



THE Source

Society of Professional Journalists
Oklahoma Pro Chapter

Jan./Feb. 2001



Members benefit in many ways

Membership in SPJ is beneficial, regardless of your level of involvement.

Those with a little extra time to spare might consider a place on the board or a committee.

Those who have a busy schedule and no extra time may consider simply joining for the other benefits SPJ offers its members.

What does being a member of SPJ do for you?

More than you may realize!

As a member of SPJ, you receive many benefits on both the local and the national level. Some of those are:

- Continuing professional education. —Programs such as the SPJ National Convention, specialized workshops, regional conferences, local chapter meetings and the Broadcasting Taishoff Seminar provide members with an opportunity to im-

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Awards banquet less than one month away

Winners to be announced Feb. 24

By *Kim Morava*
SPJ vice president

The plaques have been ordered and the certificates are being made as final preparations continue for the Oklahoma chapter of SPJ to distribute awards at its annual awards banquet.

The awards contest began in September with nearly 700 entries flooding the SPJ mailbox. Judges from three out-of-state chapters decided Oklahoma's best.

Judges awarded winners in first, second, third place and honorable mention in most categories.

The anticipation will end Saturday, Feb. 24

at the Embassy Suites Hotel ballroom as awards are presented in newspaper, radio, television, magazine, website and public relations divisions.

First place winners will receive an engraved plaque; second place winners will receive an engraved medallion, along with a gold-bordered certificate. Third place and honorable mention also will receive gold-bordered certificates.

Scheduled to present the awards are Jack Lancaster, adviser for Oklahoma State University's student newspaper, the Daily O'Collegian; Susan Ellerbach, managing editor of the Tulsa World, and

Mark Thomas, Oklahoma Press Association.

Two prestigious awards — the coveted Lifetime Achievement Award and a First Amendment Award also will be presented.

Cost of the banquet is \$26 per person.

Cocktails at a cash bar begin at 6 p.m., with dinner served at 7 p.m.

The menu includes a salad, double entrée of filet mignon and chicken dijonnaise, twice-baked potato, chef's fresh vegetable, dinner rolls, New York Style Cheesecake and beverages of coffee and iced tea.

See "Banquet," p. 4

NEXT Board Meeting, March 9

Make plans to attend the monthly board meetings of the Oklahoma Pro chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists held the second Friday of each month.

The meetings are a great place to be heard and share ideas with other SPJ members or to become a member.

The next meeting is noon, March 9, at the OPA board meeting room located at 3601 N. Lincoln in Oklahoma City.

Bring a brown-bag lunch including a drink and join fellow journalists.

SPJ needs you and your ideas so make plans to attend. We look forward to seeing you there!

New York Times reporter to speak at SPJ's Eighth Annual Job Fair

By Sue Hinton
SPJ member

New York Times reporter Kelly Crow will be the featured speaker at this year's Job and Internship Fair to be held March 2 at the University of Oklahoma. An Edmond native and 1998 graduate of the University of Central Oklahoma, Crow recently began writing for The City, a weekly section of the Times published on Sundays. The City focuses its

coverage on local neighborhoods.

Crow, 23, says she loves her job and feels fortunate to work at one of the nation's premier newspapers. She says she is happy to share her experiences with others who have similar goals.

Crow spoke at the 1999 job fair about her first professional position as a staff member at Oklahoma Today magazine.

The purpose of the job fair is three-fold: to en-

SPJ membership rewarding venture

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prove their professional skills and to facilitate career development.

- Career services and support.

- Jobs for Journalists is a once-a-week newsletter available to SPJ members. This service lists positions often before they appear in the classifieds.

- The National Sigma Delta Chi Awards which are presented annually at the National Convention.

- The annual Pulliam Fellowship for Editorial Writers allows writers to increase their understanding on a particular subject so they can better serve the public.

- The Mark of Excellence Awards recognize outstanding college journalists at the regional and national levels.

- The Pulliam/Kilgore First Amendment and

Freedom of Information Internships are paid internships that offer students the opportunity to study, research and write about Freedom of Information issues.

- Journalism advocacy.

- The FOI committee coordinates all areas encompassed by our Freedom of Information initiatives, including SPJ's Legal Defense Fund efforts, the FOI Alert, Project Sunshine and working closely with our legal counsel in the nation's capital.

- Quill Magazine, the Society of Professional Journalists' national magazine which will arrive in your mailbox each month.

- The Source, your local chapter's newsletter, will arrive once a month.

To learn about even more benefits, visit <http://spj.org/membership/benefits.htm>, the national chapter website.

What: SPJ Annual Job Fair
When: 12:30 to 4 p.m., March 2
**Where: University of Oklahoma
Oklahoma Memorial Union**

courage journalism students to aim high in their career aspirations and to provide them with the opportunity to learn from editors and recently hired journalism graduates.

In addition, the job fair brings together editors from many state and regional newspapers who are looking for new hires or summer interns.

Journalism students, and working journalists looking for new opportunities, are invited to bring résumés and news clips to present to prospective employers.

Three Oklahoma editors will participate on a panel to talk about the kind of applicants they look for. They are Anthony

Thornton, state editor of The Daily Oklahoman; Wayne Green, city editor of the Tulsa World; and Rick Hoover, managing editor of the Stillwater NewsPress.

Also participating on the panel will be recent journalism graduates working in their first positions. Among them will be an OU graduate working at the Portland Oregonian.

The SPJ Journalism Job and Internship Fair will run from 12:30 to 4 p.m. Friday, March 2, at Oklahoma Memorial Union on the University of Oklahoma campus in Norman. Admission is free. It is jointly sponsored by the OU student chapter and the Oklahoma Pro chapter of SPJ.



March 16 & 17

New Orleans

NATIONAL WRITERS WORKSHOP

•Region 8 & 12 Conference
SPJ Professional Development Workshop •

Session Highlights:

- *Writing Strategies: Why Not Us?
- *From Generalist to Specialist: Getting Into Specialty Reporting
- *Computer-Assisted Reporting 101
- *10 Tips Toward Becoming a More Effective Reporter
- *Jump Into the Net
- *What's So Funny? Humor and Journalism

www.spj.org/workshops/neworleans.htm



Oklahoma Pro Board

✧ President

Mark Hanebutt
Univ. of Central Oklahoma
(405) 974-5576
mhanebutt@yahoo.com

✧ Vice-President

Kim Morava
Shawnee News-Star
(405) 214-3962
kmorava@news-star.com

✧ Treasurer

Mick Hinton
The Daily Oklahoman
(405) 475-3105
mhinton@oklahoman.com

✧ Secretary

Ronna Austin
Oklahoma City
Community College
(405) 682-1611, ext. 7307
raustin@okc.cc.ok.us

Board Members

✧ Diana Baldwin
The Daily Oklahoman
(405) 475-3384
dbaldwin@oklahoman.com

✧ Barbara Hoberock
Tulsa World
(405) 528-2465
barbara.hoberock@tulsaworld.com

✧ Paul English
The Daily Oklahoman
(405) 475-3942
eenglish@oklahoman.com

✧ Carter Bradley
Capitol News Bureau
(405) 525-2320
carterwbradley@yahoo.com

✧ Jim Campbell
Capitol News Bureau
(405) 524-4426
jcampbell@mmcable.com

✧ Shana Hawk
Shawnee News-Star
(405) 214-3934
shawk@news-star.com

✧ Scott Cooper
The Daily Oklahoman
(405) 475-3206
scooper@oklahoman.com

✧ Harry Culver (honorary)
Capitol News Bureau
(405) 525-2320
hculver.okc.worldnet@att.net

From the President



By Mark Hanebutt
SPJ president

Fact-gathering must be precisely accurate

Fuzzy reporting by few leads to public distrust of all journalists

shouldn't happen to anyone granting an interview. It's also why many people don't grant interviews.

She got it wrong. Or more accurately, she got it generally right, which in today's complicated, precision-based world is the same as getting it wrong.

As a teacher, I'm used to students learning at my expense. It comes with the turf. But as a lawyer, commenting as a professional on a specific area of the law, I feel a little angry and a lot embarrassed that my explanation wasn't, as we say in the law, on point.

I have colleagues who will read what she wrote and think I don't know what I'm talking about.

It will affect how they view me and how they view my expertise. I don't like that.

It wasn't that she grossly misquoted me. It's that she didn't get it exactly right and, in doing that, she left the reader with the wrong idea.

As a teacher, I have shrugged it off. As a professional, I have not.

Once I was a reporter. Once I couldn't understand why people were so nervous about reporters.

Now I can.

The lesson here for all of us in the media business should be clear. We can't get things generally cor-

rect. We don't work in a general world anymore.

Those who cover particularly complex subjects — and most subjects these days are complex — need to understand that they may sometimes need to use a few extra words in a story to make sure that both the facts and the general impression those facts leave are accurate.

Of course, we need to avoid legalese and medicalese and even journalese.

Of course, we must be able to explain things simply to our readers. Not everyone has the training to understand those big, complex phrases.

But those big, complex phrases are phrased the way they are for a reason, and unless we can interpret them in such a way and with such other words as not to change that meaning, we'd better stay away from them.

To do otherwise misinforms and discredits us.

In my classes, if a student gets a fact wrong, or leaves a wrong impression, that student fails that assignment. An automatic F.

When we do the same in the mainstream media, the public gives us more than an automatic F.

They stop talking to us, and they stop believing us.

"I need to interview you." The young, doe-eyed, student reporter stared at me in desperation. She was obviously on deadline.

"What about?" I asked. "The law," she said. "There's been a court decision involving freedom of the press and I need you as a lawyer to comment on it."

I pondered her request. "The law can be tricky," I said. "You need to make sure you understand what I say before you write it, and you need to make sure you get it exactly right. Close won't do."

"Right," she said. "I can do that."

I stared at her. How else is she going to learn? I wondered.

"Okay," I said. What happened next

"I have colleagues who will read what she wrote and think I don't know what I'm talking about.

"It will affect how they view me and how they view my expertise. I don't like that."

—Mark Hanebutt
SPJ President

**Comments? e-mail
mhanebutt@yahoo.com**

Banquet-goers receive special room rates at ESH

"Banquet," cont. from p. 1

For those with special dietetic needs, a veggie platter may be ordered. Awards will be presented shortly after dinner.

Reservations to the banquet must be received by Feb. 10.

Embassy Suites Hotel is offering a special room rate of \$89 to those attending the SPJ banquet.

For more information, contact Ronna Austin at 682-1611, ext. 7307, or 793-2774.

Additional information, reservation forms and a direct link to the Embassy Suites Hotel website is at www.geocities.com/oklahomaspj, the Oklahoma Pro chapter website.

tidbits...

Get involved!

•The Source needs you! SPJ members are encouraged to contribute to the monthly newsletter.

Add your name to the list of those whose work have graced these pages by sending along an article, picture or tidbit for publication.

SPJ is about all of its members working together. This is a great and simple way to be actively involved even with a busy schedule.

Surf our web site

•The Oklahoma Professional chapter SPJ website can be found at: www.geocities.com/oklahomaspj

Soon, the domain name, or website address, will be www.OklahomaSPJ.org

It's a great place to keep up with the local chapter and find helpful links to the national chapter.

College chapters should send links to raustin@okc.cc.ok.us so they can be added to the site.

Time to update?

•Do you need to update any or all of your SPJ membership information?

National headquarters has made it simple!

On the Internet, go to: www.spj.org/membership/membupdate.htm and fill out the form.

While you're there, look around at all of the helpful information SPJ has to offer today's journalists.

Let SPJ work for you by getting involved!



Society of Professional Journalists
Oklahoma Pro Chapter
860 Van Vleet Oval
Norman, OK 73019-2051

NEXT SPJ MEETING: NOON, MARCH 9, AT OPA, 3501 N. LINCOLN BLVD.