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February 2007



## From the Chapter President

Ever stare at a computer screen for what feels like hours trying to figure out how to start a column or story? I've been thinking about how to get into this one for days. No matter how I write this I'll probably tick off someone, but then again I never got into journalism to make friends and if I need another one I should probably think about a puppy.

So far this year at least one and possibly two freelance reporters have been arrested or at the very least detained by police here in Connecticut. In the case of Ken Krayske, a self-described activist and journalist, Hartford police held him for 12 hours before he was released on bond. The events surrounding why he was arrested are in dispute but it would appear to

this writer there was no reason for him to be detained for 12 hours. None.

But the elephant in the room is really the underlying question of who gets to call themselves a journalist and who gets to decide. I don't pretend to have the answer. What I do have is a lot of questions. For example: if an individual takes a picture of an accident on his cell phone and then emails it to a news department, they pay him \$1 and then use the photo, can this individual call himself a freelance photojournalist? If I call a TV or radio station and "report" on the accident I saw and they send me that \$1 check, am I now a freelance reporter? If you answered, "yes" to any of these, then realize the "photojournalist" or "reporter" in question is

protected by the state's shield law and is entitled to any number of other protections and privileges granted to the press. By the way, if you decided that in either case the individual should be seen as a "journalist" is that "forever" or only for a given period of time and then, for how long?

Let's not forget "blogs." Are they journalism? Are their writers members of the fifth estate?

Some suggest we should ignore whether the individual is a journalist and focus on whether the product is journalism. Others suggest we just stay away from the question completely.

I must report to you that immediate past president

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### CONNECTICUT SPJ OFFICERS

#### **President:**

**Steven D. Kalb** Kalb & Associates / adjunct assoc. professor, UConn

#### **Vice President:**

**Tommy Valuckas**, Waterbury Republican-American

#### **Secretary:**

**Debra A. Estock** Yale Robbins Inc./The Cooperator newspaper

#### **Treasurer:**

**Cindy Simoneau**, Adjunct Professor SCSU, Sacred Heart University, Fairfield University & Quinnipiac University

### Board of Directors

#### **Immediate Past President:**

**Kenn Venit**, managing editor, The Justice Journal, adjunct associate professor of journalism, Quinnipiac University

**Luther Turmelle**, New Haven Register

**Elaine Ficarra**, Arts & Ideas, New Haven

**Corey Fyke**, The New London Day

**Jerry Dunklee**, Southern Connecticut State University

**Stephanie Reitz**, The Hartford Courant

**Amanda Falcone**, Meriden Record-Journal

Contact information for board members at [www.ctspj.org](http://www.ctspj.org)

**Newsletter editor: Deborah Nason**

*From the President (Continued from page 1)*

Kenn Venit and I both serve on the professional development committee for the national organization. That committee is charged with organizing programs for the upcoming national convention in Washington, DC. We hope that through our combined efforts we will be able to convince National to at least begin the dialogue on this issue. It is not a question we answer overnight, but it is a topic we believe needs to be discussed and discussed fully.

Please don't hesitate to drop me a note with any thoughts you may have on this complicated issue. I can be reached at: skalb@sbcglobal.net.

Steve Kalb

## Seeking Nominations for the Board

The Nominations Committee is seeking members in good standing interested in running for office or the board of directors for the 2007-08 meeting year. All terms take effect July 1 and end June 30.

The offices of president, vice president, secretary and treasurer are all one-year terms, so all are up for election. The position of immediate past president, currently held by Kenn Venit is automatically filled, and is not an electable position.

The board of directors is comprised of six members and serve two-year staggered terms. Board

members Jerry Dunklee, Elaine Ficarra and Luther Turmelle are serving terms that end in June 2008. Leaving three two-year terms that will end in June 2009 to be filled by election.

Those wishing to be considered for nomination must be current paid members and should send a resume and cover letter stating which position they are seeking to Nominations Committee Chairwoman Stephanie Reitz, stephreiz@earthlink.net. Other committee members are Jerry Dunklee and Luther Turmelle. Application deadline is March 31.

## Region One News *From Region One Director Carolyn James*

### ***Long Island Pro***

The Long Island Pro chapter is working at putting together the Region One Conference this spring. There are some exciting programs being scheduled, as well as a job fair and time for some fun on Long Island. The event will be held at Hofstra University on April 13 and 14.

There will be an opening reception at the Cradle of Aviation Museum and a closing pizza party reception in Hofstra's TV production studio. The conference opens Friday afternoon with a job fair and student-oriented programs, and will run all day Saturday. Part of

the Saturday programming will be a day-long investigative reporting workshop provided by IRE. For more information, call Regional Conference Chair Bill Bleyer at 631-843-2750.

The Chapter recently held a seminar asking top level management at news outlets throughout Long Island if they were ready for "The Big One." The focus was to help newsrooms prepare for disasters such as hurricanes, floods, fires and other disasters.

Speaking from experience, Mike Bologna, vice president and general manager of Herald Community newspapers, gave a chilling

account of the fire that ripped through that newspaper building more than two years ago. They managed to retrieve their vital records, but their presses, archives, computers and newsroom were completely destroyed.

Despite that, the staff rose to the occasion, and the newspaper was able to honor all of its printing contracts by coordinating with other printers, and had their own newspapers published within the week.

Bologna, who was joined in the seminar by Mike DiSalvo, a disaster management business consult

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## Extraordinary Journalist *By Jerry Dunklee, CT SPJ Board Member*

Some die too young; far too young. Mike Levine, the editor-in-chief of the Times Herald-Record in Middletown, NY fell dead of a heart attack in mid-January. He was only 54.

He was not a Connecticut journalist, but I think you need to know about him. He set an example that is unusual in these times of hand-wringing about our work.

Let me back up a bit. Last fall I taught a class at Southern about the future of journalism in the U.S. We looked, through the eyes of over 30 guests, at the revolution in news-gathering and dissemination that has hit us all like a whirlwind. We talked about the mergers, the staff cuts, the web, niche media, public relations and even had several community leaders come in to discuss journalism from their perspective. A lot of it was negative.

I wanted to end the term with something hopeful. So I asked

Mike Levine to talk us. He drove 100 miles from his home to spend three hours with the class. Here are just a few things he said.

*“Most newspapers are boring. Your first job is STOP BORING PEOPLE!”*

*“Write for the people, not for your college professor. I have too many resumes from Columbia Journalism School where the reporters haven’t learned to write for people.”*

*“Expand your view of sources. Don’t just talk to the leaders. Talk to average people who are impacted by problems in the community.”*

Mike, who won numerous awards as a columnist in New York state, came back to Middletown from a fancy job at ESPN Magazine. He said he got tired of covering celebrity jocks. He worked with writers to improve their craft. The Times Herald-Record is considered one of the best-written pa-

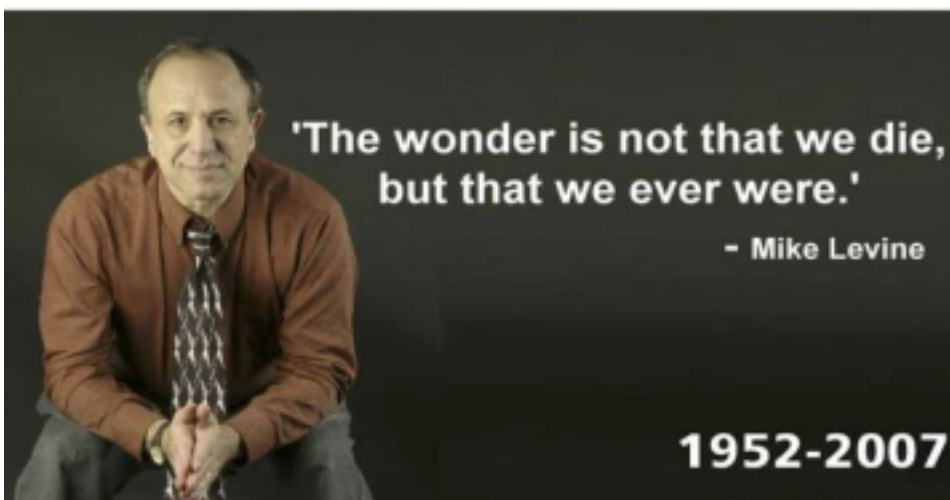
pers in the country.

He was tough, kind, and always concerned about the quality of what his paper did. When the suits came to order cuts in his staff he fought for those jobs...and won. He hired a TV news crew for his website. He wanted his reporters to blog. He was upset when breaking news didn’t hit the web quickly. You can check it out at [www.recordonline.com](http://www.recordonline.com). There are dozens of comments from readers whose lives he touched.

Get this. The Record is read by sixty percent of adults in their coverage area every day. That is amazing. They also make a lot of money.

His funeral was standing room only and many who came never knew him personally. They were there because they cared about him as much as he cared about them. The drive to the graveyard was with a full police escort. In each town, for over 20 miles, police cars blocked every intersection to permit the procession to pass.

I wanted to let you know about Mike. His career shows us all that high quality, concern for local news, and just plain humanity matter. It reminds us that what we do is relevant and important. He gave a damn. And so should we.



Visit us online at:  
[www.CTSPJ.org](http://www.CTSPJ.org)

UPCOMING PROGRAM

CT SPJ will present a "Project Watchdog" program on Sunday, March 18th at Southern Connecticut State University.

The event will bring together journalists and political, community and religious leaders to talk about the quality of journalism in the state. The program will be from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. in Morrill Hall.

Please mark your calendars.



"MEDIA SURVIVAL: WHAT WILL IT TAKE?" was the topic for the November 2006 Chapter program. (L to R) Kenn Venit, TV news consultant; Jim Smith, editor, Connecticut Post; Jack Kramer, editor, New Haven Register; moderator Cindy Simoneau, newspaper consultant.



## Are You an SPJ Member?

The Connecticut Pro Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists is looking for a few good men and women. If you aren't a member of Connecticut SPJ, we invite you to join us. We offer interesting programs, professional development, support and more. Contact Steven D. Kalb at [skalb@sbcglobal.net](mailto:skalb@sbcglobal.net).

*Region One News (Continued from page 2)*

ant, Tim Healy of Newsday, and Warren Horst, a county fire marshal, all of whom pointed to the obvious: disaster management takes a plan and a program. Management should regularly review its insurance coverage, its communication system and technology, as well as identify alternate work sites if they want to be prepared to be able to operate at a time of crisis.

### ***Pennsylvania Pro***

The Pennsylvania Pro Chapter received a \$500 grant to help the organization stage a professional development program. Pennsylvania chose to hold its program on the state's Open Records law.

### ***NY FOIA***

Effective October 24th, all government agencies in New York are required to accept requests for re-

ords submitted by e-mail and to transmit the records sought by e-mail, when they have the ability to do so.

The Committee on Open Government has developed a form that may be used to request records via e-mail. The forms are available on the Committee's Web site at:

[www.dos.state.ny.us/coogwww.html](http://www.dos.state.ny.us/coogwww.html)