

Spot News

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GPC awards program set for May 3

East Tennessee Pro Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists will announce winners of the annual Golden Press Card awards Friday, May 3, at the University Club (former Faculty Club),

The event will begin at 6:30 with a cash bar and heavy hors d'oeuvres. You can make your reservations by sending a check for \$20 per person (payable to ETSPJ Golden Press Card) to Dorothy Bowles, 1829 Chicadee Drive, Knoxville, TN 37919.

Reservations must be received by Friday, April 26, and any cancellation not received before that date will be billed \$20. If still available, tickets purchased at the door will be \$25. The University Club is at the corner of Neyland Drive and Kingston Pike.

Keynote speaker

Our keynote speaker this year is Tim Franklin, editor and vice president of the Orlando Sentinel. A long-time reporter and department editor at the Chicago Tribune and former editor of the Indianapolis Star, Franklin had been at the Orlando Sentinel's helm only two months when the newspaper was heavily involved in the Dale Earnhardt autopsy photos controversy.

A popular Freedom of Information speaker and featured speaker at the national SPJ conference in Seattle this past year, Franklin actually has some ties to the Knoxville area...he was a 1979 summer intern at the Knoxville News-Sentinel before graduating from Indiana University.

Franklin, 41, began his career at the Chicago Tribune in 1982, where he rose from county government reporter to

associate managing editor in 1997. Franklin was named one of the nation's 100 most influential business journalists by TJFR magazine, a publication that covers financial journalism. In 1999, the Midwest Financial Editors and Writers named the Tribune's business section as the best in the Midwest for overall news coverage.

AP Top 10

Franklin headed the Tribune sports department in 1996 when it won the most national AP sports editor's awards (4) in its history. In 1995, the paper won its first AP Top 10 daily section award in three years. In 1988, Franklin received an Oscar in Agriculture Award, one of the nation's top agricultural reporting awards, for a six-part series on the fallout of the farm crisis.

He was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in 1986 for a series on the state's child welfare system.

In 1981, Franklin received the Barney Kilgore Award, given annually by the Society of Professional Journalists/SDX to the nation's top college journalism student.



Tim Franklin

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Heartbreak revisited: Lessons learned from Columbine

by Clifford Hightower, UT journalism student

News reporters learned many lessons almost three years ago when two teenagers killed 13 others and themselves at Columbine High School near Denver, the former managing editor of the Rocky Mountain News said. The newspaper won a Pulitzer Prize for its photography in covering the event.

Jack McElroy, recently named editor of the Knoxville News-Sentinel, spoke to a crowd of more than 80 area reporters and journalism students at the ETSPJ meeting in March at Ramsey's cafeteria.

In April 1999, Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris, after plotting the attacks for weeks, entered the high school with guns and killed 13 people and wounded more than 40 others.

Afterward, Klebold and Harris turned the guns on themselves and took their own lives.

Lessons Learned

"I think there were a lot of lessons learned," McElroy said of the press coverage. Some of the biggest lessons were about trying to treat the event as a tragedy rather than a crime scene and being more careful with the reporting of eyewitness accounts.

McElroy said he remembered the moment he heard of the shooting. "We were in our morning news meeting. Then an editor came in and said shots were fired at a local high school."

McElroy asked a new reporter, who had just arrived that day, to call and ask for advice from newspapers in other locations where similar events had occurred. The majority said to treat the event as a tragedy, not as a crime story. The newspaper used this as the basis for its coverage.

Heartbreak

"That day we decided to run the paper with the headline 'Heartbreak,'" McElroy said. "We felt this was appropriate. We wanted to present ourselves as part of the community."

As the stories began to unfold, McElroy said he and the other higher-ups at the newspaper began to see stress taking its toll on some of the reporters in the newsroom. The Rocky Mountain News brought in counselors to help reporters cope.

"The sensitivity was like nothing I'd ever seen in a newsroom," he said.

One of the biggest mistakes made by the newsroom,



Jack McElroy

McElroy said, was the handling of the Cassie Bernall story. Bernall was said to have been asked by Klebold and Harris if she believed in God. The teenager's response was reported to have been yes, and then she was shot and killed.

Urban legend

McElroy said later they found they were in error with the story, but they could not correct the mistake. It was already a part of urban legend.

"We don't know what Cassie Bernall said," McElroy said.

A visibly shaken McElroy presented a slideshow of the photographs that won the Pulitzer Prize. "I still get choked up to this day," he said.

Although there were many mistakes, McElroy felt the experience was something he could never forget. "Journalistically, it was the greatest experience I ever had," he said.

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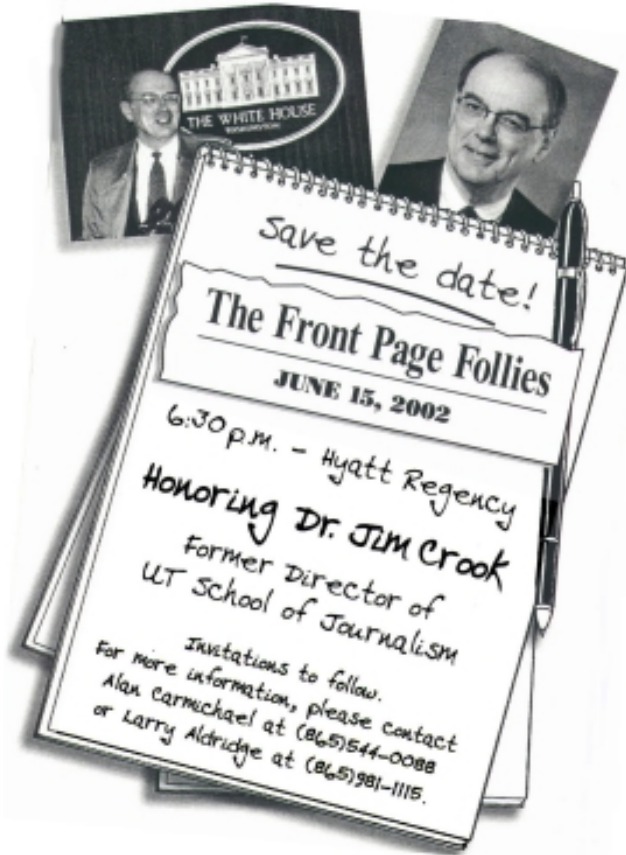
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Follies preview



Front Page Follies 2002 will honor Jim Crook. This postcard reminder has been mailed to those who typically reserve tables. The next edition of Spot News will have more information. Meanwhile, save June 15 on your schedule.

Noteworthy

Speaker at ONO Conference

Dorothy Bowles is to be a featured speaker at the Organization of News Ombudsmen (ONO) 2002 conference in Salt Lake City at the end of April. The group is interested in her research examining the response of newspaper editorials to Supreme Court's decisions in First Amendment cases. On the program with Bowles are Bill Kovach, chairman of the Committee of Concerned Journalists, and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania.

Story in TrailRunner

Former ETSPJ president, Wynne Brown, has published a story and photographs in the March 2002 edition of TrailRunner magazine. Brown's work describes the man-against-horse race near Prescott, Ariz., last October. She now lives in Tucson.

New Member

Pete Prince, veteran newspaperman, has rejoined ETSPJ. Prince, a resident of Maryville, has published, written for, and edited several newspapers including the Knoxville News-Sentinel, the Clinton Courier-News, and the Morristown Citizen Tribune.

Editor and Publisher

Ron Bridgeman, formerly of the Oak Ridger, is now editor and publisher of the Clinton Courier-News.



Members of the audience at ETSPJ's March meeting, Lessons Learned from Columbine, listen to speaker, Jack McElroy.

Franklin *from page 1*

During his tenure in Indianapolis, Franklin made substantial changes to the paper, including opening bureaus in Detroit and Bloomington. He reorganized the paper's staff of 300 reporters, and he launched a redesign of the paper.

In his year there, the Star won numerous honors, including a top spot news coverage award from Gannett for its work on the Bob Knight firing. The paper also won more Hoosier State Press Association awards than at any time in its history.

Franklin is on the board of the Florida Society of Newspaper Editors. He is co-chairman of the organization's Public Access Committee, which has been actively involved in preserving the state's open government and public records laws. He also is a member of the Leadership Committee for the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

Franklin received a bachelor's degree from Indiana University in 1982 with majors in journalism and political science and a minor in education.

Franklin is married and has 9-year-old twins. His wife, Alison, is an attorney.

Mark Your Calendar

April 19-21, SPJ National Writers' Workshop Region 3 Conference, Atlanta

June 8-9, SPJ National Writers' Workshop , Indianapolis

May 3, 6:30 p.m., Golden Press Card awards, University Club. Speaker: Tim Franklin, Orlando Sentinel

June 15, 6:30 p.m. Front Page Follies honoring Jim Crook, Marriott (formerly Hyatt Regency)

Golden Press Card awards 6:30 p.m., May 3