

THE CHASER

SPJ

November – December 1996

Fort Worth Chapter / Society of Professional Journalists

"If it happened in Fort Worth ...

it's news to us!" tips: jdycus@arlington.net

First we go to church ... then we hit the bottle

You want variety in your SPJ meetings? We've got your variety. ㄗ In November, Broadway Baptist Church will host the chapter for a killer pipe organ demonstration. The Christmas party will be a wine tasting. ㄗ Just your average SPJ schedule. ㄗ One of the world's most magnificent pipe organs, the Rildia Bee O'Bryan Cliburn Organ, will be stretched to its impressive limits by Thomas Stoker, Broadway's minister of music, for our right-after-work portion of the November meeting. From the softest whisper to the hands-over-the-ears rumble, the organ is remarkable in both design and sound. ㄗ After the Postlude, we'll adjourn to the Rodeo Steakhouse (formerly The Keg), 1309 Calhoun St., for food, libation and a brief business meeting. Order off the menu, if you like (no collection plate will be passed). ㄗ The day is different, **Thursday, Nov. 14**. The time is early, **5:30**. The church is at 305 W. Broadway. ㄗ Wine tasting, hors d'oeuvres and unbridled merriment are next on the menu — **7 p.m. Dec. 5** — at Sue and Alan Winter's, 2435 Winton Terrace W. ㄗ Bring \$10 to cover the food and the bubbles. ㄗ Don't bring anything for the auction. It's been called off to leave more time for free-form fun. ㄗ Call Sue (926-9316) to RSVP for the Christmas party.

Ethics code goes to work

After much debate, SPJ has a new Code of Ethics calling on reporters to seek the truth and report it, minimize harm, act independently and be accountable.

The current Quill prints the code on page 1 and promises complete coverage of the national convention, including what went into adopting the code, in next month's issue.

The code is designed to strengthen the bond of mutual trust between journalists and the public, whose right to know we serve. Fact is, our public doesn't like us much these days.

Debate has centered on the lack of an enforcement clause. Proponents point out that before 1987 the ethics code called for journalists to "actively censure" colleagues who breached the code. Others counter that we cannot legally force each other to be ethical and that the best way to enforce the code is to talk about it and make certain that everyone involved in gathering, writing, broadcasting, editing and publishing the news is aware of what it takes to be an ethical journalist — and that we are watching each other as well as public officials.

SPJ president Steve Geimann noted that the

code addresses recent technology changes, including the huge increase in on-line services as well as alternative media and the increase in diversity among journalists, news sources, readers and broadcast audiences.

The code was adopted after last year's proposals — including 29 suggested amendments presented at the 1995 national convention — were thrown out and more than 100 meetings were held around the country to start over. Among the most important provisions of the new code: "Tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience boldly, even when it is unpopular to do so." ... "Avoid stereotyping by race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance or social status."

And, perhaps most important in today's market: "Avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived. Remain free of associations and activities that may compromise integrity or damage credibility. ... Deny favored treatment to advertisers and special interests and resist their pressure to influence news coverage."

— Carolyn Poirot

Ed Hanley: The spotlight shone 'til the end

Former SPJ President Ed Hanley died Oct. 28 at his home in Westworth Village. He was 66.

Ed will be remembered for many great Gridiron roles (more than 20 shows), but his last solo in the 50th Golden Gridiron brought down the house. His portrayal of William Walker of the Fort Worth Opera, followed

by Ruta Lee's exuberant floral presentation, was a real show stopper.

One of Ed's proudest moments was when he introduced then-Vice President and Mrs. George Bush at the 1988 Gridiron.

A former business editor of the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Ed retired from TU Electric. Prior to the S-T,

he worked at General Dynamics and taught school.

His love for acting extended to his church, Ridgley Christian, where he wrote, produced and starred in numerous productions. During his memorial service he was remembered as being the first to say, "Let's put on a show!"

— Verlie Edwards