

New England First Amendment Institute 2011

DAY ONE: THE VALUE OF TRANSPARENCY

3:15

WELCOME

Walter Robinson, Director, Initiative for Investigative Reporting, Northeastern University School of Journalism

3:30 - 4:00

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: THE NEW MODELS FOR INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING AND WHY THEY ARE CRUCIAL TO FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Robert Rosenthal, Executive Director, Center for Investigative Reporting

Access to the work of government enables citizen and journalist alike to provide vital oversight. As the leader of the Center for Investigative Journalism, Robert Rosenthal has been a champion of the public's right to know. Drawing on his decades-long career, he discusses the changing landscape of journalism and makes the case for transparency.

4:00 - 5:30

PANEL: TALES FROM THE TRENCHES

Moderator: Mary Jane Wilkinson, Acting President, NEFAC

Panelists: Barbara Laker, reporter/Assistant City Editor, The Philadelphia Daily News; Wendy Ruderman, reporter, The Philadelphia Daily News; Jennifer LaFleur, Director of CAR, ProPublica; Sean Murphy, reporter, The Boston Globe

Panelists will share their practical experience in investigative work through painstaking interviewing and use of freedom of information laws to unearth corruption and bring truth to light.

5:30 - 6:00

ICEBREAKER

Rosanna Cavanagh, Executive Director, NEFAC

6:00

DINNER

DAY TWO: HOW DO WE HARNESS FREEDOM OF INFORMATION LAWS AND PUBLICLY AVAILABLE DATA TO FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS?

SESSION ONE: HOW TO HARNESS THE FEDERAL FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

9:00 - 9:30 **Elizabeth Ritvo, Partner, Brown Rudnick – Overview of the Freedom of Information Act.**

9:30 - 10:30 **PANEL DISCUSSION: FEDERAL FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT**

Moderator: Doug Clifton, former Executive Editor of The Miami Herald and The Cleveland Plain Dealer

Panelists: Jonathan M. Albano, Partner, Bingham McCutchen; Michael Morisy, Co-Founder of MuckRock; Elizabeth Ritvo, Partner, Brown Rudnick

How do we put federal information law to use in pursuit of local stories? How do you win federal Freedom of Information Act battles? Examples of vital information made public via federal Freedom of Information Act.

SESSION TWO: THE NITTY GRITTY: HOW TO HARNESS STATE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION LAWS

10:30 - 11:30 **PANEL DISCUSSION: COMMON ISSUES IN STATE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION LAWS**

Moderator: Gregory V. Sullivan, Partner and President, Malloy & Sullivan

Panelists: Mitchell Pearlman, lecturer, University of Connecticut; William Chapman, Partner, Orr & Reno; Peter Caruso, Managing Partner, Caruso & Caruso; Sigmund Schutz, Partner, PretiFlaherty; Joseph V. Cavanagh, Jr., Managing Partner, Blish & Cavanagh; Michael Donoghue, reporter, Burlington (Vt.) Free Press

11:30 - 12:30 **BREAK OUT SESSIONS**

Mitchell Pearlman and Lynne DeLucia, Editor, Connecticut Health Investigative Team (Conn.); Gregory Sullivan, William Chapman, and George Geers, Founder, Plaidswede Publishing (N.H.); Peter Caruso and Ebony Reed, Assistant Bureau Chief for New England, The Associated Press (Mass.); Sigmund Schutz and Andrew Marsters, Lecturer in Journalism, University of New Hampshire (Maine); Joseph V. Cavanagh Jr. and Laura Crimaldi, reporter, The Associated Press (R.I.); Michael Donoghue, reporter, Burlington (Vt.) Free Press

Common issues in state freedom of information laws will be discussed first in a state wide panel of the attorneys. Then, in state-specific breakout sessions, the details of each state's laws and exemptions will be discussed: What should you ask for and expect to get? What tends to be exempt? How should you respond when access is denied? Case studies illuminate the nuances of the law. Lawyers from each state team up with journalists for a robust discussion.

12:30 - 1:30 **LUNCH AND LUNCHEON ADDRESS**

The FOI Leadership Challenge – Pete Weitzel

Drawing from his previous experience as Managing Editor of The Miami Herald and a founding member of both the Florida First Amendment Foundation and the National Freedom of Information Coalition, Peter Weitzel discusses how you can turn on your inner activist and become a force for freedom of information.

SESSION THREE: DATABASE REPORTING

2:00 - 2:50 **Todd Wallack, The Boston Globe**

Todd Wallack gives an introduction to computer-assisted reporting — using spreadsheets, databases and other tools to analyze records and give more power to your reporting. He offers some ideas about where to find data, how to obtain it through public records requests and what tools to use to crunch the numbers.

[Break]

SESSION FOUR: SEARCHING FOR GOLD IN SECURITY EXCHANGE COMMISSION FILINGS

3:00 - 3:50 **Todd Wallack, The Boston Globe**

Thanks to the SEC's robust disclosure requirements, public companies are required by law to share information that can be of crucial importance to investigative journalists. Todd Wallack demystifies 10 K's and 8Q's, the alpha-numeric goldmine of SEC documents. He tells what's in them and offers tips on how to use them. He also walks you through a sampling of other key documents to track businesses: FDIC data on banks, corporate filings with Secretary of States, nonprofit tax forms filed with the IRS, federal contracting data kept by the US government and union filings with the Department of Labor.

[Break]

SESSION FIVE: HOW TO PINPOINT IMPORTANT INVESTIGATIVE STORIES, AND TIPS FOR BRINGING THEM HOME

4:00 - 5:30 **Moderator: Larry Laughlin, former Bureau Chief for the Associated Press for Northern New England**

Panelists: Susan Areson, Metropolitan Managing Editor, The Providence Journal; Timothy Dwyer, Executive Editor, The Day of New London; Mo Mehlsak, Editor, The Forecaster; Cara Rubinsky, News Editor, The Associated Press

[Break]

6:00 DINNER STARTS

6:30 DINNER ADDRESS: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION TRIUMPHS
Walt Bogdanich, three-time Pulitzer Prize winner and a reporter for The New York Times

A prize-winning journalist reflects on a career of digging through public records and exposing corporate and governmental misdeeds. Bogdanich's body of work is a prima facie case for the societal value of the public's right to know. He shares insights into his method of work.

DAY THREE: THE NEXT STEP: GETTING INFORMATION THE OLD FASHIONED WAY — TIPS FROM EXPERIENCED INVESTIGATIVE REPORTERS

9:00 - 10:30

SESSION ONE: PANEL — THE LEAK

Moderator: Thomas Fiedler, Dean, Boston University College of Communication

Panelists: Maggie Mulvihill, Executive Director, N.E. Center for Investigative Reporting at Boston University; Walter Robinson, Director, The Initiative for Investigative Reporting at Northeastern University School of Journalism; Stephen Kurkjian, Senior Investigative Fellow, Watchdog New England; Doug Clifton, former Executive Editor, The Miami Herald

When your FOI request languishes your reporting continues. This panel covers developing sources, encouraging leaks, avoiding common pitfalls and knowing how to evaluate what you get.

10:45 - 11:45

SESSION TWO: OVERCOMING NEWSROOM HURDLES

Michael Donoghue, reporter, Burlington (Vt.) Free Press, leads a group discussion on issues that block or slow stories getting to readers and strategies for success

[Break]

12:00

LUNCH BEGINS

12:00 - 1:00

LUNCH AND LUNCHEON ADDRESS

Lea Thompson — Lessons Learned Along the Way

Lea Thompson will address how to use your role as a journalist to be a watchdog for the public interest, pulling from her extensive experience as Dateline NBC correspondent and journalism professor. Her work has been responsible for three acts of Congress and numerous product recalls.

1:15 - 4:30

SESSION THREE: INVESTIGATIVE REPORTERS AND EDITORS

Mark Horvit, Executive Director, Investigative Reporters and Editors: Tapping into Twitter, social media & the internet

From better search techniques to the invisible Web and social media: how to find reliable information on deadline and for enterprise stories. Tips on more effective Web searches. The latest search engines, data sites and other practical information you can use immediately.

[Break]

Mark Horvit, Executive Director, Investigative Reporters and Editors: Bulletproofing the story

Strategies, tips and techniques for reporters, editors, producers and online staff to ensure accuracy discussed.

[Break]

Mark Horvit, Executive Director, Investigative Reporters and Editors: Great watchdog reporting

A fast-paced look at some of the best investigative and watchdog stories from the past year in print, broadcast and online. Full of inspiration, story ideas, sources and data tips.

4:30

CONCLUDING ADDRESS

Mary Jane Wilkinson, Acting President, NEFAC

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