

## Controversy hits national conference in Halifax, N.S.

BY STEPHEN KIMBER

A controversial Canadian newspaper publisher and the controversy over media access to the new Harper government are just a few of the subjects expected make this spring's CAJ National Conference (May 12-14 in Halifax) a lively affair.

The conference's opening night keynote speaker will be CanWest Global executive vice president David Asper. Asper — who has been critical of journalists and the CAJ in the past — will deliver a talk on the high cost of free speech then take questions from the floor.

Sunday will feature what conference organizer Rachel Boomer describes as "our marquee panel" on media access in the Harper era. The panelists will include the PMO's communications director, Sandra Buckler, former Chrétien communications director Peter Donolo, Calgary Herald national affairs columnist Don Martin and CBC parliamentary bureau chief Keith Boag.

The Saturday lunch speaker will be Toronto-based journalist, author, and filmmaker Nelofer Pazira, who has documented her home country, Afghanistan, in print and on screen. Pazira will draw on her personal experience of living as a child in Soviet-occupied Afghanistan to deliver her keynote, *Occupation and Resistance: Kabul to Baghdad*, about the parallels between Afghanistan of 1970s and Iraq of



The Saturday lunch speaker at the CAJ's national conference in Halifax, N.S., will be Toronto-based journalist, author, and filmmaker Nelofer Pazira, who has documented her home country, Afghanistan, in print and on screen. Pazira will draw on her personal experience of living as a child in Soviet-occupied Afghanistan.

today.

Those are just a few highlights of what Boomer, a Halifax Daily News reporter, describes as "a fantastic lineup that just keeps getting better."

More than a dozen workshops will be presented by award winners and subject-area leaders from across the continent. Sessions range from feature writing led by the Globe and Mail's Ian Brown, to writing for a rural or town audience with the Bridgewater Bulletin's Vernon Oickle, to the art of the live interview with the CBC's

Anna Maria Tremonti.

Conference-goers will also get to choose from nearly a dozen — and counting — panels on everything from the recent Danish cartoon controversy, to plagiarism, to blogging, to managing stress, to what your J-school profs didn't tell you.

Between workshops, panels and keynotes, of course, delegates will also get the chance to celebrate the best of the best work of their fellow journalists at Saturday night's awards gala dinner.

You can find the complete conference program and regis-

tration information — and even register online — at [www.caj.ca](http://www.caj.ca).



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# CBC backs 'very important' journalism meet set for 2007

## Global Investigative Journalism Conference planning underway

CBC News has contributed \$50,000 to become the top-tier media sponsor of the Global Investigative Journalism Conference to be held in Toronto next year.

"CBC News is delighted to be associated with this very important conference," said Tony Burman, editor in chief of CBC News of the decision to sign on as the event's Platinum sponsor. "There is no more important contribution that we can make to society than strong, publicly-spirited investigative journalism, and this conference embodies the best of that."

Gold, silver and bronze

level sponsorship opportunities are also available for media sponsors and non-media advertisers.

Conference co-chairs Sandra Bartlett and Susanne Reber, investigative journalists at CBC, are handling fundraising and Rob Cribb, an investigative reporter

with the Toronto Star and CAJ past president, will serve as chair of the program content group. More than 25 volunteers have already committed to the initiative and design work has commenced on a Web site to serve as the conference's online home.

The Toronto conference will be held from May 24-27, 2007 at the downtown Toronto Hilton. More than 600 delegates are expected to participate. The previous installment, held last September in Amsterdam, was attended by 400 journalists from around the world.

### Volunteers, sponsors sought for Toronto conference

We are looking for great ideas as we begin to structure our program for the Global Investigative Journalism Conference in 2007. Our panels, workshops, roundtables and keynote speakers need to be challenging and focus on great investigative journalism around the world. We are planning to have translation in French and Spanish to allow colleagues from all over the globe to join us.

Thanks to all members who have already contacted us with your ideas, your areas of interest and to volunteer your time. Keep it coming. We will be

going through several design rounds of our program with members of the CAJ and the Global Investigative Network to ensure we get as much input from all involved, so let us know what you're thinking.

Any fundraising contacts and suggestions for media, non-media, national and international sponsors are very welcome!

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## Students want more from their association

### Memberships surge after spring drive

BY ANGIE SETH

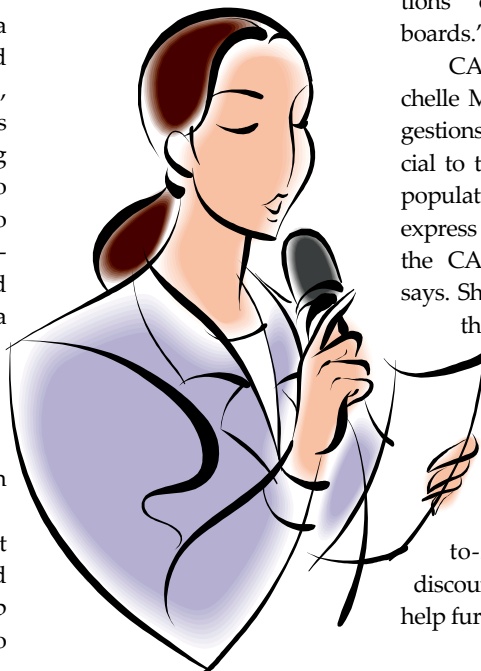
Aspiring reporters are seeking more incentives and programs from the CAJ after last fall's student membership drive netted 100 new members.

Tammy-Lynne Logan, a CAJ student representative and freelancer from Moncton, N.B., says the association's workshops help both student and working journalists. But she would like to see the CAJ reach out more to students by providing information in both high school and post-secondary classrooms on a regular basis -- not just when the CAJ is hosting an event.

"I think more workshops by the provincial chapters would benefit everyone," Logan said.

Ryerson University student Alwynne Gwilt, who helped organize last year's membership drive, concurs. She would like to

see more students run CAJ events. Gwilt says putting students at the forefront not only highlights their accomplishments, but also gives future journalism students role models to look up to and consult.



"There should also be more dialogue between students from different journalism schools," she says "The CAJ could help facilitate this...by creating pen-pal style connections or online discussion boards."

CAJ vice-president Michelle MacAfee says these suggestions are important and crucial to the association's student population. The more students express their needs, the better the CAJ can meet them, she says. She plans to help increase the CAJ's student memberships by getting in touch with and visiting more schools this year. The national board's recent decision to offer a back-to-school membership discount in September will help further this goal, she said.





COURTESY CHERYL BINNING

Neil Docherty, the International Emmy Award- winning editor/producer from CBC's *the fifth estate*, co-led a documentary storytelling workshop on March 30-31 in Winnipeg, Man. for CAJ members.

## CHAPTER EVENTS

### • Members gain insights from police, lawyers, journalists

CAJ chapters have been active across the country this winter, hosting events that range from panel discussions to training sessions.

In February, a standing-room-only crowd in Toronto gathered to hear writers Katrina Onstad, Mark Witten, Moira MacDonald and Paul Lima deliver tips and tricks in the freelance trade.

In Nova Scotia, Halifax Regional Police Chief Frank Beazley joined journalists for a beer and bull session during which he recounted his first encounter with the news media. Beazley joined the force in the 1970s, at a time when the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* reporter had an office in the police station. The chief doesn't have fond memories of his first interview, in the early 1980s. "The reporter

spelled my name wrong in the story," Beazley joked.

The CAJ's chapter in Manitoba co-sponsored a two-day event with Film Training Manitoba. Neil Docherty, documentary maker with CBC's *the fifth estate*, Rob Hardy, development manager, western independent production for CTV Television and Bob Culbert, CTV's vice-president of documentaries led workshops on all stages of documentary story-telling, from inspiration to production to the cutting room.

In early April, a crowd in

P.E.I. heard from journalists-turned-lawyers Jim Rossiter and Trish Cheverie on how to stay out of hot water and out of the courtroom.



Members in Vancouver held an organization meeting in January to start revitalizing the chapter there, and plan to meet again this spring.

Members in B.C. interested in helping to form a new chapter executive should watch their email inbox for a notice.

To find out what the CAJ is doing in your part of the country, or to help make something happen, visit [www.caj.ca/chapters](http://www.caj.ca/chapters).

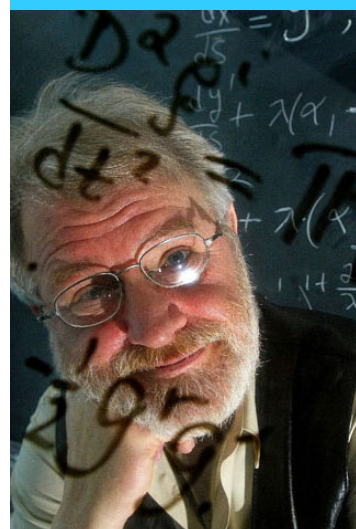
## Media magazine special edition highlights 2005's 11 award winners

A special online edition of Media magazine chronicles the stories behind last year's winners of the CAJ awards for investigative journalism. The winning pieces cover subjects such as bad prescription drugs, crooked federal bureaucrats, Mennonite drug lords, unscrupulous scientists, and military families being torn apart.

Media magazine editor David McKie asked winners to explain how they got their stories, the obstacles they faced, and to offer hints for journalists who want to conduct similar research. Each behind-the-scenes account also has a link to the stories that were broadcast and published.

Winners of the 2005 CAJ awards for investigative journalism will be announced at the upcoming CAJ national conference in Halifax, N.S., May 12-14.

Media magazine can be found on the CAJ's Web site at [www.caj.ca/mediamag](http://www.caj.ca/mediamag).



PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRIAN GAVRILOFF

Edmonton Journal photographer Brian Gavriloff won the CAJ photojournalism award last year for capturing this picture of a mathematician with all of his formulas. See pictures online at [www.caj.ca](http://www.caj.ca)

## Advocacy starts year strong

*Government transparency, editorial freedom key focus*

BY EMILY CHUNG

Winter has been busy for the CAJ's advocacy committee, which has tackled a range of issues from police efforts to seize journalists' notes to speaking out on editorial interference.

### Police seizure of notes

On Jan. 20, the CAJ said it was concerned by the police's ongoing attempts to seize reporters' notes as evidence for their criminal investigations. In the latest incident, Hamilton police seized notes related to a murder case from Hamilton Spectator reporter Bill Dunphy. The CAJ urged police to stop undermining journalists' independence and their public watchdog role by creating a perception that they are working for the police.

The CAJ's advocacy chair Rob

Cribb is also filing an affidavit to support an Ontario court case of Ottawa Citizen reporter Juliet O'Neill, whose notes were seized in 2003.

Cribb's affidavit is based on his observations as an investigative reporter at the Toronto Star. In it, he notes that sources seek reporters' confidentiality if they fear for their safety, and that they often will not come forward with important information if they believe their identity may be revealed. The courts should not compel journalists to disclose confidential sources except under rare circumstances, he states. Otherwise, they will compromise the media's ability to provide vital information to the public.

### Manitoban whistle-blowing

On Jan. 20, the CAJ said it

welcomes proposed legislation to protect whistle-blowers in Manitoba who report wrongdoings of their superiors and urged legislators to include critical provisions such as access to an arms-length investigative body.

### Gomery recommendations

On Feb. 2, the CAJ welcomed John Gomery's recommendations for increased government transparency, which included legally requiring public servants to document their decisions and recommendations to increase the amount of information available under the Access to Information Act. The CAJ said the recommendations would improve everyone's knowledge of government spending.

### Controversial cartoons

On Feb. 15, the CAJ supported the right of Canadian media to publish or broadcast controversial Danish cartoons in order to help explain riots by

Muslims over their publication abroad. The statement generated several responses from members, many of whom were supportive of the association. However, one CAJ member said he will not renew his membership, and another one said she was reconsidering.

The CAJ will hold a panel discussion on this topic at its national conference in May, featuring Western Standard publisher, Ezra Levant, and Dr. Mohamed Elmasry, national president of the Canadian Islamic Congress.

### CMA Journal's need for editorial independence

On March 2, the CAJ said it was "deeply troubled" by the firing of two senior editors at the Canadian Medical Association Journal over editorial interference by its publisher the Canadian Medical Association. The CAJ urged the CMA to clarify its position on editorial independence and noted that the CMA's own policies supported editorial freedom.

## Member profile:

## Former CHEZ FM news director Diane Benson

BY L.M. VANEVERY

A strong interest in learning and a love for language and reading is what led Diane Benson to a career in journalism. "I wanted to always keep learning and journalism is the best way to do that," she says. "You learn every day."

Benson began her career in radio and has been a reporter, anchor and public affairs host. She spent most of her career at CHEZ FM in Ottawa as an assistant news director and later, its news director.

Benson's passion for learning was fuelled in the late 1970s when she read a flyer posted in her newsroom that announced the founding conference of a new organization called the Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIJ) in Montreal. The flyer said the CIJ was forming and they were holding a conference in Montreal.

"It was very exciting for me," she says. As a young journalist wanting to improve her craft, Benson attended the gathering.

"I came back energized and

committed to the principles of good journalism," she says. This initial contact with the CIJ proved to be a long and rewarding relationship that Benson has had with the organization. The CIJ changed its name to the Canadian Association of Journalists in 1990 and membership has continued to increase.

Benson has been an active member of the CAJ since moving to Ottawa several years ago. Benson has served as president of the National Capital Chapter of the CAJ from 1999 to 2002. She served on the National Convention Committees in 1989, 1994 and 2002 when the conference was held in Ottawa.

Most recently, Benson has lent her time and energy to organizing last fall's National Writer's Symposium conference. "What I've done, a lot of people have done," she says. "We show up, come out and give of our time."

Benson's journey in learning took a new path five years ago when she joined Carleton Univer-

sity as a part-time faculty member at the School of Journalism. Teaching third year radio journalism students has given her a way to pass on what she has learned about the craft of journalism.

"I really believe in teaching and learning whether in the classroom or through the professional development we can offer in the Canadian Association of Journalists. It's all for people to get better at what they do," she says.

Benson also believes that the CAJ is one of the few professional development organizations in Canada that offers real opportunities at the local level. "They offer opportunities for journalists to stay current in their craft, share experiences, learn new skills and get to know other journalists," she says.

Benson's focus is on local chapters and students. She says she likes the CAJ's strong emphasis on students and encourages them to join the CAJ since there isn't always time in classrooms to get the professional development



COURTESY DIANE BENSON

Diane Benson, former news director at Ottawa radio station CHEZ FM, believes that the CAJ is good at working at the local level to provide opportunities to journalists.

they may seek. Benson is glad that the Canadian Association of Journalists exists to help new journalists grow and stay focused in strong journalism values.

Benson lives in Ottawa with her husband and two children. Her path of learning will lead her to complete her Masters in Journalism in June 2006. She continues to learn everyday.

*Look for more profiles of the CAJ's 1,500+ members across Canada in upcoming issues of the wire.*