



THE JOURNALISM EDUCATION ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS FREE AND RESPONSIBLE SCHOLASTIC JOURNALISM BY PROVIDING RESOURCES AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, BY PROMOTING PROFESSIONALISM, BY ENCOURAGING AND REWARDING STUDENT EXCELLENCE AND TEACHER ACHIEVEMENT, AND BY FOSTERING AN ATMOSPHERE THAT ENCOMPASSES DIVERSITY YET BUILDS UNITY.

**BY BRADLEY WILSON, MJE**

In some ways, not much has changed.

In the fall of 1967, Elwood Karwand, JEA executive secretary, wrote in the first issue of *Communication: Journalism Education Today*, “As you read this first issue, I urge you to consider what it represents in planning, preparation and prayer. Without all three, it would never have been printed.”

Whether it’s preparing a web page or a spread in the magazine, the content is a team effort and a resource for all JEA members. That hasn’t changed.

And the magazine’s first editor, Virginia Woodring, wrote, “The magazine is the realization of a dream for journalism leaders who recognize the need for a discussion forum for teachers in the journalism, English, speech, social science, art, publications and audiovisual areas.”

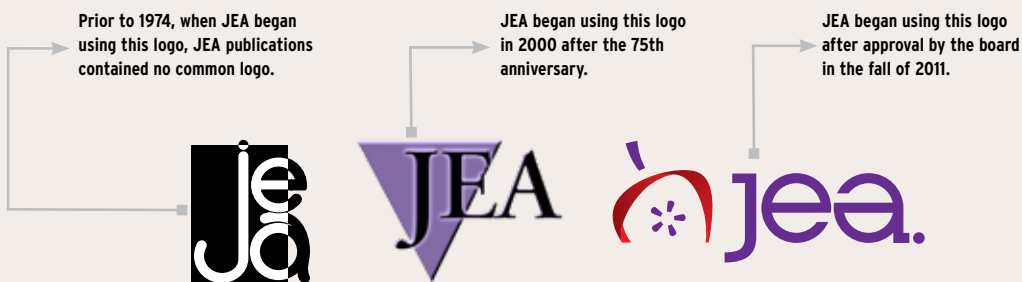
That there’s a need for a discussion forum for journalism teachers and scholastic media advisers is still without debate.

However, as JEA pushes to stay on top of the profession, other aspects of providing content to members have evolved. Since 1996, JEA has had no fewer than five major revisions to its primary website, [jea.org](http://jea.org). Thousands of JEA members have made use of the JEAHELP email distribution list, often called “the Listserv.” The organization has a thriving presence on social media. Coverage has moved from how to paste up a newspaper to how to use artificial intelligence in the classroom.

Inevitably, the media JEA provides its members will continue to evolve, but there are lessons to learn from the last 100 years. ▶▶



**RESOURCES:**  
JEA historical reports are available on the JEA website – <https://jea.org/wp/home/about-jea/reports/>



LEADING THE WAY IN SCHOLASTIC JOURNALISM AND MEDIA EDUCATION SINCE 1924

4

different news publications printed for JEA members since 1945

including *NAJD Digest*, *JEA Digest*, *J-beAT* and *NewsWire*

30

volumes of *NewsWire* published

from the fall of 1973 until the summer of 2003

11

webmasters

Jan Hansel, Mary Lu Foreman, Jake Palenske, Brent Gray, Ben Stamey, Josh Bassett, Bradley Wilson, Arthi Subramanian, Chris Cox, Kate Dubiel and Lindsay Porter

11

editors of JEA news publications since 1945

Homer A. Post, Lee Pursley, Elizabeth Ahlgren, Larry Lain, Susan Tantillo, Ron Hayes, Nancy Hall, H.L. Hall, Judy Babb, Carol Lange, Bradley Wilson

6

editors of JEA's periodical, *Communication: Journalism Education Today* since 1967

1967-1974 – Virginia Woodring

1974-1976 – Dorothy McPhillips

1976-1980 – Betty Stanley and Marjorie Wilson

1980-1982 – Dorothy McPhillips

1982-1997 – Molly J. Clemons

1998-present – Bradley Wilson

4,412

pages of *C:JET* magazine published since spring 1998

with an average of 42 pages/issue

1,660

contributors to *C:JET* magazine since spring 1998

an average of 16/issue for more than 830 stories



*Communication: Journalism Education Today* – 1968, 1996, 1998 and 2012

## IN-HOUSE MEDIA INFORM, EDUCATE MEMBERS

# JEA leads the way

The political scientist and author of *Democracy in America* (1840), Alexis de Tocqueville, spoke often on the importance of communication even as he studied associations in a young America. He observed the importance of the press in nurturing the associations that gave life to the evolving American democracy.

“A newspaper can drop the same thought into a thousand minds at the same moment,” he wrote in Book 2, Chapter 6. “To suppose that they only serve to protect freedom would be to diminish their importance: they maintain civilization.”

The news publications for JEA evolved in name, if not in mission, starting with *National Association of Journalism Directors Digest*, first published in 1945. While no copies of the first nine volumes exist, in 1953, Lee Pursley became editor, publishing three pages created on a typewriter.

That first issue focused on creating teacher certification, a discussion of journalism teacher training and “what’s a master teacher.”

Price Robinson, president of what was then called National Association of Journalism Directors, wrote in a Page 1 column, “Anything that this issue lacks is due to those of you who have not contributed to its success. In other words, Lee is asking, yeah, pleading, for items, chitchat or articles of professional import. What is your fellow teacher doing? We would like to know, via these pages — so scribble Lee a note.”

The *NAJD Digest* became the *JEA Digest* in 1964 when NAJD became JEA. Then the publication was renamed *J-beAT* in 1967.

### NEW MAGAZINE A CLASSROOM ADJUNCT

In addition to the three issues of the news

publication distributed per academic year at the time, members received a printed membership directory and an annual report. But that wasn’t enough. None of those publications provided an outlet for continuing education. So, in the fall of 1967, *Communication: Journalism Education Today* was published for the first time.

JEA President Ruth Marie Griggs wrote in that same issue, “The origin of this magazine came from two national leaders whose foresight and vitality have sparked the progress of JEA in recent years. During his presidency, Harold Cantor of North St. Paul, Minnesota, urged the establishment of a magazine as part of the expansion program of our organization. In her work as head of the JEA national Curriculum Commission, Sister Mary Ann Christine, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, saw the need for a magazine devoted largely to information on teaching effective communication. Their dreams have become a reality through the unflagging efforts of Virginia Woodring of Springfield, Missouri, who accepted the magazine editorship early last spring.”

In a column on the inside front cover of that first issue, JEA Executive Secretary Elwood Karwand wrote, “This magazine has been dear to the hearts of many of us in the Journalism Education Association, but the real work has been done by Virginia Woodring, Sister Mary Ann Christine, Ruth Marie Griggs and their dedicated followers. It is another step toward that goal of improving the journalism programs throughout the country.”

Keeping to the mission of providing educational material for teachers, that first issue contained 40 pages of articles on everything from poetry and journalism to films in the

classroom to the “World of Multi Media.”

In his article “Things I Like in High School Newspapers,” Paul Swensson, executive director of The Newspaper Fund, wrote, “Young editors are placing the accent on the first syllable when they say and think NEWSpaper.” He emphasized quality writing. “Young people, regardless of their who or where, are discovering that words can do things. Words can inform, persuade and produce results. And for some young writers and editors, words also can sing, dance, shout and stamp their feet.”

As noted in a 1971 issue of *J-bEAT, C:JET* at the time, had a budget of \$5,660 (\$43,251 in today’s dollars) for printing and \$900 (\$6,877 in today’s dollars) for postage. The 2024 JEA budget included \$36,000 for printing and mailing.

### LONGEST NEWS PUBLICATION BEGINS

In 1973, JEA published the first edition of the longest-lasting publication — *NewsWire*.

In that issue, editor Elizabeth Ahlgren wrote, “It is our aim to bring news of conferences, organizations and happenings of interest and concern to members of the Journalism Education Association. We expect to concentrate on developing a feeling of unity within the regional area by having special stories and reports for each region along with the national news. *NewsWire* will also be a medium to keep related organizations informed of JEA progress. Coverage will in no way duplicate *Communications: Journalism Education Today* but rather cover news items and news features.”

Content of that issue included documentation of the creation of a new press freedom fund, a calendar of state scholastic press association meetings, news of appointments of JEA committee chairs including, for example, the appointment of Howard Spanogle as leading general public relations with other professional organizations and summaries of the goals of the eight commissions including a new Commission on Freedom of the Scholastic Media.

Over the years, *NewsWire* grew but maintained its mission to provide members with news of the association — everything from profiles of candidates for national office to new books in the JEA Bookstore. In 1997, *NewsWire* was a function of the job of JEA secretary.

The secretary, Carol Lange, in the spring 1997 semiannual report, reminded the board that 10 years before, *NewsWire* was never more than eight pages, many filled with application forms and listings of Write-off contest winners.

“Forms and the ever-expanding lists of Write-off winners continue to fill six to nine pages of each issue, but the issues now range from 12 to 32 pages. Every issue has had a Headquarters

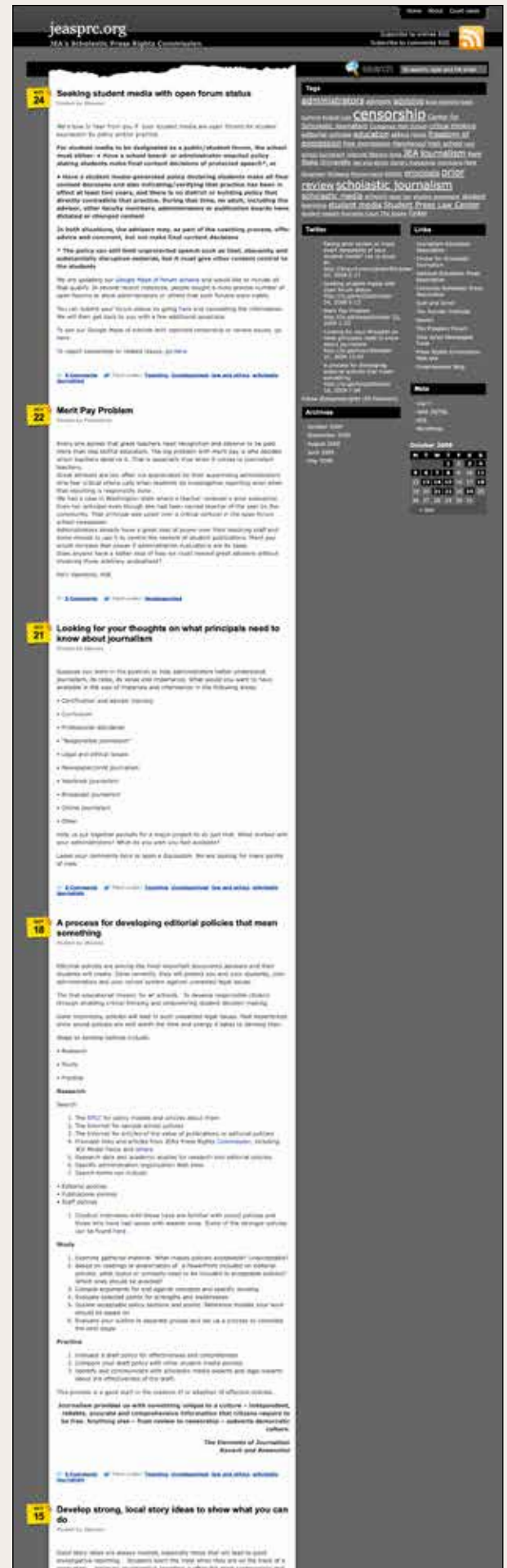
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jeasprc.org  
Oct. 25, 2009

JEA Scholastic Press Rights Commission registered jeasprc.org on April 21, 2009, and began publishing material online that May.

**JOHN BOWEN, MJE, Scholastic Press Rights Commission chair, fall 2009 semiannual report:** Since its start in September, commission members Fern Valentine, Matt Schott, Carrie Faust, Candace Bowen and John Bowen have posted to the commission blog, www.jeasprc.org. We would like to continue to post daily and encourage and encourage more commission members to participate.

The number of people visiting and commenting on the blog has increased, but we need to draw more attention to it.





jea.org, June 28, 1998



jea.org, July 3, 2000



jea.org, April 3, 2003



jea.org, Dec. 31, 2005

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Report from Linda Puntney, Bookstore update from Connie Fulkerson and calendar of dates to remember. Since January 1996, a president's message from Candace Perkins Bowen [has] kept you in touch with board action and direction. The back page was saved for commentary from individuals," she wrote.

Lange continued, "NewsWire would provide JEA members the information they needed immediately, the possibilities for professional growth and a perspective on the discipline they have chosen for their career from others who have shared its dilemmas and delights."

In 1996, JEA President H.L. Hall appointed Bradley Wilson as editor of both *NewsWire* and *C:JET*; both were publishing four issues per academic year at the time.

But after 30 years of publication, in the spring of 2003, the JEA board voted to discontinue *NewsWire* in favor of increased reliance on web communication.

At the time, the annual budget for *NewsWire* printing and mailing was \$9,750 (about \$16,642 in today's dollars), and advertising income was projected to be about \$2,500 (\$4,267 in today's dollars).

"As I see the budget," JEA Secretary Susan Hathaway Tantillo, MJE, said at the time, "the three most significant changes are moving *NewsWire* to an online publication, increasing money to create a larger JEA presence at NASSP (National Association of Secondary School Principals) meetings and financing revision of five curriculum guides. We will actively encourage members to visit jea.org for invaluable *NewsWire*-type updates, and we hope the online format will lend itself to more frequent updates of news information than was possible with the quarterly printed *NewsWire*."

By 2004, JEA leaders found that they needed a way to entice members to learn more about key events as the web continued to evolve and social media outlets were

just coming on the scene. So a four-page wraparound of *C:JET* — *C:JET Extra* — began publication and continued for 33 issues until the summer of 2011.

In January 1998, Ann Visser, Publications Committee chair, reported in *NewsWire* that, to give the periodicals and web page further direction, the committee had approved a simple mission statement for all publications: "JEA publications will inform, entertain, persuade and enlighten readers."

### INTERNET PROVIDES A NEW AVENUE

However, the media landscape was changing. The internet provided an option for organizations to get news out to their members much faster and without increasing postage costs. While the internet had been around since the 1960s, it took the invention by Tim Berners-Lee of the first web browser in 1990, the release of the Mosaic browser by Marc Andreessen in 1993 and the release of Netscape Navigator in 1994 for the web to become readily accessible.

By 1996, JEA had its first website, created by Jan Hensel, Mary Lu Foreman and Mary Anne McCloud; and, in 1997, the JEA board approved website guidelines that said all content on the website should be directly related to JEA and JEA activities and/or related to scholastic journalism or professional journalism topics, effectively replacing the printed news publications.

At the fall 1996 convention in Chicago, Hensel, adviser at Liberty High School (Missouri), gave the report of the committee to investigate content and management options. "[The] JEA website is aesthetically pleasing and strong in content. It needs to be updated more often, correct in grammar and spelling, and easy to download. A style and template should be established."

Kansas State students Jake Palenske, Brent Gray and Ben Stamey helped maintain and grow JEA's web pres-



jea.org, June 20, 2010



jea.org, July 22, 2012

In late January 2012, JEA converted its website from being created in what is now Adobe Dreamweaver to using a content management system, WordPress.

WordPress was released in 2003 as a blogging tool. A year later, it evolved to support publishing other web content by enabling users to add plug-ins and themes. By 2011, it had become the most popular content management system on the web and today 43.4% of all websites use WordPress.

jea.org, July 1, 2018



ence until 2005 when the site underwent a comprehensive redesign; it was still produced using HTML code in what was then Macromedia Dreamweaver.

The revised website contained hundreds of pages of information, including a complete bookstore catalog, the ability to submit speaker and awards nominations forms via email, and detailed information on the JEA certification program. The new website also featured “convention live,” content from the National High School Journalism Convention including highlights of the board meeting, photos from preconference classes as well as notes and photos from sessions, judging, critiques, and the vendor show. Volunteers and Kansas State students posted information online from the convention all day and night and, for the first time, had the results of what was then the Write-off competition posted online by 10:30 p.m. on the last day of the conference, saving national office staff members from dozens of phone calls in the days following the convention.

As reported in JEA semiannual reports, as of Oct. 13, 2002, the JEA website had been hit 31,620 times. This amounts to about 850 hits per week or 121 hits per day. By 2009, more than 900 unique visitors were hitting jea.org per day at peak and about 400 per day on average.

In 2009, JEA paid Atlantic BT \$20,000 to produce the next evolution of JEA’s web presence; this one would keep some content, including registration for the national Write-off competitions and uploading of images for the contests, behind a firewall where only members could access it. That first year, for the Washington, D.C., convention, 223 members uploaded images into the system. In 2019, when the convention was again in D.C., 410 members uploaded images into the system. Since the system went online 29 conventions ago, photo contests alone have generated more than \$120,000 in revenue for JEA.

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Around the same time, JEA also registered the JEA Digital Media and the Scholastic Press Rights Commission websites, further expanding the organization's web presence.

### JEAHELP EMAIL DISTRIBUTION LIST BEGINS

The beginnings of software used to manage email groups trace back to 1986 when Eric Thomas, an engineering student in Paris, developed a software program to automate the management of such lists. However, it wasn't until 1998 that JEA got an email distribution list for members. As reported in the May 1998 *NewsWire*, JEA members who had email could take advantage of the new service the board approved.

Candace Perkins Bowen, JEA past president, set up the unmoderated email distribution list — JEAHELP — at Kent State University, and any JEA member could be added to it and make comments or ask questions. In 2002, Perkins Bowen reported 533 subscribers. That had increased to 1,025 by 2009.

In 2002, Perkins Bowen reported, "In sheer time commitment, the JEAHELP and JEATALK email distribution lists are the most important part of my job.

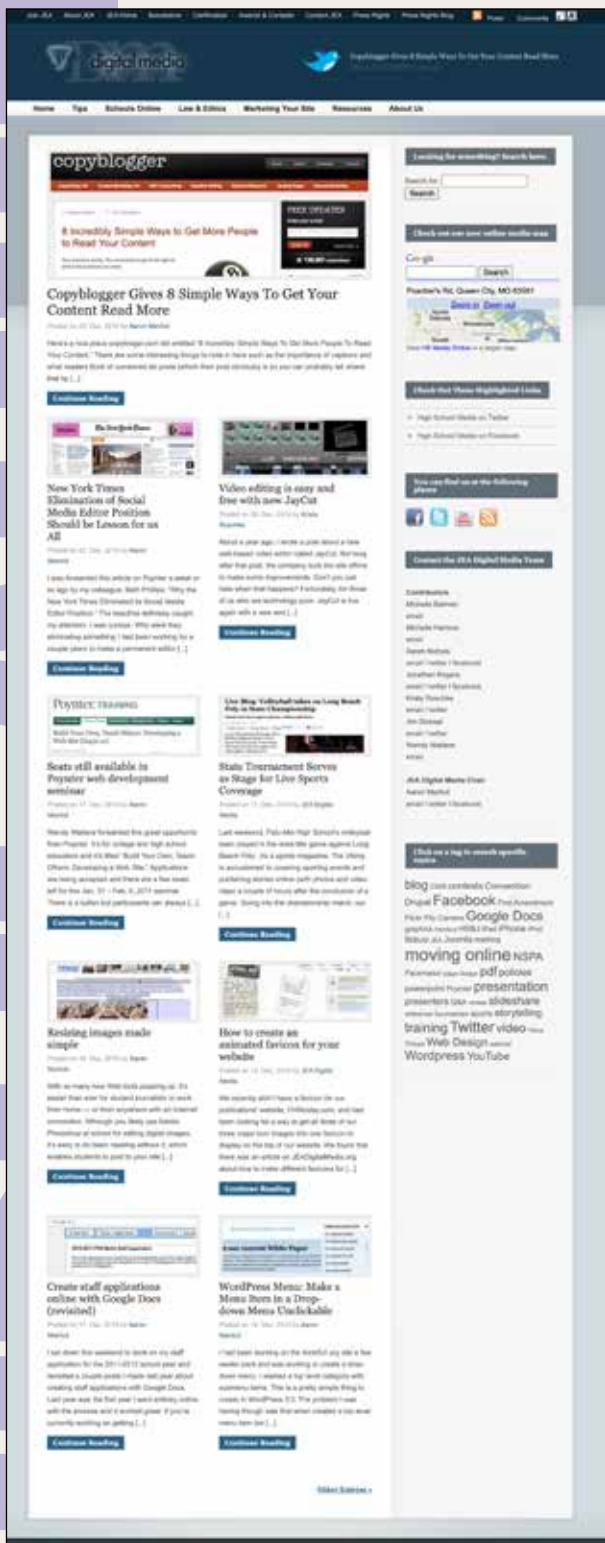
"We started this to share deadlines and information we needed about the organization, but we found it was a great way to get help and suggestions about our classes and publications too," Perkins Bowen said.

In 2003, Perkins Bowen reminded the board that the generic term, according to AP style at the time, was "email distribution list." Popular topics were Krispy Kreme donuts, prior review, crashing servers and block scheduling. In 2009, she reported trivia from the list: "Twenty-three people responded to the correct style for the abbreviated form of "microphone," though, of course, they didn't all agree. And three more had the subject line, "WHO CARES?" • Seventy posts contained the word "hotel" from August until this report was filed. As space got tighter, 27 included the words "Room With a View." • The number of posts including the word "censorship" increased with 83 mentions, up from last fall's 27, in the time since the spring convention. • Wayne Brasler was down almost a hundred posts from the same time last year — 122 compared to 219 — and Chad Rummel, second highest last year with 134, was down to 56. But cpb was also down — 126 down to 75, and that includes 15 current events quizzes. Apparently, with so many total Listservians, there's room for everyone. • No one posted anything on July 4th and thus no one wished JEA Executive Director Linda Puntney a happy birthday as they had in 2008. • The number of gmail accounts continues to grow."

Today, JEAHELP is hosted at Kansas State and has 1,170 subscribers. It supplements the Constant Contact newsletter sent out by national office staff to communicate JEA news to members electronically.

### ONLINE ADVERTISING A SOURCE OF REVENUE

In 1998, the board approved a policy allowing advertising in *NewsWire* and *Communication: Journalism*



jeadigitalmedia.org  
Dec. 25, 2010

JEA Digital Media Committee registered jeadigitalmedia.org on Jan. 8, 2009.

### AARON MANFULL, Digital Media Committee, chair, minutes, JEA Board, fall 2010:

The Digital Media committee had revamped its website during the summer and moved to WordPress. He said that more people were visiting the site.

## NAJD Elects Carlson President for 1963-65



Thomas Carlson, newspaper adviser at Thomas Carr High School, Chicago, Ill., will be the president of NAJD for the next two years. Carlson, 31, is a member of the National Press Club and the National Education Association. He was elected at the NAJD convention held at the Sheraton Hotel in Chicago, Ill., on April 12, 1963. Carlson was elected over Robert G. Slone, secretary-treasurer, and James H. Slone, secretary.

### New NAJD Officers

Carlson, 31, is a member of the National Press Club and the National Education Association. He was elected at the NAJD convention held at the Sheraton Hotel in Chicago, Ill., on April 12, 1963. Carlson was elected over Robert G. Slone, secretary-treasurer, and James H. Slone, secretary.

## NAJD Digest

Official Organ of the National Education Association, a Department of NEA and Affiliated with the National Press Club and National Education Association.

### NAJD Plans Newly-Elected NAJD President Lists Goals

NAJD's incoming vice-presidents are indeed up to the task. Harold Carlson has already served as interim editor. He is a member of the National Press Club and the National Education Association. He was elected at the NAJD convention held at the Sheraton Hotel in Chicago, Ill., on April 12, 1963. Carlson was elected over Robert G. Slone, secretary-treasurer, and James H. Slone, secretary.

NAJD Digest, April 1963, Vol. 17, No. 3, Homer Post, editor

## JEA Digest Delegates Revamp NAJD at Meeting

### PSSP Slates All-Coast Press Clinic Feb. 21-22



The Journal Education Association (JEA) held its annual convention in Chicago, Ill., on April 12, 1963. The convention was held at the Sheraton Hotel. The JEA Digest reported that the delegates at the convention voted to revamp the National Association of Journalists (NAJD). The delegates also voted to support the Professional Staff Society of Publishers (PSSP) and its proposed all-coast press clinic for February 21-22.

### Center, Brief Plan Department Session of JEA at Meeting

The JEA Digest also reported on the session of the JEA at the meeting. The session was held at the Sheraton Hotel in Chicago, Ill., on April 12, 1963. The session was held at the Sheraton Hotel in Chicago, Ill., on April 12, 1963. The session was held at the Sheraton Hotel in Chicago, Ill., on April 12, 1963.

NAJD Digest becomes JEA Digest, February 1964, Vol. 18, No. 2, Homer Post, editor

## J-BEAT

Journalism Education Association (JEA) and National Association of Journalists (NAJD) are pleased to announce the publication of J-BEAT. J-BEAT is a quarterly publication that provides news and information to the journalism community. The first issue of J-BEAT was published in February 1967. The publication is edited by the JEA and NAJD. The first issue of J-BEAT was published in February 1967. The publication is edited by the JEA and NAJD.

### J-BEAT published from 1967 to 1971 using the tag phrase, "Leading the way ... in secondary school journalism"

J-BEAT was published from 1967 to 1971. The publication was published by the Journalism Education Association (JEA) and the National Association of Journalists (NAJD). The publication was published by the Journalism Education Association (JEA) and the National Association of Journalists (NAJD).

## Board okays reorganization



The Board of Directors of the Journalism Education Association (JEA) has approved a reorganization plan. The plan calls for the creation of a new executive committee and the restructuring of the board. The reorganization plan was approved at a meeting of the board held in Chicago, Ill., on June 1, 1966. The reorganization plan was approved at a meeting of the board held in Chicago, Ill., on June 1, 1966.

### 1967 election info

- Chicago '66 preview ... 2
- Awards nominations ... 3
- Press news service ... 6
- Portland '67 invite ... 7
- Who's news ... 8

NewsWire, June 1966, Susan Tantillo, editor

## NewsWire

Journalism Education Association Vol. 15, No. 1, October 1967

### Missouri convention activities, keynote start earlier than usual

The Missouri convention of the Journalism Education Association (JEA) was held in St. Louis, Mo., on October 1, 1967. The convention was held at the Sheraton Hotel in St. Louis, Mo., on October 1, 1967. The convention was held at the Sheraton Hotel in St. Louis, Mo., on October 1, 1967.

### 13 selected for national JEA awards

Thirteen individuals have been selected for the national Journalism Education Association (JEA) awards. The awards are presented annually to recognize outstanding achievement in journalism. The awards are presented annually to recognize outstanding achievement in journalism.

NewsWire, October 1967, Ron Hayes, editor

## NewsWire

Journalism Education Association Vol. 15, No. 1, October 1967

### Indanapolis JEA/NSPA convention designed to help start your presses

The Indianapolis Journalism Education Association (JEA) and National Student Press Association (NSPA) are pleased to announce a convention designed to help start your presses. The convention is being held in Indianapolis, Ind., on October 1, 1967. The convention is being held in Indianapolis, Ind., on October 1, 1967.

### INSIDE

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- NEA chronicles covered winners...45
- Symposium influences certification process...67
- Student Journalist of Year form enclosed

NewsWire, October 1990, Nancy Hall, editor

Education Today, coordinated by Connie Fulkerson at JEA headquarters. A full-page ad that year cost \$100 in NewsWire and \$200 in C.JET. Today, a full-page ad in C.JET costs \$350. The first year, JEA received \$6,625 (\$12,118.57 in today's dollars) in advertising money for C.JET. C.JET received \$11,363 in advertising in 2020-2021, down from a high of \$16,058 in 2017-2018. In 2009, Wilson reported to the board, "We have enough hits on a regular basis now to consider selling advertising on the site or to give C.JET advertisers a 'value-added' ad on the site. As we work on updating the site, this may be something we consider."

Today, advertisers can buy online advertising, print advertising or some combination of the two in various packages that can also include ads on official JEA social media.

most important JEA services, second only to conventions in a 2011 membership survey, and third to conventions and curriculum in 2023 with 97% of survey respondents reporting the magazine was useful. In 2020, Howard Spanogle, then the magazine's copy editor, donated \$2,000 to develop a database of C.JET articles dating back to spring 1998, 1,112 entries. The database includes all information needed for a proper citation or bibliography to assist advisors in finding the articles they need for their classroom or research. According to JEA Executive Director Kelly Glasscock in the spring 2020 semiannual report, "This will be a really cool resource. JEA needs more member benefits. To a new member, they have no idea the tremendous log of incredible articles previously published. This will be really fun to see in action."

While C.JET issues have been accessible since 2006 through the EBSCO database, an online database available largely through university libraries, JEA members will be able to search and to download protected PDF versions of individual articles by the fall of 2024.

## JEA MEDIA EVOLVE

Throughout all these years, C.JET magazine has remained the only membership item sent regularly to all JEA members. It is continually cited as one of the

most important JEA services, second only to conventions in a 2011 membership survey, and third to conventions and curriculum in 2023 with 97% of survey respondents reporting the magazine was useful.

# PUBLICATIONS TIMELINE

- 1945 The *NAJD Digest* begins publication
- 1953 Lee Pursley of Anderson High School (Indiana) becomes editor of *The NAJD Digest*, Vol. 9

**PRICE ROBINSON, NAJD president:** Anything that this issue lacks is due to those of you who have not contributed to its success. In other words, Lee is asking, yea, pleading, for items, chit-chat or articles of professional import. What is your fellow teacher doing? We would like to know, via these pages — so scribble Lee a note.

SOURCE: *The NAJD Digest*, November 1953

- 1957 Homer Post becomes editor of *The NAJD Digest* – “Official organ of the National Association of Journalism Directors, a department of NEA and affiliated with NCTE, NSPA and Quill and Scroll.” He served in this capacity until the spring of 1968.

- 1967 First issue of *Communication: Journalism Education Today* published, Virginia Woodring, editor

- 1968 Second volume of *Communication: Journalism Education Today*, Virginia Woodring, editor, published combined with *JEA Digest*, Tom Oliver, editor

**RUTH MARIE GRIGGS, JEA president:** Now merged with *JET* is the *Journalism Education Digest*, thus making this volume 23 for the JEA publications.

SOURCE: *Communication: Journalism Education Today*, fall 1968

**VIRGINIA WOODRING, editor:** *Communication: Journalism Education Today/Digest* was primarily established to meet the challenge of an evolving high school curriculum, a constantly changing world, and a gradual alteration in the pattern of high school publications. The magazine is written particularly for journalism, English, speech, social science, art, publications and audiovisual teachers.

SOURCE: *Communication: Journalism Education Today*, fall 1968

- 1973 *NewsWire* begins publication with Elizabeth Ahlgren, editor
- 1975 Larry Lain becomes *NewsWire* editor and serves until 1978
- 1978 Susan Tantillo becomes *NewsWire* editor
- 1982 Dorothy McPhillips steps down as *CJET* editor
- 1987 Ron Hayes becomes *NewsWire* editor
- 1989 Nancy Hall becomes *NewsWire* editor
- 1991 H.L. Hall becomes *NewsWire* editor
- 1991 Judy Babb, as JEA Board secretary, becomes *NewsWire* editor; Mary Lu Foreman and Connie Fulkerson serve as contributing editors for final two issues

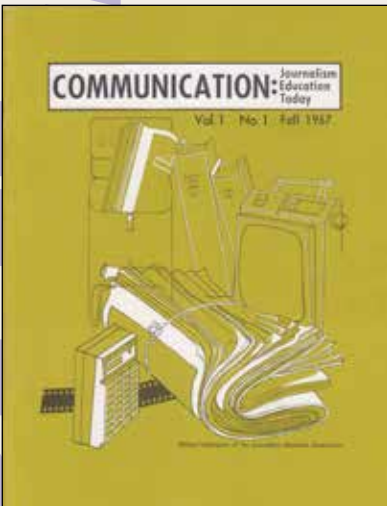
- 1995 Carol Lange, as JEA Board secretary, becomes *NewsWire* editor

- 1995 Ann Visser serves as *NewsWire* editor for one issue

- 1996 jea.org registered; From JEA Board minutes: “[Linda] Puntney will investigate with Mary Anne McCloud and her husband a way to link all JEA members on the Internet.” Created by Jan Hensel, adviser at Liberty High School (Missouri), jea.org goes live with content produced in the fall of 1996

- 1997 Bradley Wilson named *NewsWire* editor with Vol. 25

**NewsWire, October 1973, Elizabeth Ahlgren, editor**



**Communication: Journalism Education Today, fall 1967**



**jea.org on Nov. 8, 1996, Jan Hensel, MJE, webmaster**

## C:JET'S FIRST EDITOR

# She made learning fun

Reprinted From *C:JET*, winter 1996

By MOLLY J. CLEMONS

One of JEA's strongest supporters, and the first editor of *Communication: Journalism Education Today*, died July 22, 1996, at the age of 81. Virginia Woodring, a fiery redhead from Springfield, Missouri, was never without comment, wit or wisdom.

As a college student, I sat in on a JEA Curriculum Commission meeting at the fall convention in Chicago on Thanksgiving Day 1966. With the late Sister Ann Christine Heintz at the helm as commission chair, Virginia was named editor of the new publication. She responded with story ideas and suggestions immediately.

The first issue made its debut in 1967 with an avocado cover and pale green pages. (These colors were in vogue for yearbooks and other items at the time.) It remains one of the best issues ever published. Full of research and background, Virginia explored the teaching of mass media with the experts.

Virginia continued as editor until 1974, always searching for "what was new" in scholastic journalism and media education. During this time she was also the journalism coordinator for the Springfield Public Schools, and she produced a monthly teen television program for the community.

She received JEA's Medal of Merit in 1967, the Carl Towley Award in 1972, and she was named the Newspaper Fund's Journalism Teacher of the Year in 1969. She taught in the Springfield system from 1945 until her retirement in 1982.

A frequent workshop instructor and conference speaker, Virginia was well known for her humor and situations only she could get herself into. While teaching at the University of Missouri's Summer Media Workshop, she was very late getting back one evening from the International House of Pancakes, and she found her dorm locked. She even tried crawling in a window. The police caught her. But with Virginia's sense of charm and effective voice, she convinced them to unlock the door for her.

But that was it. Virginia announced she'd

never stay in a dorm again — and she never did.

Virginia had a tremendous sense of style and loved to shop. Her bright copper hair did make people notice. Once in Kansas City, when she was trying on dresses, the sales associate said, "Mrs. Woodring, that dress would be beautiful for you if it weren't for the color of your hair." She replied, "If it looks good, maybe we should go for it. The hair can be any color or shade."

The same day she was trying on shoes and told the salesman she didn't care if he sold her a size 12, a long as they were comfortable. When all else failed, he finally asked if he could perhaps knit her a pair.

She gave me some great housecleaning advice one time. She said to leave the vacuum cleaner standing in the foyer of the home. Then when unexpected guests arrived, it didn't matter what the house looked like, they would think I was in the middle of cleaning it!

Although Virginia had received many awards and honors during her educational career, none were displayed. She and her late husband, Dr. Wiley Woodring, a professor in education at Southwest Missouri State University, gave money to a lot of young people to help get their lives started.

While a resident in a nursing care facility the last three years of her life, she continued to assist young people working there and helping them get into college or training programs.

Some aspects of Virginia's life were colorful and flamboyant. Other aspects were serious and quiet. Those were the ones few people knew about.

In the last year of her life, Virginia still asked what was going on in high school journalism. She was excited to hear about computers and wished she could have been a part of that era. She still wanted to read *C:JET*.

A line on Wiley and Virginia's tombstone reads, "They made learning fun."

They made life fun and a little bit better for many people, especially those associated with scholastic journalism. ■



**VIRGINIA WOODRING**  
(1914-1996)

1967-1974, editor,  
*Communication: Journalism Education Today*

1967 JEA Medal of Merit

1969 Dow Jones News Fund Journalism Teacher of the Year

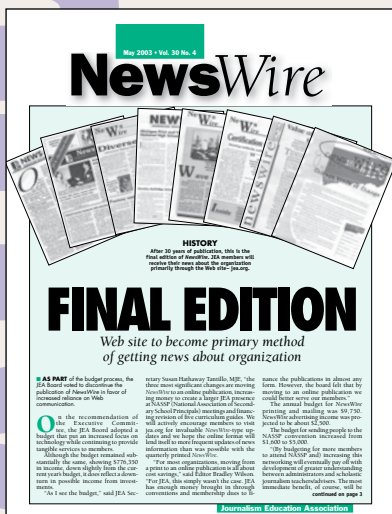
1972 JEA Carl Towley Award

President, Missouri Publication Advisors Association

- 1998 Bradley Wilson begins editing *Communication: Journalism Education Today* with Vol. 31
- 1999 75th anniversary special publication *Visions* published, Molly and Ron Clemons, editors
- 1999 Jake Palenske becomes first person officially listed as JEA webmaster in conference programs
- 2000 Howard Spanogle begins as *C:JET* copy editor with Vol. 33, No. 4
- 2001 Brent Gray, JEA webmaster
- 2002 Ben Stamey, JEA webmaster
- 2003 Final printed edition of *NewsWire* published in May, Vol. 30

**BRADLEY WILSON, EDITOR:** For most organizations, moving from a print to an online publication is all about cost savings. For JEA, this simply wasn't the case. JEA has enough money brought in through conventions and membership dues to finance the publications in almost any form. However, the board felt that by moving to an online publication we could better serve our members." The annual budget for *NewsWire* printing and mailing was \$9,750. *NewsWire* advertising income was projected to be about \$2,500.

SOURCE: *NewsWire*, May 2003



*NewsWire*, May 2004, Bradley Wilson, editor

- 2004 *C:JET Extra* wrapped around *C:JET* magazine for 33 issues
- 2004 Josh Bassett, JEA webmaster
- 2005 Bradley Wilson, JEA webmaster
- 2009 In January, JEA Digital Media registers jeadigitalmedia.org as the domain for that committee's online content
- 2009 In April, JEA Scholastic Press Rights Commission registers jeasprc.org as the domain for online content
- 2009 JEA contracts with Atlantic BT, a web design and development company, in Raleigh, North Carolina, to design and to implement online Write-off contest management system for about \$20,000; goes live in fall of 2009 and 223 photographers upload images into the system
- 2010 Howard Spanogle named assistant editor; Connie Fulkerson named copy editor
- 2012 Arthi Subramanian, JEA webmaster
- 2013 Chris Cox, JEA webmaster
- 2014 Kate Dubiel hired as full-time staff member in the national office with oversight over technology including JEA's website and online student media contest system
- 2018 *C:JET* advisory board named: Ellen Austin, Amy DeVault, Tyler Dukes, Kyle Ellis, Mark Grabowski, Scott Winter
- 2019 Connie Fulkerson and Beth Butler, copy editors
- 2019 JEA creates a SmugMug gallery to display entries recognized in convention photo contests and 1,203 images uploaded from four conventions initially
- 2020 Beth Butler, copy editor
- 2022 Howard Spanogle funds searchable database of *C:JET* articles; data entry of 1,112 articles completed by Cecil Witherspoon
- 2024 DJ Far, a contracted programmer, completes back-end system to put database of articles online and imports existing data; Alex Sinks creates individual PDF files of all *C:JET* articles available and uploads to system
- 2024 JEA contracts with Fierce Creative Agency (St. Charles, Missouri) to redesign jea.org for about \$40,000



***C:JET Extra*, wrapped around *Communication: Journalism Education Today*, Summer 2009, Bradley Wilson, editor**

## C:JET EDITOR'S GOAL:

# Make journalism better

Molly Clemons was only 27 when she became JEA president in 1975 and served one, two-year term. Always active in scholastic journalism and JEA, she received the Carl Towley award in 1980. She died Sept. 29, 2022.

Molly served as editor of *Communication: Journalism Education Today* for 15 years from 1982 to 1997 and, indeed, spent most of her career in education, beginning as a journalism teacher and head of the English Department at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb.

Linda Puntney, MJE, former JEA executive director, said, "Perhaps her most influential role was as editor of *C:JET* where she crafted content to help teachers and advisers bring best-practice techniques and cutting-edge ideas to their staffs."

Molly taught English and journalism at Blue Springs High School for one year, then became assistant principal at Palmer Junior High, later moving to Truman High School for 10 years, before becoming director of secondary education and emergency preparedness for the school district.

Former JEA President Candace Perkins Bowen, MJE, said, "She and Ron [Clemons] were the heart and soul of JEA back then. Both former presidents, they helped the organization grow and prosper."

Former JEA President H.L. Hall, MJE, said, "She and Ron both were outstanding leaders in JEA and helped make scholastic journalism better throughout the country."

Ron, her husband of 40 years, provided the following information for JEA's 100th anniversary.

### WHAT WAS THE FOCUS OF HER PRESIDENCY?

As president, she had two passions: student press rights and Write-offs. She even helped develop more Write-offs categories.

### HOW DID HER INVOLVEMENT IN JEA AFFECT HER CAREER?

She always said JEA helped her develop further leadership roles — roles that led her down a different path. After she and Ron were married in 1982, she moved to Independence, Missouri, where, within a year, she was named assistant principal of Palmer Junior High

School. She served in that position for six years and was named by *Executive Educator* magazine one of the 100 top administrators in the country.

### HOW DID HER LEADERSHIP ROLE CHANGE?

She became associate principal at Truman High School and, for 10 years, was one of Ron's bosses. She was named director of Higher Education and Emergency Preparedness for the Independence School District. While at Palmer and Truman, she wrote the presentation that led to each school receiving the Blue Ribbon Award from the U.S. Department of Education. She went to the White House to receive the award from the president.

### WHAT LEADERSHIP ROLES DID SHE HAVE AFTER SHE RETIRED?

She became director of the George Caleb Bingham Academy of the Arts, a five-week summer program for outstanding students in art, creative media, music, or theater. She followed Ron as director after he retired from that position. One of the founders of the academy, he was director for 15 years. In 2015 she and Ron were named co-executive directors of Music/Arts Institute, a nonprofit school for private music lessons. She held both positions until her unexpected death Sept. 29, 2022. Two scholarships are given in her name and on Nov. 11, 2023, the institute dedicated the new Molly Clemons Multipurpose Center.

### WHAT RECOGNITION DID SHE RECEIVE OUTSIDE OF ACADEMICS?

She was president of the Independence Junior Service League and the Independence Youth Court. She also served on the Truman Presidential Library Commission where she had the opportunity to meet past presidents and leading seniors who received the Harry S. Truman Award. The commission gave her a Special Recognition Award posthumously in November 2023. In 2020 the *Independence Examiner* named her the "Outstanding Woman of the Year" for Eastern Jackson County. The mayor of Independence named Molly and her husband Independence Citizens of the Year in 2015. ■



**MOLLY CLEMONS**  
(1947-2022)

1982-1997, editor,  
*Communication:*  
*Journalism Education*  
*Today*

1975 Elected JEA  
president

1980 JEA Carl Towley  
Award

1982 Married Ron  
Clemons

NSPA Pioneer Award  
recipient



Read Molly's thoughts on being an administrator in the summer 2003 issue of *Communication: Journalism Education Today*, Pages 34-35.