

Political Communication Report

Winter 1998 Edition

In This Edition of PCR:

- [New Editor](#)
 - [APSA Minutes](#)
 - [Call for Papers](#)
 - [Electronic Publication](#)
 - [Research Funding](#)
 - [NCA Convention](#)
 - [New Books](#)
-

David Swanson: New Editor of Political Communication

In a landslide vote of approval, the membership of the Political Communication Division of ICA selected David Swanson to succeed Doris Graber as editor of Political Communication. Graber will complete her second distinguished term with the final issue of 1998, and Swanson will be responsible for the journal from 1999-2001. Swanson is professor and head of the Department of Speech Communication at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

Swanson's nomination was put forward to the membership as the unanimous choice of the joint ICA-APSA publication policy committee. In accordance with the bylaws that govern the committee, the editorship rotated to the ICA division this term, meaning that both the candidate and the vote came from the ICA side. Nominations were solicited at both ICA and APSA business meetings, and in an announcement in this newsletter. After consideration of twelve nominees, Swanson emerged as the singular candidate who was at once highly qualified, willing to serve, and able to secure the institutional resources to guarantee a high quality editorial operation.

In the view of the publication policy committee, David Swanson will bring both intellectual and organizational leadership to the journal. He was present at the creation of Political Communication, and

has served on its editorial board. His active participation in both ICA and APSA political communication divisions assures the continued interdisciplinary reach and quality of Political Communication. His letter of intent to the committee outlined his commitment to the following goals:

“to continuously enhance the prestige and influence of the journal; to serve our field by helping to develop the skills of young researchers; to argue by example for the highest standards of scholarship; to publish work that attracts favorable attention to the journal and to our field from a steadily widening range of disciplines and intellectual communities; in short, to become firmly established, widely known, and widely respected as the premier journal for political communication research.”

The search committee consisted of the members of the joint ICA-APSA publication policy committee (Susan Herbst, Kathleen Jamieson, Matthew Kerbel, Dennis McQuail, Russell Neuman, Benjamin Page, and Lance Bennett, chair). We wish David Swanson every success with the journal, and thank him for his generous commitment of energy and resources.

Announcements regarding the transition, and instructions for submission of manuscripts will appear both in this newsletter and in Political Communication.

Minutes of 1997 APSA Political Communications Division Annual Business Meeting

After calling the 1997 section business meeting to order, Lance Bennett efficiently moved through an agenda highlighted by the announcement that David Swanson will serve as the new editor of our journal, Political Communication, and presentation of awards to Larry Bartels and Ellen Mickiewicz.

A section committee considered several potential journal editors and found an ideal combination of experience, wisdom, and commitment in Professor David Swanson, a member of the Speech Communication Department at the University of Illinois. Lance expressed gratitude to David for assuming this important position as of the 1999 publication year, along with profound gratitude for the extraordinary services of founding editor Doris Graber.

Scott Ketter, award committee chair, announced the Doris Graber Award for best political communication paper presented at the 1996 annual meeting went to Princeton professor Larry Bartels for “Politicians and the Press: Who Leads, Who Follows?” Scott cited the paper as “a model example of a conference paper, one that informs and stimulates further research.”

The Murray Edelman Award for career achievement in political communication was presented to Ellen Mickiewicz, Shepley Professor at Duke. Committee Chair, Pippa Norris, said Ellen’s work

comprises an unusual combination of “first class scholarship and policy relevance.” She noted Ellen’s two important books, *Split Signals* and *Changing Channels*, on the Soviet and post-Soviet broadcasting systems, and also her work on enhancing press freedom in the former Soviet Union and elsewhere. Ellen thanked the section and colleagues for providing inspiration to her “work in areas of the world where it’s difficult to do.”

Lance announced that the Carey McWilliams Award for a journalist whose work has helped enlighten us about politics and government was presented by the APSA, in consultation with the section, to New York Times columnist Anthony Lewis, a specialist in First Amendment matters.

The nominating committee presented a slate of proposed officers for the section: Thomas Patterson as vice chair; council member at large, Mary Stuckey; and program committee chair, Steven Livingston. All were elected by acclamation. Montague Kern will serve as Graber Award committee chair. The nominating committee consisted of James Carson, Ann Crigler, and Michael Delli Carpini.

Reporting on the APSA’s organized section chair meeting, Lance said that membership in the Political Communication section holds steady at 362, putting it around the 30th percentile in size among APSA sections. One problem our relative diminutiveness poses is that large sections such as Comparative Politics (with some 1200 members) complain that they don’t have enough panels at the annual meeting. This raises the possibility of our section facing a reduction from its current authority over 11 panels. Lance emphasized the importance of having panels in political communication that will attract large audiences in order to stave off the potential cutback in panel slots. In addition he noted that APSA has a late request process that might allow the section to add panels should the allocation be reduced. At the section chair meeting three other items of note came up:

1. The APSA asks that section newsletters contain no advertising, in order to preserve APSA’s own ad revenues.
2. There is a strong need for improvement in diversity among section officers, a point nominating committees should keep in mind.
3. Should organized sections choose to take a stand on a policy issue, the position must be related to research and teaching. And sections cannot take such stands without first adopting a policy on position-taking itself. There was no groundswell from the floor to institute such a policy for our section, so at this time we do not have permission from the APSA to announce any issue positions. However, the parent organization apparently did not establish penalty for violating its policy requiring a section policy before we take a section policy stand.

The treasurer’s report showed a balance of \$8,219.75 in the section’s account as of June 30, 1997. Expenses since the last report of \$1,697.53 included the 1996 annual meeting section reception, support for the section newsletter’s website creation, and banking service fees. Income of \$2,770.60 came from section dues and journal royalties. The assembled group authorized the treasurer to transfer the bulk of the section funds from its checking account to an interest-bearing account.

Editor Doris Graber reported on the status of Political Communication. As is her custom, Doris reminded us of the need for more people from the section to obtain subscriptions to the journal. She is looking into the possibility of linking a subscription to section membership. She added that the journal continues to welcome high quality research manuscripts, and to rely upon speedy cooperation from

reviewers.

Political Communication Report editor, Richard Davis, noted that the section's newsletter is now on the World Wide Web. It can therefore be updated on an ongoing basis by submitting items for the website to Richard. Each issue of the newsletter will be posted on the web. During discussion the idea was broached of keeping a file of course syllabi on the newsletter's website as a follow-up to the recent issue's inclusion of several course outlines.

The section's 1998 program chair, Holli Semetko, announced that the theme of the annual meeting next year is "Community, Communities and Politics." She observed that communication is central to any concept of community and welcomed proposals that touch upon the theme.

In new business, Martin Medhurst described the launching of a new interdisciplinary journal that he will edit. Rhetoric and Public Affairs will be devoted to "the history, theory, and criticism of public discourse" and will welcome "critical, analytical, or interpretive essays that examine particular instances of symbolic inducement in any historical period...."

At the conclusion of the meeting, Lance turned over the "symbolic gavel" and a set of arcane notes and records to David Paletz, who serves as section chair for 1997-98.

Euricom Colloquium on Tabloidization

CALL FOR PAPERS

There is widespread concern, both amongst experts and the informed public, that the mass media are experiencing a change that is often labelled 'tabloidization.' It is claimed that this process, which involves a shift to new and more entertainment-oriented kinds of content, is taking place both in broadcasting and the printed press, and that it is a general phenomenon of the advanced world.

The most serious concerns advanced concern the relationship between the mass media and political life, broadly considered. One of the traditional functions ascribed to the mass media is to inform citizens about the public affairs of their societies. It is argued that the shift towards entertainment based content leaves less and less room for this informative function. Another of the functions ascribed to the media is to act as the forum for rational debate. It is argued that the shift in the kind of language used, and the stress upon the sensational and the emotive, undermine the place of reason. At their most extreme, critics of tabloidization see it as one major element provoking a crisis of public life that is eroding the basis of democracy.

On the other hand, there are those who argue that there is little or no evidence for growing tabloidization, and that the traditional functions of the mass media continue to be discharged at least as well as they have been in the past.

A different argument is employed by those who welcome the spread of tabloidization, which they see as broadening and democratizing the content of the mass media. The old ways of the media were the preserve of an elite minority and they served to exclude the voices and concerns of the majority of the

population, particularly the poor and women.

The aim of this Euricom Colloquium, to be held in Spring or Autumn of 1998 in Piran, Slovenia, is to review the range of debate about tabloidization. The organizers would welcome proposals for papers addressing any aspect of the issue, whether concerned with the empirical evidence or the possible implications. We would, however, particularly welcome papers that addressed the following themes:

1. Is there a process of tabloidization? How might we define and measure the phenomenon? Is it a new development? If it is taking place, what are the causes?
2. Does the process of tabloidizations constitute a crisis for traditional political debate? Is the public sphere inimical to the discourse of the tabloid media? Do the values of tabloid journalism enhance public awareness of democratic process?
3. Is there any evidence that values of the tabloid media are eroding the commitment of the serious media to rational political debate? If this is the case, why should such a change emerge at this point in human development?
4. What are the implications of tabloidization for relations between the media and the political process? What effects does tabloidization have upon journalists' perceptions of themselves and their role in society? What implications, if any, does the process have for media ethics? Does tabloidization pose any special legal or regulatory problems for the media?

The organizers do not intend to prioritize any particular approach, method or attitude towards the issues under consideration. It is the constant aim of Euricom Colloquia to reflect a range of divergent views in order to stimulate debate and advance our understanding of the media and society.

In accordance with Euricom policy, a selection of the papers given at the Colloquium will be published in Javnost/The Public. The organizers will attempt to raise money to support the Colloquium, but potential participants from richer countries are advised that they will need to find at least some of their own funds.

Please send brief (c. 200 word) proposals for papers by e-mail to: Colin Sparks (c.s.sparks@westminster.ac.uk) or Slavko Splichal (slavko.splichal@uni-lj.si)

Potential participants wishing to know more about Euricom, its Colloquia and their publications, Javnost/The Public, or the venue in Piran, should visit the Euricom home page (<http://www2.arnes.si/guest/ljjavno1/euricom.html>).

Colin Sparks
CCIS University of Westminster
Northwick Park Campus
Watford Road Middlesex HA1 3TP UK
Tel: +44 (0) 171 911 5941
Fax: +44 (0) 171 911 5942

Electronic Publication

--by Doris Graber

Political Communication has published its first electronic issue. It's a path breaking venture that demonstrates how much more meaningful a scholarly article can be if important visual and aural stimuli are actually embedded in the text and can be recreated on a home computer. For example, on the current CD, political advertisements spring to life. You can see the action, watch the colors, and hear the sounds of the originals. The impact of politicians' speeches becomes much clearer. You can observe their body language and hear their intonations. And the tedium of a recitation of 'he-said' and then 'she-said'; is relieved when you can watch and listen to the actual interchange.

If you have not seen and enjoyed this new form of scholarly communication, be sure to order a copy from the publisher, Taylor & Francis, or get it as part of your subscription to Political Communication. And plan on joining the elite community of electronically-transmitted authors!

If your publishable research would benefit from including sounds and sights in the transmission, consider submitting it to Political Communication for its next electronic issue. Help with preparing manuscripts for electronic publication will be available. Send your ideas for single journal articles or a series of related articles to:

Doris Graber, editor, Political Communication
Department of Political Science
University of Illinois at Chicago
1007 West Harrison Street
Chicago IL 60607

Plans for the next issue are getting under way.

Bicentennial Swedish-American Exchange Fund

The Swedish Information Service Bicentennial Swedish-American Exchange Fund announces grants for two to four week intensive study visits in Sweden. Approximately ten grants, usually equal to 20,000 Swedish crowns each, are awarded annually. The grant is intended to partially cover transportation and living expenses for no less than two weeks. The study must be completed within one year of receipt of the award. The Bicentennial grant may be used in conjunction with scholarships from other sources. Grants must be within the fields to which the Fund gives priority--politics, public

administration, working life, human environment, mass media, business and industry, education, and culture. Persons who have visited Sweden many times previously will be considered only in exceptional cases. Study visits may take place between 1 June 1998 and 30 June 1999. Deadline for applications is February 6, 1998. For applications, send a self-addressed, stamped business-sized envelope to :

Asa Swahn

1 Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, 45th Floor

New York, NY 10017-2201

Phone: (212) 583-2550 ext. 2586

Fax: (212) 752-4789

E-mail: swedinfo@ix.netcom.com

Web site: <http://www.swedeninfo.com/>

Twentieth Century Fund Research Funding Opportunities

The Twentieth Century Fund is soliciting proposals in Media Studies. According to the Twentieth Century Fund, projects have the intent of enabling policy makers, consumers of news, and those in the media to meet the highest standards of performance. Fund research projects usually are designed to produce analytic, book-length manuscripts containing public policy recommendations. They are aimed at an audience that includes the informed public, the press, policy makers, and the academic community. The Fund commissions individual scholars to carry out its research projects, and the book-length manuscripts that result are edited and then usually placed by the Fund with commercial publishers or university presses. The Fund does not award fellowships or scholarships, or support dissertation research.

APPLICATION INFORMATION: The Fund does not make grants to individuals or institutions. All proposals submitted to the Fund are reviewed by the Board of Trustees, and only the Board of Trustees has the authority to approve proposed projects. The Fund's Board of Trustees meets several times a year to consider proposals, but proposals are reviewed by the staff throughout the year. Specific deadlines for submissions will be supplied by the Fund on request. Projects ordinarily begin within six months following the Board meeting at which they are approved.

Contact address:

Twentieth Century Fund

41 East 70th Street

New York, NY 10021

Phone: (212) 535-4441

Fax: (212) 535-7534

E-mail: xxthfund@ix.netcom.com

1998 Convention of the National Communication Association

The 84th Annual Meeting of the National Communication Association (formerly Speech Communication Association) will be held in New York City at the New York Hilton & Towers and the Marriott Marquis Hotel. The convention will be November 21-24 (Saturday through Tuesday) with pre-conferences on November 20 (Friday). The primary convention planner is Orlando Taylor, Box 65, Howard University, 2400 - 6th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20059.

CONVENTION THEME SUBMISSIONS. Papers, programs, forums, workshops, courses and other creative programs that emphasize the convention theme are welcome.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE. Any member of NCA may submit a paper or program proposal. All papers or program proposals must be received by February 1, 1998.

New Books

Cappella, Joseph N. and Kathleen Hall Jamieson. 1997. *Spiral of Cynicism*. Oxford University Press.

Eldridge, John, Jenny Kitzinger and Kevin Williams. 1997. *The Mass Media and Power in Modern Britain*. Oxford University Press.

Jacobsen, John Kurt. 1997. *Dead Reckonings: Ideas, Interests, and Politics in the 'Information Age'*. Humanities Press.

Johnson-Cartee, Karen S. and Gary A. Copeland. 1997. *Inside Political Campaigns: Theory and Practice*. Praeger.

Johnson-Cartee, Karen S. and Gary A Copeland. 1997. *Manipulation of the American Voter: Political Campaign Commercials*. Praeger.

- Kamber, Victor. 1997. *Poison Politics: Are Negative Campaigns Destroying Democracy?* Insight Books.
- McCombs, Maxwell, et al. 1997. *Communication and Democracy: Exploring the Intellectual Frontiers in Agenda-Setting Theory*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Malek, Abbas, Ed. 1997. *News Media and Foreign Relations: A Multifaceted Perspective*. Ablex.
- Negrine, Ralph. 1997. *The Communication of Politics*. Sage.
- O'Neil, Patrick H., Ed. 1997. *Post-Communism and the Media in Eastern Europe*. Frank Cass & Co.
- Rash, Wayne Jr. 1997. *Politics on the Nets: Wiring the Political Process*. W.H. Freeman & Co.
- Taylor, Philip M. 1997. *Global Communications, International Affairs and the Media Since 1945*. Routledge.
- Tunstall, Jeremy. 1997. *Newspaper Power: The New National Press in Britain*. Oxford University Press.
- Wanta, Wayne. 1997. *The Public and the National Agenda: How People Learn About Important Issues*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Watts, Duncan. 1997. *Political Communication Today (Politics Today)*. Manchester University Press.
- Wheeler, Mark. 1997. *Politics and the Mass Media*. Blackwell.
- Wolfsfeld, Gadi. 1997. *Media and Political Conflict: News from the Middle East*. Cambridge University Press.