results.

What might be some of the pros and cons of using the phrase "Communitarian Journalism"?

**Leonard Witt - Nov 22, 2002 10:34 am (#4 Total: 31)**

Remember New Journalism

I was, and still am, a fan of what was called the New Journalism. There was great writing done under that rubric but alas some awful writing too. Problem was the traditional journalists simple did not understand it and attacked it with a vengeance.

Fortunately it did not go away. It has resurfaced under a new name Literary Journalism. (See what Mark Kramer says about it.)

Black Hawk Down , first written at the Philadelphia Inquirer, is a wonderful example of what can happen in newspapers, when experimentation is given a chance.

Too many good things have come out of civic or public journalism to allow its name to tarnish it. As with New Journalism it has always been a work in progress, a continuing experiment. The idea is to drop or

modify what does not work and build upon what does work.

Karmer says, "Literary journalism is a duller term. Its virtue may be its innocuousness." But God Help Us when we have to be innocuous and dull to be accepted.

Of course, neither New Journalism nor Public Journalism are exactly inflammatory phrases. So it really wasn't the terminology that caused the outcry, it was the change, the experimentation.

Still maybe as with New Journalism, Public Journalism must find a name that is less of a lightning rod, but under which the practice, the change, the experimentation continue. So what is that name?

**Cole C. Campbell - Nov 22, 2002 11:05 am (#5 Total: 31)**

Communitarian carries a lot of baggage, too

Griff wrote: It's not new, but a Google search on the phrase "communitarian journalism" produces some interesting results. What might be some of the pros and cons of using the phrase "Communitarian Journalism"?

Communitarianism is a full-blown political philosophy, which is strike 1. (So is libertarianism, which is pretty much the default philosophy behind conventional journalism, but because it is the default philosophy it is invisible as a philosophy and not controversial.)

And many people believe communitarianism carries with it a coercive element -- you must conform to the community standards irrespective of your individual stance. Strike 2.

Strike 3 for me is that communitarianism shifts the focal point from citizen to community. That's a subtle shift, as citizens are effective in communities. But I think it's productive to focus on the relationships between journalists and citizens and the relationships among citizens -- all tangible players, all with relationships that can be identified and worked on -- rather than on the less tangible, more abstract and more process-than-relationship-oriented idea of community. If nothing else, it's easier to ask journalists to think of their default unit of analysis -- reader, listener, viewer, browser -- with a citizen overlay. What happens when you think of these people as citizens, not simply as consumers of your news or of political/public affairs information?

**Leonard Witt - Nov 22, 2002 11:23 am (#6 Total: 31)**

The New & Literary Communitarian Journalism

Griff you asked:

What might be some of the pros and cons of using the phrase "Communitarian Journalism"?

Well it certainly meets the dull and innocuous acceptability threshold mentioned Leonard Witt 11/22/02 10:34am in my earlier post.

How about The New & Literary Communitarian Journalism

**Dennis Foley - Nov 22, 2002 6:55 pm (#7 Total: 31)**

What's in a name?

I've heard Jay Rosen, Buzz Merritt and others say at conferences that we'll know when civic journalism has succeeded when it's just becomes known in newsrooms as journalism.

We could always try "Responsible Journalism."

**Stanford Mukasa - Nov 22, 2002 10:42 pm (#8 Total: 31)**

Community Journalism

I would suggest we revisit the term Community Journalism. It is generic and an appropriate description of what the journalist aims at achieving in a community.

The problem with the term Public is that it is divisive. Public usually refers to a group of people who share a common interest and concerns on an issue at a given point in time. In this case Public is a transient group of individuals who move from one issue to the next. There is no cohesion, no sense of community, as people change allegiances depending on an issue. The notion of public is issue-driven.

Civic tends to be a more functional description on an individual's responsibilities to society. The term tends to de-center the individual and places him/her on the receiving end of prescribed norms and values. Not that this is a bad but the individual is also de-centered and appears to be fulfilling a prescribed function.

The term community on the other hand is more appropriate because it places the individual in a situation where the individual interacts symbiotically with the social structures. This is the essence of a community, where individuals exist as "human agency" capable of influencing and being influenced by the social structures they helped to shape.

Community in the sociological sense undergirds the cohesiveness of societal existence. Unlike Public a community is far from an ad hoc agglomeration of individuals with transient interests on a given issue. But a stable dynamic sum total of individual citizens. Community journalism's function is to maintain that cohesiveness and the common purposiveness of the community.

If the journalists wants to reconnect with society or community then we are looking at community journalism. Here the journalist serves as a communicative and informative engine in the interaction between the human agency on one hand and the social structures on the other hand.

**Buzz Merritt - Nov 23, 2002 10:10 am (#9 Total: 31)**

the name game

I agree with Cole that communitarianism is a full blown political

philosophy and, to my mind, that disqualifies it. "Community" journalism is too limiting and plays to the mistaken notion that public journalism can only be practiced in smaller environments, which is certainly not the case.

**Ken Sands - Nov 23, 2002 1:25 pm (#10 Total: 31)**

Interactive Journalism

OK, this name probably won't work because everyone will automatically assume that it means Web journalism...

But it does get at one of the core practices of Civic or Public Journalism, that the media can facilitate better interaction with readers, between readers, between members of the community.

**Stanford Mukasa - Nov 23, 2002 2:20 pm (#11 Total: 31)**

Community Journalism

Community Journalism is based on the view/concept that a journalist's role extends beyond informing the community about issues and problems. The journalist facilitates debates and resolution of the problems. It does not matter whether it's a small rural community or is based in a large metropolitan area. The advantage with community as a sociological concept is that it gives each member of the community a sense of participation, autonomy and creativity in addressing or dealing with the problems. The journalist becomes a facilitator, encouraging, through follow-up stories, continuing debate and resolution of the problems.

**Cole C. Campbell - Nov 25, 2002 11:14 am (#12 Total: 31)**

Are we naming the field or the society?

I wonder if there is any value in explicitly separating these tasks? It may be too soon -- we may need to continue the discussion of what to call this field before we can usefully resolve what to call the society. Or it may be that the society can have a name that fulfills Len's notion of being low-key and non-inflammatory (Who could object to the "Journalism and Democracy Seminar" or some such?) even as it continues to discuss the proper name, philosophy and practice of what we think of as public/civic/community/[communitarian]/citizen-centered journalism.

**Jay Rosen - Nov 25, 2002 3:23 pm (#13 Total: 31)**

The Power of Naming and the Movement for Public Journalism

Hello, friends.

Naming: what a vexed choice that turned out to be! Ten years ago, when Buzz Merritt and I tossed around adjectives to put before the sacred word journalism for use in our writings, what little we knew about the politics of naming. Really, we were clueless about how obsessed people could become with a name-- public journalism, civic journalism, or (my initial and entirely lame effort) community-connected journalism.

Clueless, but also artless. Let's be honest. Public journalism is not a striking or particularly beautiful name for anything, and civic isn't much better. They are crude devices compared to, say, Students For a Democratic Society, which conveys a sense of motion, or The Federalist Society, with its claim to authority. Abolitionists: you knew what they were for. Public journalists? Well, the best we can say is: you had to find out.

You couldn't easily tell what public journalism (as against...?) meant, which developments in the field were being highlighted. On first hitting the newsroom ear, terms like public this or civic that landed with a mostly institutional thud. They conjured more with the worlds of philanthropy, academia, or good government groups than the daily grind of journalism. Helpless and abstract, they signaled to many working journalists just this: I have more important things to worry about than some fad like that!

That's not how everyone felt, of course. But it was true for a significant cut of the population that in theory might have responded to the movement and its ideas.

Still, public journalism was the best name we found at that point; and while it didn't have beauty, motion, authority or cache, and while it was annoying to journalists impatient with jargon of any kind (except their own), it did have a certain logic and effect.

For when you attach an abstraction to a category term like journalism, you are saying at least one meaningful thing: rethink this in light of that. Revise journalism into a more public activity. That, to me, is about the most we could claim for the semantic good done by either name--civic, public--as common title and newsworthy development.

But this crude device had a second result, deeper down in the professional language and newsroom mind. To say that there is such a thing as civic journalism is to advertise a conclusion earlier reached: that journalism is a plural pursuit, there are different ways of going about it, different philosophies about what's worth doing or trying in daily, metropolitan journalism, different lines you can draw marking off the forbidden from the permitted.

There was, it was claimed by some, another advanced style of professional practice, another kind of journalism different enough to be called--with straight face--"civic" or "public" as against... as against...

As against what? Here we find the origins of the movement "against" civic journalism, or since that's too strong a term, let's say the reaction in the mainstream mind against. For the true and honest answer to "...as against what?" was too long and too contentious to get across in most cases. Were one to try, it would go like something this:

"That's right, public journalism, as against... well, the overly professionalized, intellectually cautious, needlessly uniform and not very creative practices then constraining what most mainstream editors and reporters did everyday, along with the honorable principles, legitimating ideas, popular catch phrases, and mental habits that lie behind them."

After a while, people who got mixed up in public journalism began calling its implied opposite "traditional" journalism. ("Traditional"... ugh... another lifeless and artless term) Maybe it is better known as the American newsroom's common mind. Public journalism was a movement within that common mind, from which it proposed to differ, but then not completely.

more...

**Jay Rosen - Nov 25, 2002 3:26 pm (#14 Total: 31)**

Part Two of a really long post... The Power of Naming

But what if the most striking characteristic of "traditional" journalism was the belief in its own singularity, its claim to sole or even universal legitimacy within the professional tribe? I hadn't considered this when I started working in this area. But I have since.

When you listened to someone like Michael Gartner speak to a group like the American Society of Newspaper Editors you heard a man in total command of the language and mores of his tribe. He could narrate things from inside the common mind of the American Editor, which is someone he arguably is. There was zero distance between him and his audience, something I was strongly aware of when I had to question him once before the ASNE.

Public journalism, civic journalism, community-centered journalism-- these terms could not be more grating or fatuous to someone like Gartner. First, they offended his ear, and Michael Gartner has a great ear. Then, when he found out what they allegedly meant, the goings on in and around the "movement," (ugh) he felt even worse. This wasn't a bad variety of something he recognized as journalism. This was something set against what Journalism and Good Editing were ever about.

Efforts in the name of civic journalism weren't bad ideas, said Mike. They were frauds, almost like pyramid schemes in the way they come around during tough times. Public journalism's well touted projects were so confused, as professional practice, that they actually mixed up journalism with stuff like passing public legislation, which as a category mistake could be rated M for "moronic."

This is the kind of rhetorical method Gartner and others took up when commenting on public journalism, and it's a fascinating, complicated, and historically massive thing. By the 1990's, American journalists had essentially spent 100 years developing the common mind that made for the professional culture you saw in action at, say, meetings of the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

Start in the mid 19th century, take independence from faction, graft on scientific notions of objectivity, blend with neutral professionalism (a clean practice) to set against corrupt politics (a dirty one), infuse with Progressive ideals and evasions, toss in interpretation (permissible to counter McCarthy-like deception by news release), add the watchdog function as basic to a re-written First Amendment, swirl in the grand mythology of Watergate and the adversarial culture that emerged on either side of 1974, somewhere along the way add "news

analysis" to what journalists do, plus nostalgia for shoe-leather reporting in an age of desk bound reporting and then you bake that mixture into J-school text books, Pulitzer Prizes, ASNE conference programs, Investigative Reporters and Editors, newsroom routines, press clubs for local tribes and a thousand other practical containers. Top with "first rough draft of history" icing and serve: this is the professional way.

That "thing" I have just described does exist, I believe. (Of course, I cannot prove it.) But it's not quite right--not elegant, either--to call it a mindset. It's deeper: a religion that lives in in the professional mind and culture-- an extremely successful religion, claiming huge numbers of followers, with its own patron saints, an elite or priestly class, plus rank and file. It even has excommunication, as in: Jim Fallows, you're no journalist!

Which is why I think public journalism is best understood today as a breakaway church, emerging like so many movements before it in places considered provincial by some. When you have a strong church--and larger than life pastors like Gene Roberts--any quarrel over dogma is potentially significant, especially one that strikes elite believers as blasphemy.

Now the "new" church (which of course claims its own strong grip on traditional goods in journalism but interprets them differently) needs a professional society. Well, that is how Americans do things.

more

**Jay Rosen - Nov 25, 2002 3:30 pm (#15 Total: 31)**

Part Three of a really long post... The Power of Naming

Let's have our society. We've come this far with a flawed and clunky title like "public journalism." Most of the costs of adopting it have been paid. It at least does battle with what Buzz Merritt used to call, "One Journalism."

That's a way bigger deal than I thought at the time.

Society of Public Journalists or something like it gets my vote.

Cheers, everyone....

Jay Rosen

What Are Journalists For? (Yale University Press, 1999)

**Cole C. Campbell - Nov 25, 2002 3:53 pm (#16 Total: 31)**

Public journalism as heresy

From Art Kleiner, "The Age of Heretics: Heroes, Outlaws, and the Forerunners of Corporate Change" (New York: Currency/Doubleday, 1996), page x:

"New truths," said Thomas Huxley, "begin as heresies." He was defending Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection. He might have added that

new heresies also begin as truths. A heretic is someone who sees a truth that contradicts the conventional wisdom of the institution -- and remains loyal to both entities, to the institution and the new truth. Heretics are not apostates; they do not want to leave the "church." Instead, they want the church to change, to meet the truths that they have seen halfway.

**Neil Heinen - Nov 26, 2002 3:36 pm (#17 Total: 31)**

Fill In The Blank Journalism

I went to retrieve some notes from my files and found while I have been using the phrase public journalism for some time now my file was labeled civic journalism. So I'm not as clear on this as I'd like to think. Public journalism does seem established to me: the battle has been fought and there's no need to fight it again. A substantial number of viewers and readers and listeners know what public journalism means. Instead of trying to rename it let's focus on doing it well. The better we do it, the more popular the name. I do think we will need to recognize that the name implies a more expansive definition than we might all share. The domain extends beyond traditional practitioners of journalism of any name. Two of the most impressive winners of this year's Batten awards were GothamGazette.com and Picture Projects. We can probably get away with referring to both as Citizen-based Journalism for now. But both are really public journalism in the truest sense of the word. So I reiterate the need to include like-minded civic thinkers, and writers and film-makers, and web-artists and students, to participate in our discussions and our society.

**Cole C. Campbell - Nov 26, 2002 3:59 pm (#18 Total: 31)**

Which brings us to another definition...

I agree with Neil that the conversation will be enriched by including "like-minded civic thinkers, and writers and film-makers, and web-artists and students" (and I agree with Cheryl Gibbs about including scholars from outside journalism). Both of these notions of inclusions introduce the question of the larger definition: Defining journalism. That might be useful to grounding this discussion and the proposed society.

**Jan Schaffer - Nov 26, 2002 4:07 pm (#19 Total: 31)**

SPJ??

The Pew Center has just relocated to the University of Maryland and I am free to begin participating in some of these discussions.

Historically, I have been the practical person here, so I must ask: do we really want a moniker with the acronym SPJ? I would urge us to consider something more distinctive -- and something that will not be confused with the very traditional Society of Professional Journalists.

I don't care whether the name contains civic or public. But, again and again in entries to the Batten Awards and in proposals for funding, we saw editors intermingling the concepts of public journalism and good public affairs reporting. I, for one, don't believe they are the same

thing. But it's an easy out for editors to claim that a good investigative series is "public journalism."

Cole Campbell, a few years ago, suggested a name that has always stuck with me: CRE, for Civic Reporters and Editors. at.

By the way, reach the Pew Center now at 301-985-4020.

**Leonard Witt - Nov 29, 2002 6:18 pm (#20 Total: 31)**

Learn from Corporate America

Since Public Journalism seems to have a image problem, we have to borrow from the best minds in corporate America.

You just make a few name adjustments and then add a catchy slogan.

So here is my entry:

The Public Journalism Society, which we then we reduce down to its lowest common denominator, its acronym:

PJs

Then finally we add a slogan:

PJs: Advancing Democracy So America Can Sleep Better

Now will Mainstream Media finally accept us?

**Jay Rosen - Dec 2, 2002 11:13 am (#21 Total: 31)**

CRE could be an effective title; a word about the word practical

I like Jan's suggestion, via Cole Campbell: Civic Reporters and Editors has some logic to it. We would be wise to consult the success of the group whose name is echoed here. Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE) is, in my view, the most vital and successful professional organization in journalism.

What are the reasons? I would begin with the nature of the commitment IRE members share. They are passionate about a particular form or "container" for journalism, and the people who crowd the lobbies and hallways at IRE conferences are pretty clear about what they are there for: to advance investigative reporting. This commitment to a (named) style of reportage involves, certainly, the techniques of investigative work and means for its effective practice. It's about craft, if you will. But the spirit of thousands who gather at yearly IRE conventions moves well beyond the how-to headset. It's also the social good and political magic that are believed to lie in investigative work.

Such strong beliefs make for an effective civil society and that is one thing IRE is: a society of believers joined by an heroic ideal of what journalism can at best be. This is not just a "theory." The IRE story-- "How to Do Good with the Power of the Press But Remain a Neutral Force in Polics"--has history behind it; it pulses with cultural power in names like Dustin Hoffman and Robert Redford, Bob Woodward and Carl

Berstein.

What's a home run to this crowd? Not just the exposure of wrongdoing, error, waste or ruin, but an investigation so powerfully rendered, a case so effectively proven ("nailed") that public bodies have to take notice and act. Not just the crime uncovered but the indictments and convictions. Not just the scandal but acts of legislative repair triggered by the four-part series on.... Pulitzers go more easily to work that accomplished something. Everyone knows this.

The trick is to sculpt yourself into politics, but in a plausibly "neutral" shape.

The IRE model is brilliant rhetorically, because it shows how the press can be an active agent, a political actor of sorts, and yet not too activist. Journalism is rendered heroic and effective without being "for" one side or tool to another. These are very evident strengths. IRE is a faith-based organization. That's why it's so effective. You can feel that binding faith in the hallways, which is doubly effective because connected to occasional use of a very real power: the front page expose, the Frontline in prime time. It's magic, when it works. Journalism and politics combine for social progress.

In addition, IRE has very wisely sunk academic roots by claiming a home at University of Missouri, where there is found both a professional culture of journalism and an academic culture of reflection and research. Ideally, IRE lies midway between. The organization is named for practitioners, the people who are, in fact, Investigative Reporters and Editors. But it welcomes those who study and teach. This too is ideal.

It seems, then, that on all these levels we are doing something similar. Whatever we end up calling it, "this" is likewise a faith-based organization; and I get rather prickly when someone starts to suggest to me that digging out and learning to speak the philosophy of CRE, IRE, SPJ, ASNE, NABJ is anything but a practical task.

Knowing what your philosophy is and how it "works" is the most practical kind of work anyone who cares about journalism can be doing. Not teaching the skills of reflection is malpractice if you're training people to go out and do journalism. It simply will not do to keep alive our witless and exhausted divisions between thinking about and doing the work in any key genre of journalism. I spend 50 percent of my time now trying to get the faculty I teach with to retire any such distinction-- in other words, to grow up. I'm trying to learn how to do it myself.

more...

**Jay Rosen - Dec 2, 2002 11:40 am (#22 Total: 31)**

Civic Reporters and Editors, cont.

I spent time at a number of Pew Center events, which I thought wholly worthwhile because they were under the surface great philosophical journeys, disguised in your program as best practice sessions for hard-headed newsroom folk. I loved this, and look forward to more from Jan's

base in the university

In my 45 visits to newsrooms over the years this is what I thought I was doing as a practical Joe myself: get some best practices talk going for newsroom thinkers who had a paper to put out-- you know, that day. Of course, that same day they had intellectual puzzles to sort out. Tell me truly: was that "practical" work or a floating seminar in press philosophy? By now I know my own answer well: who in blazes cares?

Society of Civic Reporters and Editors: SCRE. Or just Civic Reporters and Editors. I would be proud to be a member of that group, in the philosophy division or among the hardhats. I'd expect to see any of you in either wing. You're all believers, all doers. All are philosophers and poets, as well as journalists. What unites you is your commitment.

**Leonard Witt - Dec 2, 2002 1:55 pm (#23 Total: 31)**

IRE vs. CARE

First a comment about the acronym IRE, here is what is written at the Investigative Reporters and Editors website. At the organization's organizing meeting in 1975: "Les Whitten asserted that what most characterizes the investigative reporter is "a sense of outrage."

"During the course of the meeting (and with the help of a dictionary), it was determined that the simplicity of Investigative Reporters and Editors and the resultant acronym, IRE, seemed to fit such an association."

If outrage is the motivating force behind IRE, I think the motivating force behind the Civic Reporters and Editors is a sense of caring. We care about public life, we care about democratic institutions, we care about the state of journalism today and we care about our communities.

Being among investigative reporters and editors at work is like being in a war room. The modus operandi is deconstruct and attack. It is us against them. Finally, as Jay Rosen says above, the supreme act is to "nail 'em".

Our society of Civic Reporters and Editors is more analogous to a nonviolence peace movement. We want change, but we want it by reaching out rather than by knocking down. We want to build alliances rather than go on the offensive. We want to discover what works and what doesn't and build on the positive.

Although our modus operandi is almost the opposite of the IRE, in the end, we both want the same thing, a society and a democracy that works better. American journalism needs the IRE; it also needs us.

So, calling the society: Civic Academics, Reporters and Editors, would give us CARE. I know CARE sounds soft in comparison to the hard-edged IRE, and it is used too often, but if not CARE, then what other acronym might more closely deliver our messages as quickly as the acronym IRE does for investigative reporters and editors.

Also adding academics to the society's name in CARE would be in keeping with an IRE tradition which allows both journalists and active

journalism professors to be voting members of its society. Unlike the IRE which, at least in name, keeps its academics out of public view, we should be proud to let the world know exactly who we are and what we stand for.

**Leonard Witt - Dec 2, 2002 5:33 pm (#24 Total: 31)**

Try These

If CARE doesn't work, there seems to be plenty of word combinations to play with plus some nice vowels.

Society, Alliance, Association, Civic, Public, Reporters, Editors, International.

Here are a few tries:

ACRE

Association of Civic Reporters and Editors

SPEAR

Society of Public Editors And Reporters

**Stanford Mukasa - Dec 2, 2002 6:48 pm (#25 Total: 31)**

Community journalism

At the risk of sounding repetitious let me say we need to go back to the grass roots, to the basics, the community. It is a very basic form of human organization. It carries within it the essence of creativity and individual initiative. It is where individual initiative sum totals group cohesion and work. This is where the journalist belongs, a community where everybody who is anybody is an active participant in community based efforts at development and progress.

Above all the notion of community defines who we are and what we do, namely, reconnect with, and be part of, the community.

Whether we engage in civic education, investigative reporting, communications research, etc. We are all ultimately grounded in the community.

Public and civic are political constructs. Community is a generic form of human organization and purposive engagement.

I say we vote for community because it holds the promise of what we are trying to achieve. It is not a fancy or commercialized term but reflects us at our most basic configuration.

**Jan Schaffer - Dec 3, 2002 10:20 am (#26 Total: 31)**

Civic Journalism Venture Group?

One thing we've learned in training civic journalists is that journalists hate almost any labels applied to themselves. They will label others -- liberal, conservative, moderates, front runners, etc. - - just don't label them.

A name like CRE might benefit from its likeness to IRE and it's simple.

I've always appreciated the dynamic inventiveness of civic journalists and would welcome a name that would invoke some of the creativity and risk-taking. Although no perfect acronym comes to mind, Civic Journalism Venture Group, evokes some of the feel... but others may have some thoughts here....

Communitarian is a very loaded word for most journalists. Community journalism speaks to a lot of what very small newspapers do, but it's not always civic.

ACRE, as an acronym, belongs to some other groups. As does CARE, a international anti-poverty consortium.

**Tom Warhover - Dec 3, 2002 1:15 pm (#27 Total: 31)**

CRE -- the ACLJ of journalism

I've never worried too much over the distinction between civic and public. Both work for me -- everyone seems to know that we're talking about "that movement" when those names are invoked, even if they don't have a clue as to what it all might be about.

Community journalism, as Jan notes, too often is confused by the journalism done by small newspapers since before Mr. Mencken was born. Much of it is public journalism, but not all, and not all with the same reflection and intent even when the outcomes are similar. (If metros need to worry about getting the connections right, community newspapers often still need to worry about keeping those separations.)

Soon as I saw CRE, I thought of the ACLJ. You know, Pat Robertson's response to the ACLU. Robertson set up the ACLJ as an antidote to that liberal loving organization of lawyers.

I worry that CRE would also be seen as to a response to/opponent of IRE. Of course, in some ways, public journalism is. But I hope it's a heckuva lot more than that.

I would suggest getting back to the original offering: Society of Professional Journalists. Yes, SPJ is problematic. But is the Professional Journalists' Society, or PJS?

**Ana María Miralles - Dec 3, 2002 1:26 pm (#28 Total: 31)**

NAME THE SOCIETY

I propose: International Association of Public Journalism: IAPJ  
I strongly recommend the word INTERNATIONAL since outside USA the PJ has been growing a lot.  
And why PUBLIC and not CIVIC journalism? Just because if we want a real international association PUBLIC is better than CIVIC. The word Civic has another connotation in other places different to USA. Instead, PUBLIC means what it means almost everywhere.

**Kathy Campbell - Dec 3, 2002 10:58 pm (#29 Total: 31)**

Just for fun

and especially for Jan:

How about JGJG: the Just Good Journalism Group!

On a more serious note, I was really struck by Jay's notions of movement and commitment that a name can evoke. I'd love to see something that says "Journalists for . . ." or building on Ana Maria's idea: International Association for Public Journalism.

Kathy

**Leonard Witt - Dec 4, 2002 5:33 pm (#30 Total: 31)**

The International Organization

Ana, there are lots of organizations that are global, which never use the word Global or International in their title.

I am much more interested in figuring out what our mission is on an international level. Is it to spread what we are practicing in the United States, is it figuring out a kind of civic journalism that works for every journalist everywhere or is it basically to build a philosophical model that can then be applied everywhere? Or is it simply a platform to exchange ideas? Or an organization to run workshops and then exchange ideas?

**Cole C. Campbell - Dec 4, 2002 5:49 pm (#31 Total: 31)**

We have a lot to learn from international journalists

It's true that public journalism has been a United States phenomenon that journalists around the world have been drawn to, but I think there is much that North American journalists can learn from our colleagues around the globe who have different experiences with and insights into democracy based on their country's experiences.

Ana, you're keeping us with an eye on the big picture -- that's what we need! Thanks.

**The PJNet Web Forum Charter Building Forum, Phase I Archive**

##### **5. Converse with the Big Picture, Comprehensive Thinkers**

What should the charter say (if anything) about the following:

Values: Democratic values, professional values, philosophical underpinnings of either

Structures and systems: Politics, markets/economics, culture, professional culture

- New frameworks for journalism:
- Journalism v. media
- Attentiveness v. attention-grabbing

- Civil society v. mass society
- Inquiry v. "news and information"
- Public life v. private interest
- Diversity v. dominant culture

DISCUSSION EXPANDERS: What else should a charter encompass or address? What other documents - bylaws, for example - should complement a charter? Should the charter's tone be informational and explanatory - the 5 Ws and an H of the organization - or should it be inspiring and evocative, a treatise on the threats and opportunities facing journalism and facing democracy? -- Cole Campbell

**Leonard Witt - Nov 19, 2002 9:56 am (#1 Total: 9)**

Committee of Concerned Journalists

New frameworks for journalism:

Journalism v. media  
 Attentiveness v. attention-grabbing  
 Civil society v. mass society  
 Inquiry v. "news and information"  
 Public life v. private interest  
 Diversity v. dominant culture

These frameworks, it seems to me, are similar to the concerns of the Committee of Concerned Journalists  
<http://www.journalism.org/who/ccj/about.asp>  
 Its web site says, "1,900 people, including journalists, writers, editors, producers, educators and more" have signed up at the CCJ site. How can we as civic journalists tap into that powerful consortium?

**Griff Wigley - Nov 19, 2002 10:55 am (#2 Total: 9)**

System Admin

Committee of Concerned Journalists

Len wrote: How can we as civic journalists tap into that powerful consortium?

Len, in what ways is that signup list at CCJ a "powerful consortium" -- by their numbers or their influence or... ?

**Leonard Witt - Nov 19, 2002 11:08 am (#3 Total: 9)**

Ask Wally Dean

The Committee of Concerned Journalists  
<http://www.journalism.org/who/ccj/about.asp> is powerful in both numbers and influence. Influence, that is, if it asserts itself.

We have to get Wally Dean, he is interested in this discussion, to comment. Early on he worked for the Pew Center for Civic Journalism <http://www.pewcenter.org> and now works for the CCJ.

I am extremely interested in hearing his comments.

**Cole C. Campbell - Nov 19, 2002 12:17 pm (#4 Total: 9)**

The Committee and the Project on Excellence in Journalism

Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel, heads of the Committee of Concerned Journalists and the Project on Excellence in Journalism respectively, have been interested in public journalism and quite cordial to public journalists. They even have appropriated some language from public journalism -- especially frequent references to citizens -- in "The Elements of Journalism." But their conception of citizen is fairly limited. The book positions citizens as informed consumers and potential allies of journalists in resisting corporate incursions. That's OK as far as it goes, but it does not give citizens any standing to define what good journalism is, to say what they need from journalism. The committee and the project favor professional discipline over market discipline, but they have little to say about democratic discipline -- which can suffer from an overdose of either market or professional prerogatives.

**Dennis Foley - Nov 22, 2002 4:32 pm (#5 Total: 9)**

Inspirational

While I imagine we'll need some by-laws and informational aspects in our charter, I urge an inspirational statement as our "preamble" or "declaration." We need to let people know immediately our point of view and what we stand for. Speaking from personal experience as to why I've been on this journey for a decade, and on how I have seen others embrace "the movement," the articulation of beliefs, the questioning, is what taps into the yearning I believe is out there among many journalists for deep contemplation of why we do what we do. I also recommend we explicitly state our ethical stance. I'm also interested in the framings at the beginning of the post because I need to understand them better. I also wonder if we should address competing theoretical views of the press role, such as libertarian vs. social responsibility.

**Cole C. Campbell - Nov 25, 2002 11:16 am (#6 Total: 9)**

What breathes hope into you?

What message would be inspiring?

**Leonard Witt - Nov 29, 2002 8:01 pm (#7 Total: 9)**

Middle Class Newsrooms Covering Diverse Cultures

Cole and Dennis above ask what message would inspire us? I would vote for what messages inspire us.

For me the message would center around how middle class newsroom can best cover diverse communities. Can those newsrooms produce stories that would cause diverse communities to say afterwards: You got it right? You do understand? This is not pandering. It is serious journalism that goes deep into a community and understands its

textures, relationships and complexities.

Civic Mapping is a starting point, but there is so much work to still be done.

Getting the voices and ideas in those communities heard is only one part of public journalism. Yet understanding communities, especially disenfranchised communities, is what inspires me.

If there were five, ten or maybe 20 journalists, academics and citizens with the same interest who were similarly inspired, we could make a difference for readers and disenfranchised communities by improving the practice of journalism.

Other groups of five or ten could take on the issues that inspire them. Positive change would occur, but it would be a slow process. However, the alternative is business as usual and that simply is not good enough.

**Jan Schaffer - Dec 11, 2002 3:01 pm (#8 Total: 9)**

Innovations and drive-by shootings

I would hope that one of the goals of the new society would be to foster responsible journalistic innovations that connect with community.

For me, that has been a hallmark of civic journalism. Civic newsrooms have shown an appetite for trying new things, even if they were not blessed by the College of Cardinals. The level of creativity -- and courage -- is quite a legacy.

Of concern to me, as these discussions progress, is what appears to be an aspiration to join the College of Cardinals. One of the problems with joining any "club" is that you must adhere to the rules, so to speak.

I would urge you all to consider whether there is enough oxygen there for civic journalism. It will never be embraced by some of the Cardinals. So be it.

I agree that Rosenstiel and Kovach appropriate some citizen language in their "Elements" book and I genuinely welcome that. But I don't find them to be solid supporters of civic journalism. Quite the contrary.

If you look the first edition of their book, civic journalism was the victim of a rather bad drive-by shooting.

I personally got Rosenstiel to rework that language in later editions. I'm glad he did, but it took considerable effort.

**Leonard Witt - Dec 11, 2002 4:42 pm (#9 Total: 9)**

Think Like the Quakers

Jan, you and Cole and Jay have all made the religion of journalism analogies. So I will jump in too. Think of the The Religious Society of

Friends. They are hardly a blip compared to the numbers in all organized religion. Unlike other religions there is no Quaker theology and no Cardinals, priests or even ministers. Everyone is equal. Their unifying mission is centered around peace.

Yet, leaderless and small in numbers they have affected big change over the last couple of hundred years. Women's rights, prison reform, abolition of slavery were all greatly influenced by Quaker thought and action. They are still an extremely powerful force in the world peace movement. And have stayed the course through all our wars even when being a peace advocate was not exactly the accepted norm.

So don't worry about the oxygen. Or the Cardinals. Just worry about what is right and just and move forward in that direction. Everything else will take care of itself.

1. The Public Journalism movement made a great question on traditional journalism problematic practices. In this sense, PJ has been like epistemology of journalism questioning liberal journalism philosophy and practices.

2. Public Journalism movement has contributed to consolidate the concept and practice of Citizen Agenda.

3. PJ movement's most important contribution (As I see) has been to open the discussion about the real role of journalism in democracy and public sphere.

4. PJ has promoted group work between journalists and media that were supposed to be rivals.

5. PJ has contributed to re-create the idea of deliberation with the participation of common people in the public space, quoting the importance of common people knowledge about ordinary life very connected to Public Agenda.

#### **The PJNet Web Forum Charter Building Forum, Phase I Archive**

#### **6. What Will We Need to Make the Society Thrive?**

For civic journalism to keep evolving it will need a critical core of journalists, who have a formal mechanism through which to share thoughts and ideas on theory and practice.

Often with other areas within the journalism industry, those functions are provided by specific professional organizations. They include groups like the American Association of Sunday and Feature Editors, IRE, Association of Health Care Journalists, Association of Food Journalists, etc. They are many and varied.

They are held together by their common identities as food writers, feature editors, sports editors, ombudsmen, managing editors, investigative reporters, etc. However, there are only a few people in newsrooms with the title of civic journalist and, in fact, the trend seems to be moving towards having fewer people with that title rather than more.

DISCUSSION STARTERS: How do you form a journalistic organization with traditional trappings when journalists might not even know how to self identify themselves as would-be members. Of course, we must determine if there is a big enough base of journalists who believe in the tenets of civic journalism and who would be willing to join a professional organization. If they could be identified, that would be a giant step forward. One would surmise, at least initially, the enthusiasm of its charter members might be more important than numbers. For example, there is often only one ombudsman at each paper and yet they have a vibrant professional group. However, they do have a firm identity. -- Leonard Witt

**Cole C. Campbell - Nov 20, 2002 6:52 am (#1 Total: 7)**

We know who we are

Len,

I think this society should be for journalists who in fact already identify themselves as interested in the relationship between journalism and democracy, who have been on the journey or realize they want to go on the journey to explore this relationship.

Why did you begin this work? Why did I? In most cases, journalists drawn to this work have experienced readers/listeners/viewers expressing their alienation from our journalism and have tried to figure out why that alienation occurs and what we can do about it.

It's easier to identify oneself than to identify colleagues on the same journey. So this society would be a place to meet and greet fellow travelers and to move further along the path together through conversation, brainstorming, experiment, reflection, etc.

**Leonard Witt - Nov 20, 2002 9:09 am (#2 Total: 7)**

What's Your Interest in Civic Journalism?

All Participants:

Cole has an excellent idea. What if each person who comes to this forum tells what has drawn him or her towards civic journalism or to the idea of journalism and democracy or to journalistic reform. It would be a great tool for helping the Charter drafters understand what motivates would-be members. I will write my motivations in my next post, but what about the rest of you: What motivates you?

**Dennis Foley - Nov 22, 2002 4:18 pm (#3 Total: 7)**

Motivation

The civic journalism movement, which I happened across when Kettering sent me Harwood's "Main Street" report 10 years ago, articulated what had been bothering me for a long time about reporting on government and politics -- and about the general public outcries about dirty politics, untrustworthy government officials, the tainting effects of money, and mudslinging campaigns.

Harwood's work "rang true" to my optimistic/idealistic views about how elected officials and government workers ought to be public servants. In many ways, I viewed journalism the same way, as public service. The 10 year journey as a civic journalist has not changed my view, but it has helped me understand the relationships among journalists, elected/government officials/interest groups/advocates and citizens.

I've also learned the power that comes from changing your behavior and how that can affect the way others behave to you. In work assignments, I moved from a politics editor trying to create pragmatic ways of using civic journalism concepts in our coverage of elections and government, to the newspaper's ombudsman, where I heard plenty from readers about how they see the role and performance of journalists.

No, I have moved to reporting on county government, with some politics thrown in. My optimism remains, tempered by the realities/pragmatics of journalism and the "real world," with occasional bouts of frustration/despair. But never cynicism. Cynicism by the public, politicians and the press seems to me to be the most formidable obstacle.

Harwood's early work suggested people would participate in democracy if given a real chance to make difference. Journalists have a tremendous role and responsibility to cover their communities in ways that accurately reveals the breadth and depth of community life in the public arena. My work as ombudsman and journalist has convinced me there is one particular role everybody -- public, press, politician -- undisputedly assigns journalists: watchdog.

The essential question is how well we serve our watchdog role. I'm not fussed about whether our journalism is public, civic, communitarian, new or "good, old-fashioned" journalism as the critics like to claim. Rather, the question is whether journalists have limited their vision and failed to acknowledge that we are not just a community watchdogs, or government watchdogs, or the watchdogs of power, of the afflictors of the comfortable. We are democracy's watchdogs. That's how "the Framers" drew it up, albeit reluctantly.

So the behavior we choose has to flow from answering the questions surrounding how well we act as democracy's watchdogs. That's my motivation, grounded firmly in the continued belief that one person can make a difference, and, by extension, that a whole bunch of people working collectively can make a big difference.

**Cole C. Campbell - Nov 25, 2002 11:18 am (#4 Total: 7)**

Democracy's Watchdogs

Maybe this is the society's name.

Who let the dogs out?

**Griff Wigley - Nov 27, 2002 10:16 am (#5 Total: 7)**

System Admin

Via email from Edmund Lambeth <lambethe@missouri.edu>

It's difficult to summarize my position on civic journalism in a few words. The movement has provided a significant body of experience and innovation that can be mined and refined to good advantage for both the public and American journalism.

I'm not sure I have a settled judgment on how that can best be done. But I believe a cooperating network of research/reflection/and action centers would help, especially if they were established at a number of distinguished journalism and mass communication organizations. A major, 10-year demonstration and research grant from a major foundation would be a boon to the work of such a network.

Alternately, the applied research network could be designed around cooperative media of different sizes and at different regions of the country, working with the network. To bring off such a second phase in the civic journalism movement would require intellectual energy, personal commitment and pragmatic imagination.

Were such a movement to develop, I would wish it well and do what I could to contribute. My glance at the website tells me that you are off to a promising start. Jay Rosen, Buzz Merritt, Cole Campbell, Lewis Friedland, Kathy Campbell, Jan Schaffer, as you know, are among the many highly talented academicians and professionals on your task force.

**Ana María Miralles - Dec 3, 2002 1:28 pm (#6 Total: 7)**

WHAT WILL WE NEED TO MAKE THE SOCIETY THRIVE?

Here are some ideas:

1. To have financial support, international preferably (Ford Foundation, Neumann Foundation, etc) in order to reinforce the movement in other places inside and beyond USA borders, where movement is still growing.
2. To post in a web of our new Association PJ projects or experiences in course everywhere.
3. To write articles, conduct researchs.
4. To have an annual general meeting with a big seminar about PJ in theory and practice.
5. To participate in seminars or meetings about political culture and public sphere with PJ papers.
6. To create an Observatory (or something like that) to measure the quality of practices close to the idea of PJ.

**Leonard Witt - Dec 4, 2002 5:46 pm (#7 Total: 7)**

Let's Build on the List

Ann, starts a good list above. We should all try to add to it. What will this organization need to thrive?

Just something as simple as small cells where like minded people come together via telephone on a fixed time schedule to discuss ideas and then share with everyone else.

Perhaps each year we start one big national project with links to papers and news organizations everywhere. Public Radio did that with its America 9-11 One Year Later project. It allowed a lot of small places to leverage their work into a massive, very impressive project.

#### **The PJNet Web Forum Charter Building Forum, Phase I Archive**

### **7. The Lounge**

The Lounge is a place to chit-chat, socialize, chew the fat, and shoot the bull with your colleagues. Help yourself to the coffee and snacks. Step outside for smoking, though. Start new discussion topics on any subject, any time of the night or day.

Post a note to let others know you've arrived. Welcome and/or harrass the newcomers.

**Keisha Hoerrner - Nov 18, 2002 4:03 pm (#1 Total: 33)**

Welcome to KSU!

As a colleague of Len Witt's in the Department of Communication at Kennesaw State, I would just like to welcome you to this forum. We look forward to the interchange of ideas and the wealth of viewpoints that are sure to be represented in the coming days.

We are so pleased to have Professor Witt on our faculty to share his expertise and enthusiasm for civic journalism. Thank you for taking the time to provide your expertise as well.

Keisha L. Hoerrner, Ph.D.

**Griff Wigley - Nov 18, 2002 4:34 pm (#2 Total: 33)**

System Admin

Greetings, Keisha, kudos for being the first to post... and thanks for doing a beta test for us.

**Griff Wigley - Nov 19, 2002 6:40 am (#3 Total: 33)**

System Admin

And as the online facilitator for this forum, I'd also like to welcome everyone.

I did a few of these web forums with Len Witt when he was at MN Public Radio and it's a treat for me to be working with him again. He's actually not half-bad to work with.

So grab something to drink (The Lounge is open 24 hours), greet your colleagues, and then head to the discussion topics whenever you're ready.

And if you have questions about these message boards, feel free to post them here. Or contact me by clicking on my name in the header.

**Yohtaro Hamada - Nov 19, 2002 7:13 am (#4 Total: 33)**

Hello from Tokyo

This is Yohtaro Hamada, a reporter of Japanese newspaper. Just want to say hello from Tokyo. I will be serving as a co-chair of International Liaison Committee. If you ever have a chance to visit Tokyo, I promise to welcome you here.

**Griff Wigley - Nov 19, 2002 7:20 am (#5 Total: 33)**

System Admin

Hi Yohtaro, glad you could make it. It's still early on Tuesday here in the US altho you're probably getting ready for bed.

**Cole C. Campbell - Nov 19, 2002 7:39 am (#6 Total: 33)**

Greetings from Chicago

Good morning from the Windy City.

This is Cole Campbell. I'm chairing the Charter Committee, the work of which is being done on this forum. My job is to get the discussion started, contribute along with everybody else, then pull everything together in a document that can be reviewed and revised face to face at Kennesaw State in January.

I look forward to a robust conversation on line and, later, in person.

Thanks!

**Griff Wigley - Nov 19, 2002 10:30 am (#7 Total: 33)**

System Admin

Hi Cole, good to have you here in the Lounge.

And thanks for all the prelim work on the intro pieces on the discussion topics.

**Leonard Witt - Nov 19, 2002 10:38 am (#8 Total: 33)**

Welcome from Kennesaw State University

Hi Everyone:

Our team <http://www.kennesawsummit.kennesaw.edu/meettheteam.htm> at Kennesaw State University has been busy setting up the web site <http://www.kennesawsummit.kennesaw.edu> and this forum. We are looking forward to the discussion.

By the way, I have visited the Field of Dreams

<http://www.fieldofdreamsmoviesite.com/distance.html> in Dyersville, Iowa, so I believe in the axiom: If You Build It, They Will Come.

**Neil Heinen - Nov 19, 2002 6:07 pm (#9 Total: 33)**

From The Broadcast Committee

This is Neil Heinen, Chair of the Broadcast Committee, entering the Lounge. Feels good in here. As one of many wearers of several hats in this bunch I sure like the idea of looking at the demand side of public journalism. My hunch is I'm having more success with my students at Edgewood College examining journalism in public life than with the journalists at WISC TV in providing it. The magic of course is in the juxtaposition of the two. And consider me squarely on board Cole's proposal to include civic leaders and "the public" in this journey. There's some sound thinking about this going on outside the newsroom and the classroom.

**Cole C. Campbell - Nov 19, 2002 9:49 pm (#10 Total: 33)**

Hi Neil

I'm looking forward to learning more about your work with students and broadcasters in the course of this forum discussion.

**Buzz Merritt - Nov 20, 2002 11:43 am (#11 Total: 33)**

a new face?

Buzz Merritt here. I hope really old guys can play, as I'm looking forward to all of this, including January.

**Kathy Campbell - Nov 20, 2002 2:35 pm (#12 Total: 33)**

Everything's ducky in Oregon

Hi! Kathy Campbell checking in from Eugene. I'll be the academic liaison as we try to put all this together. Some related news: a small group of Oregon dailies is putting together a civic journalism project on our horrendous state budget problems; JoNel Aleccia, a working journalist and one of our graduate students here at the University of Oregon, is heading the project. I'm hopeful that the project will generate some interest among journalists who will wish to join us--it's kind of a neat and very timely recruiting opportunity!

Best,  
Kathy

**Griff Wigley - Nov 20, 2002 5:19 pm (#13 Total: 33)**

System Admin

More loungers

Hi Buzz and Kathy, welcome to the Forum... and the Lounge.

Buzz, did you see this mugshot of you in Len's posting to his weblog

today?

**Griff Wigley - Nov 21, 2002 4:35 pm (#14 Total: 33)**

System Admin

Other mugshots

It's only fair to put up some other mugs:

Me

Professor Len:

**Leonard Witt - Nov 21, 2002 4:52 pm (#15 Total: 33)**

Add Your Photo

When you come into the lounge if you want to add your photo let Griff know where it is and he will pick it up electronically. It makes the whole thing more personal.

**John X. Miller - Nov 22, 2002 3:36 pm (#16 Total: 33)**

Hello from Motown ...

Hello, folks,

I'm John X. Miller, public editor at the Detroit Free Press, and pleased to be among like-minded journalists and professionals who recognize civic/public journalism values and routines need to be more widely articulated and practiced.

We're using some aspects of civic mapping in the newsroom here, but I want to go deeper, yet find I'm still fighting against wrong-headed ideas of what's civic journalism. Though it's evolved in practice, the criticism remains largely the same.

Now, we're faced with passing CJ on to the next generation. Our work may never be done. But I look forward to it, and talking and working alongside many of you.

**Cheryl Gibbs - Nov 24, 2002 8:09 am (#17 Total: 33)**

Hello from Hoosier country

(Or, to Ana Maria, if you're reading this, hola de Hoosierlandia!) Good to see so many familiar names here and some new ones as well. For the record, this is the only conversation that I wanted to be part of enough to overcome my laziness/technophobia about online discussions. It's been a good but challenging fall for me at Earlham, due institutional priority shifts that are giving me the opportunity to prepare a new interdisciplinary course on the ethical coverage of conflict, building on the pioneering work of educator Annabel McGoldrick and BBC reporter Jake Lynch of the U.K.; some trying experiences with student newspaper staffers (amazing, how self-righteously wrong they can be); and some unexpected family needs. But

... it's very motivating/inspiring to see folks kicking up the conversation about public/civic journalism again. So hello and thanks to everyone who's posted -- and to those who have yet to post!

**Cole C. Campbell - Nov 25, 2002 11:21 am (#18 Total: 33)**

Hello back from snowy Chicago

Hi John X. Hi Cheryl G.

Welcome to the society in search of a name, explicit philosophy, etc.!

**Griff Wigley - Nov 25, 2002 11:53 am (#19 Total: 33)**

System Admin

Welcome Cheryl

Hi Cheryl,

I thought I'd grab your mugshot from the page that announces your new journalism text book:

"Getting the Whole Story: Reporting and Writing the News."

**Griff Wigley - Nov 25, 2002 12:09 pm (#20 Total: 33)**

System Admin

Welcome John

I found your mugshot, John, but couldn't find your column on The Freep! Got a link to it for us?

**Griff Wigley - Nov 26, 2002 6:32 am (#21 Total: 33)**

System Admin

Where's Jay?

I see Jay's posting elsewhere so maybe hoisting his mugshot here in The Lounge will entice him to stop by:

**Jay Rosen - Dec 2, 2002 9:15 am (#22 Total: 33)**

Answering Griff's question...

Greetings everyone, most of whom are old friends, co-warriors, fellow travelers, or former participants in the Project on Public Life and the Press seminars. I'm here. My work these days is focused closer to home: chairing the Department here and trying to figure out what J-school should be these days. I am doing less writing and almost zero traveling, in part because I have a daughter in kindergarten and a son who's 13 months old.

You can check out the Opinion Forum I edited on recent debates over the future of Journalism Education here:

[http://journalweb.journalism.fas.nyu.edu/mason/pubzone/publish.html?url=journalweb.journalism.fas.nyu.edu/zone/zonedfordebate\\_1/forum.1.index.html](http://journalweb.journalism.fas.nyu.edu/mason/pubzone/publish.html?url=journalweb.journalism.fas.nyu.edu/zone/zonedfordebate_1/forum.1.index.html)

Cheers.

**Griff Wigley - Dec 2, 2002 4:07 pm (#23 Total: 33)**

System Admin

Greetings, Jay. Good to hear you're taking that dad role seriously!

That's quite a nice post-webforum editing/web publishing job. Looks like it was a lot of work. Maybe we can do something similar here.

**Ana María Miralles - Dec 3, 2002 1:24 pm (#24 Total: 33)**

LOUNGE

I am sorry to be a little late here. I was outside Colombia. Hello to Cole, Cheryl, Jay (Tom Wharover is there???) and the other people I met in Washington, Dayton, Baltimore, etc, talking about Public Journalism. Hello to the people of Kennesaw University!! I am glad to meet you.

I decided do not read your proposals before I write my own ideas. But, once I post my proposals I will be able to share some comments with all of you.

Thank you for inviting me to participate in this initiative that I am truly convinced will be very positive for PJ. And please, excuse if I make some mistakes trying to write in English.

**Griff Wigley - Dec 3, 2002 3:12 pm (#25 Total: 33)**

System Admin

Greetings Ana

Hi Ana, delighted to have you join us. Don't worry about any English mistakes. Most of us are envious of anyone who's as fluent in another language as you are.

Here's a mugshot (small photograph) I found of you on a website.

**Tom Warhover - Dec 3, 2002 5:29 pm (#26 Total: 33)**

Tom Warhover is here. Great to hear from you, Ana, and from all the really smart and interesting folk who have "gathered" here. I've been lurking around the site for several days now but haven't jumped in the water until today.

**Leonard Witt - Dec 3, 2002 5:42 pm (#27 Total: 33)**

Hello, Tom and Ana

Hi Tom and Ana:

It is good to see you both posting. Tell your friends. And as for the lurkers, jump in. It's fun, interesting and very much a piece of what civic and public journalism is about.

Tom, do you have an electronic mug shot? Let Griff Wigley know where it is, and we will post it.

Thanks again.

**Griff Wigley - Dec 3, 2002 9:13 pm (#28 Total: 33)**

System Admin

Tom's mug

How's this one, Tom?

**Griff Wigley - Dec 3, 2002 10:04 pm (#29 Total: 33)**

System Admin

Dennis

I found a teeny mushot of Dennis Foley:

**Griff Wigley - Dec 4, 2002 11:33 am (#30 Total: 33)**

System Admin

New and improved mugs - Len and Tom

Tom Warhover

Len Witt

**Griff Wigley - Dec 4, 2002 5:19 pm (#31 Total: 33)**

System Admin

Don't forget the poll

All you Lounge lizards, don't forget to take the straw poll on the names suggested thus far:

Griff Wigley "Straw Poll: Name the Society" 12/2/02 4:01pm

**Dennis Foley - Dec 10, 2002 11:22 am (#32 Total: 33)**

I'm much larger in real life

Thanks for showing my face. I've been on "vacation" for two weeks. Good to see some friendly faces. Hello, Jan, Cheryl, Tom, Ken, Buzz, Jay, John. I hope to see y'all in January and look forward to meeting everyone I don't know other than by their eloquent words and their much larger mug shots. -- dennis

**Griff Wigley - Dec 11, 2002 6:45 am (#33 Total: 33)**

System Admin

Dan Suwyn

Dan's joined the conversation so here's his mugshot: