

# Houston Trade Business News

## Upcoming ASBPE Events

### April

The Houston chapter of ASBPE is hosting a panel discussion Tuesday, April 27 about hiring, managing and getting the most value with freelancers.

The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. with networking and refreshments at 6:30 p.m. at the Museum of Printing History, 1324 W. Clay. \*

### June

Join the Houston chapter at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 22 at the Stag's Head Pub on Portsmouth off Shepherd Drive. This is a fun spot to meet the officers and board members, and network with other business publication editors. \*

### August

The Houston chapter of ASBPE is hosting a panel discussion about technical editing -- turning experts into writers -- at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 26 at the Museum of Printing History, 1324 W. Clay. \*

## Freelancers Key to Small Staffed Publications

Editors continue to search for cost-effective ways to increase coverage without increasing staff.

By Trudy Schreiner, President; and Monique A. Barbee, Secretary, Houston Chapter

In today's economy, many business publication editors defy the odds by producing quality publications with a small staff. In the search to balance complete and extensive coverage with the economic times, freelance writers may be the key. But, where do you start, and what do you need to know to make the most of this valuable resource?

To learn more about utilizing freelancers for your publication, join the American Society of Business Publication Editors and speakers John Beltz Jr. of GrantPrideco Inc. and Regina Throop-Hicks, editor and publisher of *Total Body* magazine, at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 27. (see

Upcoming ASBPE Events for more details).

It's important to know where and how to find freelancers, how to determine compensation packages, and what to include in assignment letters and writer's agreements.

"It is imperative that editors map out clear guidelines with their freelancers," Throop-Hicks said. "They don't know what you want unless you put it down on paper. Make your assignments clear, and make your contracts solid."



Throop-Hicks



Beltz

Beltz, vice president of corporate marketing communications, will offer his reasons for hiring freelancers.

"... I like to employ outside writing professionals because it helps put some objective distance between the employee being interviewed for our news magazine article and the editing staff," he said. "Oftentimes, a freelancer can find the right spin or golden nugget of information for the

(see Freelance Writers on page 4)

## You'll Love Philadelphia in June

The 2004 ASBPE National Editorial Conference will be held in the adopted hometown of Benjamin Franklin, a forefather of American journalism.

By Matthew V. Veazey, Board Member, Houston Chapter

Just as Franklin offered his readers timely information and sage advice in his gazette *Poor Richard's Almanac*, the June 24-25 American Society of Business Publication Editors (ASBPE) national conference in Philadelphia will update business journalists on the latest trends in the industry with seminars, panel discussions and workshops.

The event will be held at the downtown Sofitel Hotel, close to the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall and other major attractions.

"As always, the conference offers the best value, by far, than



(photo by Scott Frances Ltd.)

At Signer's Hall on Philadelphia's Independence Mall, visitors can walk among 42 life-size bronze figures of the 39 signers of the U.S. Constitution, as well as the three who dissented.

(Photo copyright National Constitution Center, courtesy of the Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau)

most other editorial-related conferences for our profession when you consider the price of registration and the number of sessions we have devoted for editors over a two-day period," said Robin Sherman, ASBPE associate director. The registration fees each year typically are one-third the cost of similar industry events.

The conference, Sherman pointed out, is designed to maximize attendees' networking opportunities.

"Nowhere else can editors

(see National Conference on page 4)



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# Media Scandals, Challenge of Objectivity

The Houston Bar Association presented its annual Law & Media Seminar on Saturday Feb. 21 at South Texas College of Law campus downtown, where it discussed scandals in the media.

By Trudy Schreiner, President, Houston Chapter

The Law & Media program consisted of two panel discussions: Panel I – The Pressure is on: When Assignments lead to Scandals, Mistakes and Liability; and Panel II – Cultural Balancing Act: The Challenge of Objectivity.



Panel I speakers (left to right): Aric Press, Anna Werner, Michael Graczyk and Bill Ogden.

Panel I was moderated by Wendy Benjaminson, Sunday editor at the *Houston Chronicle*, and included Michael Graczyk, Houston correspondent for The Associated Press; Bill Ogden, attorney, Ogden, Gibson, White, Brooks & Longoria L.L.P.; Aric Press, editor-in-chief, *The American Lawyer*; and Anna Werner, reporter, "11 News Defenders," KHOU TV.

Panel II was moderated by Bob Nicholas, president

of Nicholas/Earth Printing and a former Channel 2 News anchor, and consisted of Chris Baker, talk show host for KPRC Radio; Rev. Sean P. Horrigan, a reporter for the *Texas Catholic Herald*; Helen Malmgren, a producer on "CBS 60 Minutes"; and Lionel M. Schooler, attorney, Jackson Walker, L.L.P.

The first panel opened with discussions centering on the recent Jayson Blair case and its fallout at other publications.

Blair was found to have fabricated sources and organizations for stories filed at the *New York Times*. A reporter from another publication, who was trying to match one of Blair's stories, inquired about the story sources and led to the uncovering of Blair's fabrications, thus leading to a review of all of his stories.

Because of the Blair scandal, reporters and editors are being held more accountable by their news organizations - sources are attributed no matter where the information is found and quotes are no longer edited for grammar.

Graczyk reported that a new news policy at *The*

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## Consistency Key for Graphic Design

Staying consistent with a graphic look, and other words of wisdom from local Houston graphics experts.

By Theresa Ward, Vice President, Houston Chapter

Working with words, grammar and syntax is the job of an editor who works for a monthly trade magazine. Coordinating with the magazine's graphic designer and layout artist, however, requires a whole other set of skills.

In search of ideas, solutions and better ways to understand why graphics and design matter, editors attended the

American Society of Business Publication Editors (ASBPE) Houston

chapter's February panel discussion on the topic with speakers Deborah Nix, director of publications and design for the Houston Apartment Association and its

monthly magazine, *Abode*; and Scott Sheinfeld, graphics editor for the *Houston Business Journal (HBJ)*.

Sheinfeld explained that design matters a great deal because it makes the information readable and aids in comprehension. At the same time, he noted that good design enables a person to read further.

"If the information is not presented well and isn't concise, there will be little interest from the reader," Sheinfeld said.

At *HBJ*, Sheinfeld is involved in contributing his design ideas when the story is assigned to a writer. He sits down with the writer and editorial team to brainstorm visual ideas early in the process. Sheinfeld also is a big believer in asking the subject of a story for possible images. For example, he was able to use an action shot at no cost from the Houston Rockets for a Book of Lists cover.

Nix emphasized that design should be clean: use a maximum of three different fonts; be consistent: use the



Graphic designers Deborah Nix and Scott Sheinfeld wrap up their presentation during the February meeting.

same grid template throughout; and be appropriate: be trendy but match it to the readership. For *Abode*, Nix has about one week to do the layout and select graphics for completed stories. Nix said that lately she's using more photos in her layouts.

And speaking of photos, they both advised tips on avoiding the "police lineup" look with which all editors are faced. First, ask those being photographed to lean into the picture. Another tip is to place the subjects in a natural setting to their workplace.

For example, if the person is a computer analyst, place him or her with computers in the background or surrounding area. And if you're stuck with a lousy headshot, Sheinfeld suggests cropping the photo tightly.

Both speakers were asked what design trends they like and what's catching their eyes. Sheinfeld said there's more of a trend to integrate Web and print design, at which point he also mentioned that design on the Web has done its share of damage. Nix sees a move to cleaner design as exemplified in *Simple* magazine and Martha Stewart's *Living*. She noted that flashy design is not as

trendy anymore.

In response to the question, "What is the biggest mistake designers make?" Nix said it's designers not learning to use image software with scanners, and Sheinfeld said it's breaking design consistency.

Sheinfeld and Nix also offered their comments on the question "How often is it important to consider a redesign?" *HBJ* does a complete redesign every five years, which Sheinfeld said offers the magazine a marketing opportunity and ensures the publication maintains a contemporary look to match the times. Nix said *Abode* has been redesigned three times in 12 years.

To elicit feedback about the look of their publications, both speakers ask readers and advertisers for their comments and suggestions. Nix also believes it's important to ask friends and associates outside the industry, as they often can provide good insight with fresh eyes.

When the meeting adjourned, Nix and Sheinfeld remained on hand as audience members continued to ask questions and showed samples of their magazines to the speakers. \*



Audience members discuss graphic design and their magazines with speakers Deborah Nix and Scott Sheinfeld, above right. Below, ASBPE Houston President Trudy Schreiner, center, meets with Sandy Rueckert (left) and Leslie Haines.

(Photos by Mark Hiebert)



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Jumbo Size Postcard - 6 x 8.5

CUSTOMIZED POSTCARD PRICING - 4.25 X 6 - HOUSE COVER STOCK			
4 color over black	Print Only	Print / Mail / Postage Customer List	Print / Mail / Postage DDP List
250-499	\$ .40	\$ .77	\$ .87
500-999	\$ .37	\$ .74	\$ .84
1000+	\$ .34	\$ .71	\$ .81
4 / 4	Print Only	Print / Mail / Postage Customer List	Print / Mail / Postage DDP List
250-499	\$ .50	\$ .87	\$ .97
500-999	\$ .46	\$ .83	\$ .93
1000+	\$ .42	\$ .79	\$ .89

\*DDP mail lists are residential property owners in the 7 county Houston Metro area.

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written piece that our own staff can't uncover because of preconceived ideas about the issue."

Beltz has nearly 30 years of experience in business-to-business (B2B) marketing, marketing communications, market planning activities and business management. He also is a published author in a number of industry-related trade journal magazines and has been a contributing writer to the *Houston Business Journal* in such topics as the ever-changing role of the chief executive officer for company branding in today's competitive B2B marketplace.

Beltz has a bachelor of science degree in business and an associate degree in marketing from Oklahoma State University.

Throop-Hicks, has been an editor for 16 years with eight magazines and two newspapers. She started her career in the publishing industry at the age of 16, when she worked as a reporter for her local newspaper. Although Throop-Hicks grew up in Texas, she attended McNeese State University in Louisiana, where she earned a bachelor's degree in mass communications.\*

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mingle with each other so easily and learn what the best practices are," he said. "We are specifically set up to do that."

Conference organizers also recognize that business editors have a wide range of reasons for attending the annual event.

"Our sessions are designed to meet a cross-section of editorial needs – from how to use an editorial advisory board; to how to know when the research you're writing about is reliable, valid and worthy of publication; to how to package information effectively; and how to automate and streamline your editorial workflow," Sherman said.

The 26th Annual Awards Banquet will be held the evening of June 24 at the nearby Pyramid Club, which offers a commanding view of Philly from atop 52 stories. Award winners will be recognized for editorial excellence in the areas of feature writing, newsletters and magazines. In addition, Young Leaders Scholarships and the Lifetime Achievement Award will go to new and seasoned business journalists, respectively.

For additional information about the confer-

ence, visit the ASBPE Web site: [www.asbpe.org](http://www.asbpe.org). To learn more about Philadelphia, visit the city's Convention & Visitors Bureau Web site: [www.pcvb.org](http://www.pcvb.org).\*

## Top Historic Philly Spots

1. **Betsy Ross House**--239 Arch St. (between Second and Third streets); (215) 627-5343; admission: free, suggested donation \$2 adult, \$1 children

2. **Edgar Allen Poe National Historic Site**--532 North 7th St.; (215) 597-8780; admission: free

3. **Christ Church**--2nd St. above Market Street; (215) 922-1695; admission: free, but donations welcome

4. **Penn's Landing and Society Hill**--Columbus Avenue between South and Vine streets; admission: varies by attraction

5. **Carpenters' Hall**--320 Chestnut St.; (215) 925-0167; admission: free

(The above locations have been excerpted from [philadelphia.about.com/cs/history/a/top\\_historic.htm](http://philadelphia.about.com/cs/history/a/top_historic.htm))

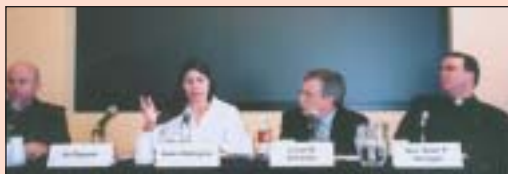
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*Washington Post* requires quotes be printed exactly as the source said, including grammatical errors. Werner said story fabrication is more difficult with live television news reports.

Panel moderator Benjaminson said the *Chronicle* also requires quotes be reported as stated by the source. In the case of anonymous sources, at least one editor will know the name of the sources. Taking the anonymous source guidelines further, *Chronicle* reporters must have at least two sources saying the same thing; the information provided must be a fact that couldn't be accessed by any other means; and the information must not be an opinion of the source.

Press concurred with other panelist when he said, "We use them as they say it."

In the end, Blair's mistakes suggest reporters must continue to be committed to following the story. They also must be able to tell their editors when the story just isn't there or if an entirely different story has emerged.



Panel II speakers (left to right): Chris Baker, Helen Malmgren, Lionel M. Schooler and Rev. Sean P. Horrigan. (photo by Monique A. Barbee)

The second panel was more of a panelist debate. Baker jumped into the session by offering some examples of reporting biases.

"Militant Islamic is a value judgment. They are terrorists," he said, questioning whether such catch phrases as "suicide bomber" and "militant Islamic" originated in newsrooms or journalism schools.

Malmgren commented that television reporters do not usually make the determination about using catch phrases. "Often times, producers make these decisions," she said.

She said that news outlets must strike a balance between biases – more concern should be placed on whether a story is not telling all the facts.

Baker, who is in the opinion-giving business on talk show radio, commented on opinion vs. fact.

"When giving your opinion, you must be clear that your statement is your opinion," he said.

Tara Shockley, com-

munications director at the Houston Bar Association, reported 87 attendees at the 2004 seminar. The Law & the Media seminars are free to media, communications professionals, and journalism and law students. For information on future events, contact the Houston Bar Association at (713) 759-1133.\*

## ADVERTISEMENT ASBPE Book Now Available



Are you looking for editorial management tips? Get your copy of *Best Practices of the Business Press* at the next Houston chapter meeting. The book is uniquely targeted toward editors of business, trade and association publications, making it a must-have for professionals in the industry.

Abbie Lundberg, editor-in-chief of *CIO Magazine*, says this about the ASBPE book:

*"These are the lessons a journalist learns over the course of a career; it's great to have them brought together in one work."*

A limited number of books are available for purchase through the Houston chapter -- contact President Trudy Schreiner at [tschreiner@houston.rr.com](mailto:tschreiner@houston.rr.com) to reserve your copy. The 170-page book is published by Kendall Hunt Publishing and sells for \$35.