

# Spot News

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## 2004 Front Page Follies to honor Jackie Brown

The 2004 Front Page Follies will honor former News Sentinel co-worker and long-time Follies cast member Jackie Brown, who passed away recently after a two-year bout with cancer.

Jackie, who sang in many local musical productions and at Alive After Five at the Knoxville Museum of Art, was known for her rousing blues and gospel style solos in the Follies.

### Paula Apsell of Nova to deliver Hill Lecture

Paula Apsell, Executive Producer of Nova, the most honored science documentary series on television, will speak on "What's Hot, What's Not, in Science Programming" on the University of Tennessee campus Monday evening, March 29. Her speech will be at 8 p.m. in the University Center's Shiloh Room. The public is welcome. There is no admission charge. Refreshments will be served after her presentation.

Apsell's speech is this year's Alfred and Julia Hill Lecture. This lecture series brings distinguished science communicators to campus to share their thoughts on science, society, and the mass media. The Hill Lectures are made possible by an endowment created by Tom Hill and Mary Frances Hill Holton in honor of their parents Alfred and Julia Hill, who founded Oak Ridge's daily newspaper The Oak Ridger. The Hill family's endowment of the lecture series was a gift to the University of Tennessee's School of Journalism and Electronic Media in the College of Communication and Information.

The Follies will be at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, June 19, at the Knoxville Convention Center.

The annual roast of newsmakers is sponsored by the East Tennessee Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists and raises funds for communications scholarships at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville.

"It will be emotional for all of us in the cast as we honor Jackie and name the Follies scholarship for her," said chapter President Lisa Skinner.

"But the show will be its usual fun and rollicking self as we poke good-hearted fun at newsmakers. Jackie wouldn't have wanted it any other way."

Jackie was a reporter at the News Sentinel and later worked in the Marketing Department at the newspaper as Director of Public Service and community services manager. In that role, she worked on many New Sentinel community projects, including the Empty Stocking Fund.

She had previously worked at Business Week in New York City and was also at one time head of public relations for the Knoxville Chamber of Commerce.

Invitations to the Follies will go out soon. Tickets are \$75 apiece, or \$750 for a table of 10. Ticket information is available by calling Sally Guthrie at 588-1474.

### *Inside*

Ethical Dilemmas . . . . .page 2

Patriot Act/Civil Liberties . . . . . page 3

## What do we report and when? Panel considers ethical dilemmas

Policies regarding the handling of ethical dilemmas in newsrooms seem to have been passed down over the years and have not, as yet, been written down and handed out to new reporters. Such was the general impression gleaned from speakers at the March 16 meeting of ETSPJ.

Duncan Mansfield, correspondent with the Associated Press; Jack McElroy, editor of the News Sentinel; Buzz Trexler, managing editor of the Daily Times; and Christy Banks, editor, and Ryan Seals, police reporter, of the Daily Beacon led the discussion of "Ethics in the Newsroom."

The discussants were introduced by Jean Ash, who explained that the idea for the meeting came about because of McElroy's editorial explaining his paper's coverage of stories about a football player and a UT professor, both of whom had been accused of rape. The paper had not reported the allegations because charges had not been filed. When other media published stories about the football player, Mondre Dickerson, the News Sentinel was accused of covering up for the football team.

In an odd coincidence, Michael Combs, a music professor and member of the UT Board of Trustees resigned his position at about the same time he was being investigated by the Sheriff's Department for rape. The News Sentinel did not detail the rape charges, but the UT Daily Beacon did. Thus, media that hold out names and allegations risk being scooped by competitors with different policies.

According to Trexler, the Daily Times runs nearly everything in Blount County public records. "We try to be objective, but we have to be subjective in the way we look at it," he said, noting that they are influenced by how other media handle issues.

Mansfield talked about the sense of history with the football team. When the media hear that a player has been punished for "an undisclosed violation of team rules," the next call should be to the cops. The UT "football machinery" springs into action: the handy lawyer appears; they trounce the accuser; the coach issues a statement. If you don't report, people want to know what you're hiding, Mansfield said.

Seals said the Daily Beacon felt obligated to report the allegations against Combs because rumors were spreading and because Combs was a public figure in the classroom with students. "We don't like to operate on rumor," Banks added. The Beacon staff contacted several UT professors for advice before running the story and went through a long editing process. "It was a great learning experience for the whole staff," Seals said. When charges were later dropped, the Beacon ran that story, too.

During discussion following the presentations by each speaker, participants noted excellent resources available for journalists facing ethical dilemmas. Notable are the Web site of the Poynter Institute and the hotline at Loyola University.

Nineteen members of SPJ attended the meeting at the West Knoxville Public Library on March 16.



Members of the ethics panel are from left, Lisa Hood Skinner, Duncan Mansfield, Buzz Trexler, Jack McElroy, and Jean Ash. (Another photo is on page 4.)

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# Kirtley, Lewis decry loss of freedom

by Anne Marie Brooks  
UT journalism student

Despite an unexpected snowstorm that closed county schools, the classroom in Alumni Memorial Building was full for the February meeting of the East Tennessee Society of Professional Journalists.

Approximately 200 students, teachers, and local journalists came together to listen to Jane Kirtley and Anthony Lewis speak about “The Patriot Act and Civil Liberties in the Age of Terrorism.”

“There are forces who want us to be scared all the time,” said Kirtley, a doctor of jurisprudence and former journalist, about the terrorism paranoia that has been instilled into the general American public.

She went on to explain that the events of September 11, 2001, unsettled us to the point of giving up our freedom. Because of this, President Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair have done a good job of keeping us ignorant about how we are being protected from these evil forces of terrorism.

“They are supposed to be accountable to us,” Kirtley reminded her audience. The Patriot Act was passed by Congress very shortly after the terrorist acts of September 11. It was a 342-page document that gives the government unprecedented authority to monitor us online and on wireless networks.

One of the few parts of the Patriot Act that some people are familiar with is the provision in Section 215 that allows subpoenas on libraries of the records of books borrowed and sold. The only reason that anyone really knows about this is because of commercials that aired recently depicting a young man being questioned by the authorities while trying to check out random books from his local library.

“In this country, we don’t know what behavior will be deemed suspicious,” Kirtley said of the provisions in the Patriot Act. Things that seem so simple such as checking out books can become an issue of national security. She elaborated that people who just happen to have an interest in the Nation of Islam, or who want to read up on the people they hear about in the news could find themselves in court, guilty only of a desire for knowledge.

Kirtley also noted the common psychological finding that people who are under constant surveillance change



Anthony Lewis and Jane Kirtley prepare to speak about the Patriot Act and civil liberties.

the way they act. And, as the government gets greater authority to keep tabs on people, that government will become more secretive. This leads to secret trials and hearings, and even detentions.

Anthony Lewis, two-time Pulitzer Prize winner and professor at Harvard Law, told the audience about the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn where people have been detained and tortured under suspicion and often with little evidence of terrorist involvement.

Lewis then told the story of Jose Padilla, an American who was born in Brooklyn and joined a gang. While in prison for gang-related charges, he became a Muslim. Last year, he was arrested as a witness of the World Trade Center events and was imprisoned. The day before his case was set to go before the Supreme Court, Padilla’s court-appointed attorney was told that there would be no hearing. He is an American citizen being denied due process.

“It’s not the person that matters, it’s the principal,” Lewis said about this case. Then, Lewis told more stories of similar cases that have in fact happened to Americans, immigrants, and aliens. A few terrorists have been found and brought to justice through all of these detainments. But the vast majority of people being detained, beaten, and denied basic civil rights are just innocent bystanders.

Lewis encouraged the audience to take a stand against these invasions of civil rights. He told them to write letters to congressmen, or send emails, whatever it takes to let our government know that they are still accountable to the citizens.

*Continued on page 4*

## Kirtley, Lewis

After the lectures, Lewis and Kirtley fielded several questions from the audience. Although everyone was concerned about the snow, most people stayed until the end of the question period. The closing question addressed the finality of the Patriot Act. "Some of the provisions of the Patriot Act are supposed to sunset in the year 2005," Lewis said before going on to explain that since the American people have let the government carry on these secret activities this long, their behavior may not stop any time soon.

### Mark Your Calendar

May 21, Golden Press Card awards program, University Club

June 19, Front Page Follies, Knoxville Convention Center



Bonnie Hufford, UT SPJ student chapter adviser, and Christy Banks, editor of the Daily Beacon, look on as Ryan Seals, Beacon police reporter, talks about coverage of the Combs case.