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University sponsors annual high school press conference

Noelle Greenley

For the Oregon Daily Emerald

High school newspaper journalists throughout Oregon are gathering at the University today to study ethical issues the media face in handling news and entertainment.

"Curiosity and Conscience: The Struggle to Find Meaning in the News" is the theme of the 68th annual Oregon Scholastic Press High School Press Conference. The event, sponsored by the School of Journalism and Communication, appeals to students as consumers of media and encourages critical decision making skills.

"When we looked at headlines about the O.J. Simpson case or measured the rapid growth of tabloid 'infotainment', this year's theme came quickly to mind," said conference coordinator Jennifer King, assistant dean for external affairs at the school.

"We developed this day to provide high school students with the ethical and decision making skills necessary to determine what is news and what is entertainment," King said.

Duncan McDonald, dean of the journalism school, will deliver the keynote address. McDonald became dean in July after serving two years as chief operating officer of the Freedom Forum

Media Studies at Columbia University. He has won the University's prestigious Ersted Award for excellence in teaching.

Media literacy can never come too soon, McDonald said. The conference stresses the importance of educating students as they begin to make decisions about careers. As they become more aware of the media process, students can learn to be critical consumers and participants.

People have always had appetites for sensationalism, he said. A walk through history shows that trials and scandals have consistently appealed to the public. What is different in modern media is the dosages. McDonald suggested that at no time in history has the public been so exposed by the media as today. This exposure results in a loss of privacy and increased distortions.

McDonald said he hopes to encourage the students to not be passive about media content and to listen more carefully to the messages being sent. He questions how aware consumers are of what they see and hear.

"We are all responsible for improving the media," he said. "When all is said and done, and all is shaken out, we can hope that we are properly informed."

INTERNET

Continued from Page 1

"On-line newspapers have more than tripled in the last eight months," Russial said.

On-line publications have many advantages and disadvantages when compared to printed publications.

According to Russial, on-line publications lose some of the traditional functions of newspapers.

The future of on-line publications, he said, could provide for individualized publications that send only information a person has expressed interest in.

"If that happens, newspapers will no longer be a common community product," he said.

Another disadvantage of on-line publications, he said, is that they don't allow you to tell what news is more important.

"It's an important function of newspapers to be able to tell the reader that a policy decision made by the city council is more important than a small, two-car accident out in Junction City."

Steve Ponder, journalism professor, said Internet resources greatly increase access to inter-

national news.

"Before, with international news, everything was mediated by newspapers and television news networks," Ponder said. "Now we don't have to rely on how they gather news and package it for us."

He said this increased access gives people a great advantage for information gathering.

"It's very liberating," he said. "You're no longer subject to the space limitations of your local newspapers or television station."

According to Ponder, one issue facing the future of on-line publications is funding. Currently, printed newspapers, for the most part, are funded by advertising.

"It remains to be seen whether the Internet will be a successful vehicle for advertising," he said. "Undoubtedly it will have to be, but they aren't sure how yet."

He said most newspapers are currently experimenting with on-line publications.

"Newspapers have invested heavily in this technology to they will not be left behind," he said. "They're experimenting to see if they can attract a large enough audience and to see if it will be profitable."

■ ET ALS

MEETINGS

African Students Association will meet today at 5 p.m. in EMU Cedar Room D. For more information, call 346-4379.

MISCELLANEOUS

Educational Opportunities Program will sponsor a workshop on motivation today at 2 p.m. in the Koinonia Center Library, 1414 Kincaid St. For more information, call 346-3232.

OSPIRG's Earth Day 1995/Free the Planet group will sponsor a bake sale today from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in front of the University Bookstore, 895 E. 13th Ave. For more information, call 346-4377.

Oregon Humanities Center will sponsor a lecture, "Toward a Globalization of the Modern: The Case of Modern Indian Art," today at 4 p.m. in the Gerlinger Alumni Lounge. Daniel A. Herwitz, associate professor of philosophy at California State University in Los Angeles will speak. A reception will follow the lecture. For more information, call 346-3934.

Jewish Cultural Center of Eugene will sponsor a lecture, "Behind the Mask: The Secrets of Purim" by Rabbi Efraim Davidson tonight at 7:30 at 2548 Willamette St. For more information, call 334-6772.

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11 a.m. - 2 p.m.