

Spot News

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Follies auction features stay with ambassador

Former Knoxville Mayor Victor Ashe, now ambassador to Poland, is donating an extraordinary item for the Front Page Follies auction—Two nights in Warsaw at the Ambassador's Residence.

On arrival in Warsaw at the Chopin International Airport, the winning bidder will be met personally by Ambassador Ashe and will be escorted in his official car to the ambassador's residence where the lucky person will stay in the principal guest room. This residence has over the years hosted four presidents of Poland and three American presidents and two vice presidents, not to mention every Secretary of State since 1976. Each July 4 it is the scene of the July 4th Independence Day party which attracts more than 1200 guests.

The package will include breakfast in the private family dining room or on the terrace with a spectacular view of downtown Warsaw—weather permitting—and one formal dinner in the state dining room.

Also included is a tour of Old Town with a visit to the Royal Castle where Polish royalty resided centuries

ago and a walk along the Royal Way. A visit to the newly opened Museum of the Warsaw Uprising, which has received rave reviews, will be a highlight.

Joan Ashe will take the winner on a special shopping tour to her favorite shops where Polish handicrafts, amber and leather goods are expertly designed and made and sold at prices others only talk about. The person who wins this auction item will need to take an empty suitcase to bring back the items he or she cannot do without.

The Ambassador will take the winner on a special tour of the 530-person strong American Embassy to see diplomacy at work. If the winner decides to stay on his or her own to visit Krakow, the ancient capital of Poland and the home of the late John Paul II when he was Bishop and Cardinal, expert advice and

assistance on travel arrangements and sights to see will be provided.



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Region 3 meeting

Changing districts a possibility

By Jean Ash

Drawing a new map of SPJ's different regions (including ours), membership, and the location of next year's Region 3 conference were on the agenda at the Region 3 Conference in Charleston last month.

Region 3 Director Holly Fisher announced that discussion among national SPJ officers includes the possibility of merging East Tennessee into Region 12 or keeping it in Region 3. Another possibility affecting our chapter might be the merger of North Carolina into Region 3. President-elect Dave Carlson pointed out that some regions, as currently configured, have thousands more members than others, but are much smaller geographically. "There's an attempt to try and even things out," he said.

SPJ membership is a constant concern, said Fisher, noting that the totals are steady but there is constant churning. She said we need to concentrate on retaining members and that this issue will be a priority of the new presidency.

Looking toward the future, Fisher said a canvass of Region 3 did not uncover anyone else who wanted to run for Regional Director, so she is willing to continue in the position for another two years.

Also, the chapter representatives present (which did not include anyone from the University of Georgia) selected UGA in Athens, Georgia, as the top likely location for the regional conference in 2006. Advantages include a university conference center, which would be financially attractive, and the relative ease of calling on Atlanta media and academic personnel to staff panels. Other locations mentioned include Jacksonville, Gainesville, and Orlando, Florida.

Golden Press Card

Winners in the **Golden Press Card Competition** will be announced on Friday, May 20, at the University Club.

The event starts at **6:30 p.m.** with a cash bar. Dinner (salad, dinner and dessert) is at 7:00, and the program begins at 7:30.

Keynote speaker this year is Irwin Gratz, president of the national Society of Professional Journalists. A broadcaster in Maine for 26 years, Gratz is now the voice of Maine Public Radio's Morning Edition.

Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door. Make reservations with Sally Guthrie (588-1474) or sallyguthrie@mindspring.com.

Follies auction

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The dates are to be mutually arranged between the winner and Ambassador Ashe. Airfare is not included.

Thank you to Georgiana Vines for making this happen.

The auction committee is working hard to come up with items. For example, Citadel Communications has donated for the auction \$1,000 worth of advertising on NewsTalk99 WNOX.

The Front Page Follies will be Saturday, June 18, at the Knoxville Convention Center. Cocktails are at 6:00, dinner at 7:00 and the show at 8:00. Tickets are \$100 each or \$1,000 for a reserved table for ten.

This year's honoree is Tutt Bradford.

Officers and Board ETSPJ

President Dorothy Bowles

First Vice President Alan Carmichael

Second Vice President Michele Silva

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Ex Officio Georgiana Vines

Communications Coordinator

Sally Guthrie (588-1474)



Representing ETSPJ at the Region 3 conference in Charleston, S.C., April 8-9 were from left, Bonnie Hufford, UT student chapter adviser; Lisa Hood Skinner, ETSPJ past president; Holly Fisher, Region 3 director; Dorothy Bowles, ETSPJ president; and Jean Ash, ETSPJ secretary.

Not many hardcore news junkies, convention speaker says

by Jean Ash

One of the popular sessions was titled “The Emergence of Convergence.” Panelist Ken Rickard, of Morris Digital Works (a division of Morris Communications), said the use of technology to connect a series of newsrooms to each other must also include the often overlooked convergence with the audience, what he calls a critical component.

He cited statistics showing daily newspaper readership and projections from 1970-2010 as a line going straight down. Meanwhile, a review of page-views of Web publications shows huge year-on-year growth until 2004, when the growth turned flat.

The problem, according to Rickard, is that the number of hard-core news junkies is but a small slice of the pie, which is now maxed-out. In addition, he says, people are more interested in world and national than in local news. Today we are seeing “the most transient and mobile society in human history that is not actually nomadic,” he said.

BluffonToday.com

Using a Morris cyber publication, BluffonToday.com as an example of the direction converged journalism should be going, Rickard said reader participation and news-gathering transparency are the keys to success.

(Please look at www.bluffontoday.com to see some of the innovations being made.)

Another panelist, SPJ President-elect and director of the Interactive Media Lab at the University of Florida, Dave Carlson, explained how the Internet has the ability to capitalize on the strengths and eliminate the weaknesses of the different traditional media.

For instance, the new, converged, media can optimize the strength of radio and cable media while combating the weakness of print in the area of timeliness. Similarly, it can override the linear-ness of TV and radio by allowing users to select the stories they are interested in, while skipping over those they are not. Internet users can also rerun video clips. The ‘net also lets users be eyewitnesses to events as with TV, and encourage use of the imagination, as with radio.

Sponsored content

A negative was pointed out by the third panelist, Augie Grant, associate professor at the University of South Carolina. He is concerned about Internet media links to other pages that “will result in people not realizing they are seeing sponsored content.”

And while the Internet can overcome problems and expenses of traditional media distribution, Rickard said we need to lower limits on access to include those without computers, perhaps by means of things like kiosks in malls.

Law School for Journalists

Please help us spread the word among Tennessee media. The Law School for Journalists, June 6, is going to be an outstanding program with outstanding panelists and luncheon speaker.

And who can turn down a free box lunch? There is no charge to attend the Law School for Journalists, and an updated Media Guide to Tennessee's Legal System will be given to those attending, along with other materials.

Registration information is posted on the Web site at www.tsc.state.tn.us, and registration material is at <http://www.txc.state.tn.us/geninfo/PRESSREL/2005/LSJ.htm>.

Mark Your Calendar

May 20, 6:30 p.m., Golden Press Card awards program, University Club

June 18, 6 p.m., Front Page Follies, Knoxville Convention Center

Golden Press Card Awards

May 20, 6:30 p.m.