

90° In The Shade, Ad Infinitum?

Wet or Dry: Does It Really Make Any Difference?

by Shawn M. McKinney, University of Texas at Austin
Newsletter Editor/Designer

It was **hot** in Phoenix. *Really* hot. As someone who grew up in a relatively severe climate, the hot, dry, airless desert city of El Paso, Texas, I thought I understood heat. Having once spent four years as student in New Orleans, I consider myself well-versed in the particulars of the wet vs. dry heat debate. Wet heat, I will attest, doesn't make skin shrivel and crack like dried paint. Dry heat, alternatively, doesn't make taking a shower seem positively redundant. Thus I felt perfectly capable of qualifying, if not quantifying, heat. Until, that is, I spent August 9-12, 2000, at the AEJMC Conference, in Phoenix.

In a recent *Harper's Magazine* article ("Star of Justice," April 2001), author Barry Graham describes Phoenix as "an apocalyptic, science-fiction cityscape of freeways and broad, empty streets under a cruel sun." That is about as close as Graham comes to a compliment. For my part, over the blistering few days I spent there, at moments I imagined I was being roasted alive. Forced outside one afternoon, hurrying from one glass-and-steel, air-conditioned oasis to another, I stopped walking and simply stood still. Curious, I surrendered to the onrushing, blurry, indefinable waves of heat continually pushing over, around and through me. Breathing immediately became difficult. My eyes tried to water, then

> see **Wet or Dry**, back page



illustration by Shawn M. McKinney



Last year's winning entry.

Calling All Student Logo Designers: AEJMC's Next Competition Wants Your Work

The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication needs a logo for the 2002 Convention in **Miami Beach, Florida**.

Student designers are invited to submit entries into the national competition sponsored by AEJMC's Vis Comm Division. **Entries must be postmarked by May 14, 2001.** Official guidelines for the competition follow.

Further reference to the guidelines can be found on the competition's official web site, located on the Web at: www.mtsu.edu/~jgraphic/aej2002.htm. You can also email Ray Wong, this year's Logo Competition Chair, at: rwong@mtsu.edu.

> see **Calling**, page 4

Letter from the Head...



D j Vu, All Over Again

by C. Zoe Smith, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO

Vis Comm Head

It's d j vu all over again. Although it isn't the early 1980s, yes, I am the division head! I'm sorry to say many of you had nothing to do with my elevation to this position. When Steve Masiatlat unexpectedly resigned early last summer, I said I would help out during 2000-2001. Since our next division head, Andy Mendelson, is one of my students from both the University of Missouri and Marquette University, I was happy to be of help to both him and the division.

Andy, Kim Bissell (our second vice head), and I were together in Atlanta in early December to fight for programming slots for the 2001 convention in Washington, D.C. Andy worked really hard to get us great times for our sessions, and we have big plans for top-notch speakers and off-site tours. We are co-sponsoring sessions with lots of other great divisions, so we think you will be pleased. Most of our speakers and panels have been confirmed, and I can promise you it will be a great convention worth attending in August. We have utilized much of what Washington, D.C. has to offer; the next issue of **Viewpoints** will reveal the top-notch program we have assembled.

I thought I would end by sharing an excerpt from one of the statements I wrote in 1999 for my dossier for promotion to full professor. While the words may not be terribly brilliant, the sentiment is heartfelt. I hope you will consider serving the division in some capacity; you never know where that first position will lead you.

STATEMENT ON SERVICE & ADMINISTRATION

When I attended my first convention of the Association for Education in Journalism (AEJ) in 1977, something wonderful happened. Faculty and graduate students from around the country who cared deeply about photojournalism and graphic design were assembled in Madison, Wisconsin, listening to research papers and panels on teaching. I sensed even then as a graduate student presenting a paper that AEJ would become an important part of my professional life.

AEJMC is the oldest and largest organization of college teachers of journalism in the United States. That fact impressed me back then, but what meant the most were the two small but hearty groups of individuals interested in visual communication. I volunteered to work on the Research Committee and within five years found myself propelled into the position of inaugural head when the Photojournalism and Graphics Divisions merged to become the Visual Communication Division.

Being active in this new division allowed me to develop some leadership skills while trying to shape the direction this new group would take. Eventually my divisional work led to more responsibility within AEJMC, including two years as the Publications Committee chair and two three-year terms as an elected member of the Teaching Standards Committee. Most recently I have been asked by president Marilyn Kerns-Foxworth to serve on the association's Membership Committee.

My involvement in our national accrediting body grew directly out of being on this committee, allowing me to represent AEJMC on the Accrediting Council for six years. During those two three-year terms I also served as a member of the site team reviewing journalism programs on four university campuses. Accrediting is a controversial topic in some quarters. Although accrediting journalism programs is an imperfect system, in six years I read and heard about every accredited unit in the country, which has given me a valuable, more well-rounded view of our collective educational mission.

My consistent involvement in the Visual Communications Division of AEJMC, along with my own scholarly activities, has put me in the position of regularly reviewing manuscripts for many of our top journalism and mass communication journals. I believe being a tough critic has helped upgrade the level of scholarship within my area of visual communication. While peer reviewing is considered a service activity, I also view it as a form of scholarship because it keeps me up-to-date on the historical research going on around me. The best work of other scholars inspires me to do more to help flesh out our history. The more pedestrian work I review re-enforces how critical it is for me to inspire our graduate students to join forces in reclaiming photojournalism's past.

Interaction, Presence, Life

by Shawn M. McKinney, University of Texas at Austin

Newsletter Editor/Designer



Greetings from Austin, Texas, where "dubya" marks the spot.

This is Shawn M. McKinney, now serving you as the editor of **Viewpoints**, your Visual Communications Division newsletter. I am in the middle of my second year as Assistant Professor in the School of Journalism (formerly Department of Journalism) at the University of Texas at Austin. I teach primarily in two areas, Visual Design and New Media.

Over a recent weekend, I came face-to-face with a new kind of living picture, my first nephew. Improbably, Scot William McKinney, Jr. was expelled from the womb on 01/01/01. He belongs to my brother, Scot, and his wife, Sandra. Clearly, he has my father's outsized ears. I also detect a gift for odd facial expressions, as well as regular noxious emissions.

Perhaps because I ushered in the new year by watching **2001: A Space Odyssey** on late night cable TV, my nephew reminds me of no one so much as the unborn baby whose image concludes that wondrous film. Maybe it's the way he periodically wrinkles his brow like an old man, or those deep blue eyes that stay fixed on nothing in particular for long periods of time. My brother reminded me that Junior cannot even track moving objects with any success yet. How is he to adapt to our speed-of-light multimedia environment?

Junior loves to push off solid objects with his feet. He claws at the air as if searching for something solid to hold onto. Mostly, he cries and sleeps and craps and eats, not necessarily in that order. Sometimes, asleep, he scares me—his head rolls so far to one side that it looks as if it will inevitably fall off. He craves the feeling of motion, a phenomenon I have observed in other babies of the M² generation.

Thus I suspect Junior will feel particularly at home in cyberspace, a place that favors perpetual motion and basic instincts. Myself, I struggle daily to adapt to the new breeding ground for outrageous ideas and sketchy business plans. While I was born late at night, reluctant to emerge, Junior popped out quickly, eager to test the harsh light of day. Whether in a hardware store, the car, a shopping cart, or on the dining room table, though Junior mostly sleeps, he requires intermittent rocking or jiggling. And he's never asleep for long. In his world, as in cyberspace, motion = interaction, presence, life.

At the dawn of an exciting, confounding new era, we may all do well to heed Junior's lesson. The Internet, too, resists stasis. Even as many of our academic peers grumble and groan regarding the pace of change, that pace will continue to accelerate. Perhaps it is time to give up altogether the idea of ever catching up—as in the classroom, so to, in the electronic realm. More importantly, keep moving forward; you never know where the future will lead.

Vis Comm elects new officers

The Visual Communications Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications elected new officers during the division's annual business meeting at the national convention, Aug. 9-12, in Phoenix.

Members elected the following people to serve as division officers until the August 2001 meeting in Washington, D.C.

Division Head: C. Zoe Smith, O.O. McIntyre Professor, 2000-01, School of Journalism, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211-0001; 573-882-3732; smithcz@missouri.edu.

Co-Vice Head: Andrew Mendelson, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Journalism, P. R. and Advertising, Temple Univ., Philadelphia, PA 19122; 215-205-5020; amendels@astro.temple.edu.

Co-Vice Head: Kim Bissell, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Journalism, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0172; 205-348-8247; bissell@jn.ua.edu.

Newsletter Editor/Designer: Shawn M. McKinney, Assistant Professor, School of Journalism, Mail Code: A-1000, Univ. of Texas, Austin, TX 78712; 512-232-5986; smckinney@mail.utexas.edu.

Viewpoints

The Official Newspaper of the Visual Communication Division of AEJMC

Visual Communication Division Officers, 2000-2001

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Logo Competition Chair

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Creative Projects Chair

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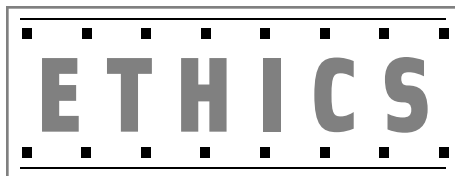
Viewpoints is the official newsletter of the Visual Communications Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), and is usually published three times a year, fall, spring and summer. Articles and letters to the editor are encouraged. Opinions expressed in all submissions belong to the authors and not the **Viewpoints** editorial staff, the officers of the Visual Communication Division, or the officers of AEJMC. Submissions may be mailed to: Shawn M. McKinney, Assistant Professor, School of Journalism, Mail Code: A-1000, University of Texas, Austin, TX 78712. Better yet, email Shawn at: smckinney@mail.utexas.edu. *The editorial staff prefers email submissions over snail mail.*

Publication Committee Considers Online Policies

The Publications Committee of AEJMC is currently debating whether to continue providing conference papers online, and seeks feedback from AEJMC members concerning this issue.

For a number of years, paper presenters have had the opportunity to put refereed research from summer conferences on the AEJMC website. This greatly facilitates access to each other's work. However, the committee is concerned that editors of non-AEJMC journals may conclude that such online accessibility constitutes a form of prior "publication," such that the editors may then refuse to

accept these papers for publication in their own journals. Consequently, this could have a significant impact (and a negative influence)



on AEJMC members' ability to get work published, at least in the traditional sense.

Options include: providing *all* refereed papers online; continuing the current practice

of allowing members the *choice* of putting work online; *limiting* access online to extended abstracts with contact information; or *ending* the practice altogether.

As the resolution of this issue will likely effect each and every AEJMC member, the Publications Committee asks for feedback through both Divisions and Interest Groups. Please contact Vis Comm Co-Vice Head **Andrew Mendelson** (by phone at: 215-205-5020, or by email at: <amendels@astro.temple.edu>) and share your thoughts.



Calling for Logos

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GUIDELINES

- Include the letters AEJMC and the words: August 2002, Miami Beach (this can be separated from the symbol but needs to work with the logo.) AEJMC should be an integral part of the logo.
- Be adaptable to multiple uses, i.e. program book cover, name tags and promotional materials. The logo should not lose impact or legibility when substantially reduced.
- Reflect the diversity of interests within AEJMC. Logo objects, forms and images should be generic to mass communications.
- Retain a sense of balance and internal integrity when typographic elements are removed.
- Be reproducible in solid tones using one color. Do not use tonal gradations or screens.
- Not use copyrighted artwork.

PROCEDURES

- Entries must be the work of students enrolled in classes taught by AEJMC members. Students

may submit multiple entries. Entries are limited to 10 per school.

- Entries must be postmarked by **May 14, 2001**.

FORMATS

- Designs should be submitted on a letter-sized format no smaller than 4 inches by 4 inches (24 by 24 picas). Include on the same sheet the logo reduced to no larger than 1 inch by 1 inch. Do not mount the entries.
- On each hard copy entry, please include the student's name, address, school and faculty sponsor on the back of the design.

ADDRESS

AEJMC Logo Design Competition
c/o Ray Wong
School of Journalism
Box 64
Middle Tennessee State University
Murfreesboro, TN 37132

Vis Comm Elects

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PF&R Committee Chair: John King, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Comm., East Tennessee State Univ., Johnson City, TN 37614-0667; 423-439-4169; johnking@etsu.edu

Research Committee Chair: Kimberly Sultze, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Journalism, St. Michael's College, Colchester, VT 05439; 802-654-2257; ksultze@smcvt.edu

Teaching Standards Chair: Brian Johnson, Associate Professor, Dept. of Journalism, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL 61801; 217-333-2103; bkj@uiuc.edu

Last Call! ☆ Call for Papers ☆ April 1, 2001 Deadline for AEJMC/Washington, D.C. Convention Entries

by Kimberly Sultze, St. Michael's College, Colchester, VT

Research Committee Chair

The Visual Communications Division of AEJMC invites faculty and students to submit research papers on any aspect of visual communication, its forms, messages, or institutions. Papers will be considered for presentation at the association's annual convention in August 2001. Visual is broadly defined and includes photography, film, television, web design, graphic design, illustration, and digital imaging, as well as other visual phenomena. We welcome both qualitative and quantitative research into visual media history, theory, law, policy, effects, processes, use and ethics.

All submissions will be blind-refereed by a panel of independent readers. A \$100 award will be given to the top student contribution, and the top three faculty papers will be recognized in the AEJMC Annual Convention Program.

Work previously presented or published, or work currently under consideration by a scholarly journal, by another AEJMC division, or by another scholarly or trade organization is ineligible and will not be accepted.

The deadline for paper submissions is **April 1, 2001**. All authors will be advised whether their paper has been accepted and will receive a copy of the reviewer's comments by May 15, 2001. At least one author of an accepted paper must attend the convention to present it.

Send papers to: Kimberly Sultze, Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, St. Michael's College, One Winooski Park, Colchester, VT 05439-0001; 802-654-2257; ksultze@smcvtedu.

The Visual Communications Division could still use your help as paper reviewers (and possibly session moderators and/or discussants) for the 2001 AEJMC annual convention. If you can help, please contact Kimberly Sultze (see address above) right away. Ideally, paper reviewers will only have to review three or four papers. Thank you in advance for your help.

Last Call! ✨ Call for Creative Projects ✨ April 1, 2001 Deadline for AEJMC/Washington, D.C. Entries

by Jay Anthony, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC

Creative Projects Chair

The Creative Projects Competition is sponsored annually by the Visual Communication Division of AEJMC. This year the competition is co-sponsored by the Newspaper Division.

This competition provides a juried outlet for original, creative work that may not otherwise have a public forum. Any work related to visual communication is fair game, from photography to typography to webography. Use your creative abilities! Projects need to be related to journalism and mass communication education in some way.

However, if you can expand the boundaries of *non-traditional* research and if you can give an inspired 15 minute visual presentation of your project, the Creative Projects competition may also be for you.

To submit work, include an explanation of your work that describes:

1. the SIGNIFICANCE of the project;
2. a RATIONALE for the research and creative work;
3. a discussion of HOW this work furthers the understanding or teaching of visual communication.

Submit the work in the best, most complete form possible. Make it *understandable* to the judges.

Previous presentations have included slide shows, CD-ROM projects, printed media design studies, videotapes, and websites. Web design projects must include the URL to allow online review by the judges.

Projects will be blind refereed by a panel of independent judges. Presenters will be notified of acceptances by mid-May.

The creative project session is scheduled for presentation at the AEJMC Annual Conference in Miami Beach.

Send entries to:

Jay Anthony
Associate Professor
School of Journalism and Mass Communication
CB3365 Carroll Hall
University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill, N.C. 27599-3365

Send questions (via e-mail) to:
janthony@email.unc.edu

NO FAX or E-MAIL submissions will be accepted.

PROJECTS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY **1 APRIL 2001**.

Professor Moves North to Move Online...

by Paul Martin Lester, California State University, Fullerton, CA

Vis Comm Member

As some of you know, I am currently enjoying the first year of a two-year leave from California State University, Fullerton working as a research fellow at the Practical Ethics Center at the University of Montana. Yes, I traded Pacific Ocean views for mountaintop vistas, Hawaiian shirts and shorts for parkas and long underwear, and my black Miata sports car for a green 4x4 pickup truck. I'm working on a couple of books, writing an ethics column for *News Photographer* with my partner, Deni Elliott, teaching occasionally, and helping to create a certificate program, "Ethical Design and Production for the Web." The program has three goals:

- > Develop an eight-course, for credit, certificate program, delivered entirely online and designed to produce ethically and socially sensitive Web practitioners;
- > Experiment with a variety of online delivery types, from completely self-paced to term-specific synchronous courses; and
- > Experiment with the online certificate program as a way of bringing together students and faculty from diverse cultures and institutions.

This program will communicate to future Web professionals and others the technical aspects required for Web design and production within an ethical framework. It emphasizes the essential role that ethics plays in the development of leadership in cyberspace. It is not enough for those who produce sites on the Web to know techniques, they must also be aware of the critical ethical, legal, and social implications of its use.

As the course is offered completely online through a virtual classroom software program, students, instructors, and guest speakers can be located anywhere in the world.

REQUIRED COURSES

Visual Communications Visual literacy in a mass media context that is concerned with the personal, historical, technical, ethical, cultural, and critical perspectives used to analyze and produce visual messages for the web and other related media.

Web Design and Production One A beginning course that introduces the students to web searching, HTML programming, web editor production, ethical and legal issues, and graphic design considerations.

Ethical Uses and Abuses of the Web A course that concentrates on the multi-faceted and ever-growing ethical issues involved with the production and presentation of web pages for public and professional use.

Writing for the Web A course that explains the unique skills involved in writing for the web—whether for an advertising, public relations, journalistic, or entertainment context.

Web Design and Production Two An advanced version of the first course in which students continue their knowledge of web design and production with added complex skills and website management.

Legal and Social Issues of the Web A companion to the Ethics course in which students concentrate on the varied legal issues associated with the relatively new medium and how those issues affect society.

Capstone/Collaborative Project Students with this course will get a chance to work together to produce websites that reflect the best from their ethical, legal, and technical instruction given through the previous courses.

ELECTIVE COURSES (Students Select One)

History of the Web and Distance Communication This course will not only detail how the Web came to be such a powerful medium of expression in modern society, but will detail the histories of a variety of distance communication techniques—smoke signals, telegraph, and television, for example—in order to make comparisons and future predictions about the use for the Web.

Business Applications for the Web In order for students to be successful producers of presentations for the Web, they should be taught of the successful and unsuccessful business practices in use today.

International Implications for the Web Since the first word for this medium is the world, it is highly appropriate for students to take a course in which global communication and concerns are addressed.

And here is where you come in. I need students and instructors for this program because I want as much diversity as possible between those registered, those guest speaking, and those teaching the courses. This program will be administered through the Center of Continuing Education and the Practical Ethics Center at the University of Montana, but anyone in the world can attend. If you think any of your students would be interested in obtaining the certificate for course credit and if you are interested in teaching one of the courses above, let me know and we'll work together on syllabi, student awareness of the program, and salary requirements.

> Call for Viewpoints Contributions from Vis Comm Members <

by Shawn M. McKinney, University of Texas at Austin

Newsletter Editor/Designer

Unless you want to hear more about my private life—and you don't—I need contributions from Vis Comm members for the next newsletter. What do I look for? Basically, contributions that aren't usually a part of traditional publishing outlets. I could use rele-

vant news items, columns that address one or more Vis Comm issues (i.e., instructional "how-to" pieces, ethical discussions, reviews of creative work, etc.), teaching tips, and conference anecdotes.

As always, calls for entries (or

papers, or projects, or reviewers) receive special attention. Announcements, op-ed pieces, and letters to the editor are encouraged. Even visual contributions are fine, including illustrations, cartoons, or photographs. Contributions from graduate

students are certainly welcome.

The best way to reach me—to discuss ideas, make suggestions, or submit copy—is by email, at: smckinney@mail.utexas.edu.

I look forward to hearing from each and every one of you, soon.

VCQ Delivers Annual Report 2000

by James D. Kelly

Editor/Designer

Editor's Annual Report Visual Communication Quarterly Vol. 7, Nos. 1-4, 2000

This annual report represents activity for the four issues of *Visual Communication Quarterly* published in 2000. It is organized into four sections: Review Process, Types of Projects Submitted, Acknowledgements, and General News and Background.

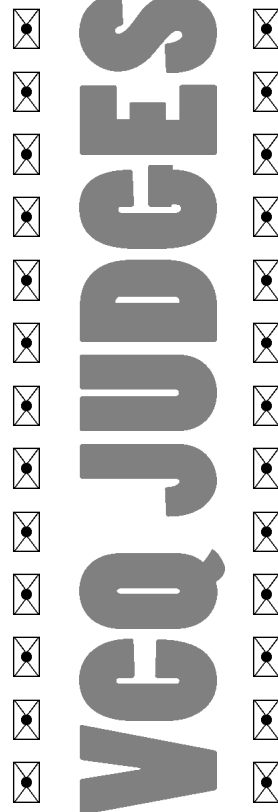
Review Process

Between August 1, 1999 and July 31, 2000 we considered 16 submitted research papers. All went out to three reviewers. Of the total, seven (44%) were accepted; three (19%) were rejected, six (37%) were returned with requests for revision and resubmission.

In volume seven we published seven research articles, three Commentaries, six book reviews, four Positive/Negative columns, and three annotated bibliographies.

Manuscript Judges

- Ann Auman, University of Hawaii
- Kevin Barnhurst, University of Illinois
- Dan Berkowitz, University of Iowa
- Michael Carlebach, University of Miami
- Prabu David, Ohio State University
- Craig Denton, University of Utah
- Michael Griffin, Macalester College
- Charles Lewis, Mankato State University
- Carolyn Lin, Cleveland State University
- Sandra Moriarty, University of Colorado
- Shiela Reaves, University of Wisconsin
- Michael Sherer, University of Nebraska
- Zoe Smith, University of Missouri
- James Tankard, University of Texas
- Sandra Utt, Memphis University
- Wayne Wanta, University of Florida
- Robert Wicks, University of Arkansas



Types of Projects Submitted

All manuscripts received are coded for topic and research paradigm. The eight topics categories are: typography, graphic design, informational graphics, cartoons, photography, motion pictures, television/ video,

and computers. We used the following six types of research paradigms: quantitative social science, qualitative social science, history, law & policy, interpretive/critical, and descriptive.

Of the 16 manuscripts reviewed, 12 were about photography, three concerned graphics, and one concerned television/video. Six were quantitative social science, two were qualitative social science, two were histories, two were law & policy, one was descriptive, and one was interpretive/critical. Of the seven articles published, six concerned photography and one concerned television/video. Three were histories, two were quantitative social science, one was qualitative social science, and one was interpretive/critical.

Acknowledgements

I again offer my heartfelt thanks to Jim Gordon, editor of *News Photographer* magazine and professor emeritus of photojournalism at Bowling Green State University. Without his help and the support of the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA), publication of VCQ would not be possible.

Next, I must acknowledge the work of my staff. Patsy Watkins, Jock Lauterer, and Julianne Newton are in the difficult positions of persuading many of our best (and busiest) scholars/professionals to write book reviews, Commentary essays, or annotated bibliographies. I know their jobs can be frustrating. Ken Kobr continues to write an excellent column each issue with the dependability one expects from a seasoned journalist.

Finally, I must acknowledge the great amount of intellectual energy freely volunteered by the scholars who reviewed manuscripts for VCQ. The reviewers offer 1 or 2 typed pages of detailed, insightful and constructive reviews. I have learned a great deal from reading the reviews and I know authors have also benefited tremendously. The quality of the work published in a journal is clearly related to the intelligence and commitment of its reviewers.

General news and recommendations

Distribution of the annual compilation is now handled by the NPPA national office and I want to thank Bradley Wilson for agreeing to do so. Many universities are only able to pay with a purchase order and the AEJMC headquarters was unable to accept them. Jennifer McGill, AEJMC executive director, was helpful in making the transition and I want to thank her and Bradley for their efforts on the journal's behalf. Sales of the annual have yet to reach an amount sufficient to pay for the reprinting of the first two volumes of VCQ. Our sales flyer has been updated by Julieanne Newton and is being distributed to all members and to the chairs and directors of all ACEJMC programs. Submission of the journal to various abstracting and indexing services is planned for the upcoming year. Unfortunately, VCQ remains too difficult to find in a library.

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Austin, TX 78712

Viewpoints

Wet or Dry

from page 1

gave up. Everything around me—buildings, people, food—appeared glazed, wrapped in a dull shade of orange. I had passed into another world, familiar, yet strange.

Heat was something I grew up in and never managed to escape from for very long, something as familiar—even comforting—as duststorms, yucca plants and discarded newspapers tossed about in the wind. Suddenly heat was something more, something forbidden, dangerous, inhumane. People come here to *retire*, I thought, to grow *old*. People who can afford to retire any number of other places. Furthermore, I had already noticed as much new construction taking place here as in the overhyped dot.com wilderness I call home, Austin, Texas. In Phoenix, everything looks new. Everything matches everything else. And everything is *orange*.

Yet only one year ago, at about this same time, I was walking down Canal Street, wondering why I still bothered to wear a tie, or even a shirt. Weather conditions had somehow failed to deter me from the admittedly questionable plan of getting away from the conference for a few hours

to take in a movie. I chose one about sharks, *Deep Blue Sea* (Renny Harlin, 1999), thinking where there are sharks there is usually water, gallons upon gallons of the big cold stuff. The movie did not disappoint, at least in that respect—based on the scenes I actually watched. The formidable journey to the theatre so depleted my normal reserves that I essentially passed out, shortly after taking my seat in the dark. I awoke only occasionally, to the roar of yet another explosion or the crunch of anonymous flesh.

Looking forward to this year, I wonder: Will wilting inside another freshly laundered shirt, while jostling for a decent look at the Vietnam Memorial, be much different than melting in line for hours, outside K-Paul's Kitchen, two years ago? Is the grand plan to exchange wet for dry each year? Then what of Miami Beach? Shouldn't 2002 favor dry heat?

More to the point, is it foolish to wonder what it would be like to spend the Dog Days of August—just once—calm and cool?



Visual Quick Picks: Of Math, Mysticism and Fearsome Flocks

by Shawn M. McKinney, University of Texas at Austin

Newsletter Editor/Designer

The enigmatic 1997 film, *Pi*, by writer/director Darren Aronofsky, is a creative exercise in futility. Shot in glaring, high contrast b&w, the film wears its lofty ambitions on its sleeve. The protagonist, Max Cohen (played by Sean Gullette), can't stop pursuing a tangled web of mathematical mysteries that suggest a connection between the stock market, the ancient chinese board game, Go, the golden mean, and Jewish mysticism, among other highbrow topics. Often seen popping pills, relocking locks, glancing over a shoulder, picking ants from his computers, or staring into a bathroom mirror, Max is rarely at ease in this Lynchian pastiche. Not unlike last year's *The Cell*, it doesn't add up to much in the end. Yet the striking camerawork, expertly welded to punchy techno beats and white noise, make for a compelling visual and aural feast.

The stylish 1963 thriller, *The Birds*, directed by Alfred Hitchcock, is an example of a master craftsman transcending formidable technical limitations to produce suspense and surprises. *The Birds'* psychological entanglements are arguably on a level with the philosophical conundrums presented in *Pi*, while the older film delivers something *Pi* is missing—a wry, laconic sense of humor. Shot in a bluish technicolor, *The Birds* might as well be dressed in black and white, as are most of the film's feathered forces of evil. While the use of sound is invariably clever and convincing, more effective still are long scenes presented in complete silence, only enhancing a viewer's involvement. In the closing scene, the protagonists appear to drive away safely. Yet the long pan poses new questions, revealing more and more birds, as far as the eye can see.