Countdown to San Diego

NABJ gets powered up for 35th anniversary

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The set of Hearst Television’s “Project Economy,” a public interest series focused on communities’ struggles with unemployment. Coverage continues on page 11.

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From the president
Kathy Y. Times

A whole new world
A new fantastic point of view
No one to tell us no or where to go
Or say we’re only dreaming…
— Celine Dion & Peabo Bryson

I love music, and inspirational lyrics often pop into my head, empowering and encouraging me to take broader strokes to achieve ambitious goals. Achievement knows no boundaries.

This year, I’ve traveled to Houston, Los Angeles, San Diego, Dakar, Senegal, and the Washington Beltway to further NABJ’s goals. With every mile traveled came strengthened purpose, pride and progress.

I went to Senegal at the invitation of the country’s president and the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS. One of my many stops included a visit to Goree Island, Senegal – a holding place for slaves en route to the Americas. I left the island with newfound strength and courage. I also witnessed the dedication of a new bronze “African Renaissance Monument.” While media attention focused on the sculpture’s significant cost and size, it seemed to succeed in its purpose to act as an invitation of unification for those on the continent and of reconnection to those in the Diaspora.

I left Senegal with new relationships with scholars, journalists and the next generation of leaders: a regal Jacqueline Jackson, daughter of the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Jomo Bellard, past Florida A&M University Student Government Association President and Roslyn Brock, the youngest chairman elected to lead the NAACP Board of Directors.

I left Los Angeles with a new sense of pride after having lunch with NABJ veterans. Our members told prospective partners and sponsors how NABJ shaped their careers. Your vice presidents and I held meetings with news managers and editors in Southern California to discuss diversity, jobs and our upcoming summer convention in San Diego.

I went to Houston and felt invigorated after a New Year’s Day gathering with a hardworking chapter.

I left our Winter board meeting in San Diego grateful for the commitment of the local chapter, sponsors and team working to ensure an awesome convention.

I left College Park, Maryland, the home of our new NABJ headquarters, reflecting on how far we’ve come since NABJ’s inception almost 35 years ago. It is a fabulous facility within the $30 million Knight Hall at the University of Maryland, equipped with state-of-the-art technology to help NABJ and its members reinvent, retool and restructure. Special thanks to everyone who helped us make the move.

I look forward to my journey back to the West Coast where I hope to see you at the 35th Annual Convention and Career Fair in San Diego. Convention committee chair Elise Durham and her team and our Board of Directors and staff are lining up new sponsors, speakers, and professional development tracks designed for managers, mid-career journalists, newbies, entrepreneurs, and members in transition. Don’t miss the incredible speakers during our new “Brown Bag Lunch Series.” Go to www.nabj.org for more information.

One of television’s favorite physicians, Dr. Oz, will be there talking about our health. Traditional and online media companies and Google will be there providing a unique perspective on the future of our business. The economy is picking up, and so is the number of recruiters for this year’s Career Fair!

Oleta Adams sings, “I Don’t Care How You Get Here. Just Get Here, If You Can.” NABJ cares how you get to San Diego, and we’re working on helping you get there and working to provide year-round training 24-7. Embrace the power of change.

Yours in service,

Kathy Y. Times
Interim NABJ Executive Director Drew Berry addresses the Board of Directors as they meet in January in San Diego. The Board toured the convention site, made advocacy visits to newspapers, new media executives and TV stations, and held its January budget meeting to consider the spending plan for 2010.

SAN DIEGO
2010 NABJ
CONVENTION AND CAREER FAIR
july 28 - august 1

NABJ@35: THE POWER OF CHANGE

NABJ celebrates its 35th anniversary and the power that change can bring. Members are reminded that June 15 is the deadline for pre-registration for this year’s convention and job fair. The fee is $330 for full members, $345 for associate members and $175 for students. Continental Airlines is offering a discount to NABJ members; for details, call 866-479-NABJ. A roommate finding service is being offered to reduce hotel costs to $100 a night or less. Please email your dates of travel, gender and contact information to nabjroomateconnect@gmail.com. Members also can donate money to help their displaced colleagues attend the job fair. A new donation button and the links to all San Diego Convention information is available at www.nabj.org.

Finance Manager Lambert Fleming, Associate Representative April O. Turner, Berry and Region V Director Cindy George share a light moment during the board meeting.

Berry and Treasurer Gregory H. Lee Jr. walk through the city on the way to the Manchester Hyatt where NABJ’s Convention and Career Fair will be held July 28-Aug. 1.

Vice President-Broadcast Bob Butler, Parliamentarian Tonju Francois and President Kathy Y. Times listen during the tour of the Hyatt.
Region I
Director
Katina Revels
and Butler stand in one of the private lounges of the Hyatt, overlooking the San Diego waterfront.
Journalists and specifically, NABJ members know Gerald Boyd as a pioneer, a trailblazer, and the man who kicked doors open for the rest of us, all the way to the top of the New York Times as its first black Managing Editor.

Last month, while in Detroit for a meeting of Kaiser Journalism Fellows, an NABJ member told me that she had never met Boyd but she would never forget her very first NABJ conference, right after he was named managing editor. “He and Robin (D. Stone) were walking through the lobby, and everybody jumped to their feet and applauded.” It was a really telling moment in terms of his legacy within NABJ and the way he showed that anything was possible. It gave people chills.

However, others sadly remember Boyd as a footnote in the headlines around the Jayson Blair plagiarism debacle at the Times. In June of 2003, Boyd resigned from the job he loved.

Boyd was the NABJ Journalist of the Year in 2001, and over the next five years, he reached the pinnacle of success and the glare of infamy before he came to the NABJ Convention in Dallas in 2003 to give his first public remarks after resigning. When Boyd died in 2006, few knew that he wanted to set the record straight with a memoir. With the help of his wife, journalist Robin D. Stone, that book, My Times in Black and White, hit bookstores in February.

“It was important for him to write about what made him who he was,” Stone said in an interview. “He wanted to not just write about the end of his career at the Times, but about all of his life.” The book was a bitter-sweet education for Stone as well.

“Although he had asked for feedback, I didn’t read the entire manuscript until after Gerald died,” Stone said. In reading those pages, she discovered a lot about her husband that she didn’t know: “I always knew that Gerald loved Zach (his son) and I, but it was very emotional to see his feelings about us and our life together written out in that way,” Stone says.

Boyd had written 800 pages before his death, and it became Stone’s mission to flesh out the story, filling in the blanks and getting his story out to the world.

“I knew that there was more to Gerald’s story than just his version, so I had an idea to get the anecdotes from people who knew him to help bring his story to life,” Stone said. She set about the task of contacting family and friends and going back to his childhood home in St. Louis.

Stone says that getting different perspectives and adding them to her husband’s narrative, helped to show his humanity, drive and his competitive spirit.

While Boyd’s career was firmly entrenched in newspapers, there is much for journalists, especially those entering the field, to learn about the business of media in this book.

“Gerald was one of the last of an era of old-school journalists,” Stone said, adding that “he had one foot in a newsroom when there were no computers, and another trying
Boyd selects photos with Howell Raines (left of Boyd), for the New York Times’ Sept. 11 coverage.

When Boyd graduated from University of Columbia in 1973, he started his career at the St. Louis Post-Dispatch as a reporter, and then a White House correspondent. After a decade there, he moved on to become a political reporter, and a White House correspondent for the New York Times. Over the years, he held the posts of metropolitan editor, assistant managing editor, deputy managing editor for news and ultimately, held the managing editor post.

George Curry, an old friend of Boyd’s since their early days at the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, says “It was no surprise that Gerald got to the New York Times, because that was his lifelong dream.”

Curry says that one of Boyd’s true legacies besides his role at the Times is what he contributed to young black journalists. Boyd and Curry took on the challenge of creating a workshop for students during their tenure in St. Louis. “Hundreds of kids have gone into the business, because we spent our Saturdays with them,” Curry said.

Dana Canedy, a senior editor at the Times, continued on page 10

Boyd interviews a reclining President George H.W. Bush.

To get a foothold into new media.”

Continued on page 10
remembers the impact that Boyd had on her career, as well. “When I first met him, I was a little flustered. I had heard of THE Gerald Boyd, the highest ranking black staffer at the Times,” Canedy says. “But he had a great sense of humor, and a kind smile that helped me get over my intimidation.”

In 2000, Canedy saw his skill as an editor, and the way his mind worked around a story when she worked on the Pulitzer Prize-winning “How Race Is Lived In America” series. “He read every draft of every version of every story,” Canedy says. “When he was engaged in a project, he consumed it.”

Boyd’s life and career mirrors so many of the major stories in this country’s history, including race and race relations. The conversations that were going on in the newsrooms where Boyd worked over the years were the same as echoed throughout a country that struggled to deal with race and social equity. “He understood the significance of his impact and what it meant to be the first black man in senior management at the Times,” Stone says.

Stone says her husband had a commitment to mentoring journalists throughout his career. And even though the world of news content is ever changing, and working journalists continue to struggle, Stone says that the lessons taken from Gerald’s life and work are the same for all journalists, no matter the media. “Gerald believed in doing the best journalism at its core, and in being transparent in reporting,” Stone says.

For all of the highlights in his career, resigning from his position as New York Times managing editor in June 2003 marked a tough period Boyd, his family and his close friends. Curry, who spoke at Boyd’s memorial service in New York, says, “I am still angry about the people who tried to Velcro Gerald to Jayson Blair.”

Boyd was caught up in the firestorm that surrounded Blair, a young black reporter found to have committed frequent acts of journalistic fraud while working at the Times. Questions were asked about how the problems could go sustained in the atmosphere of high quality journalism at the Times.

According to Curry, there have been many accomplished journalists who have gotten caught up in plagiarism scandals, “but you’d be hard pressed to name the editor. “

“If you thought that Gerald gave preferential treatment to a reporter because he’s black, you are wrong. If you thought that, you didn’t know Gerald,” Curry says.

Canedy adds that she’s sure Boyd never got over the loss of his job, “and neither did his friends. “When he left, I sobbed like a baby.” She adds that when many of his colleagues outspokenly tried to set the record straight, Boyd interceded because he didn’t want them to jeopardize their positions. “That’s the kind of person he was,” Canedy says.

Stone thinks that for Boyd, writing the book after leaving the Times, was a way to make his feeling publicly known and to redefine himself. “It was partly therapeutic. As he wrote, he was probably in search for himself,” she added.

And as much as the book chronicles Boyd’s professional career, there is a tenderness that shines through, especially when he writes about family. In the book’s introduction, Boyd says he wrote the book for his son, Zach, who is now 13 years old.

“I want him to understand the people and forces that shaped his father, and by extension, that shape him,” Boyd wrote. “The Times used to be my life, but my life was more than the Times. Fortunately, I came to appreciate this before it was too late.”

Andrea King Collier is a freelance journalist based in Lansing, Michigan. She chairs the NABJ Media Institute on Health and Health Disparities.
Television and Broadcasting the Economic Evolution

By Brigitte Yuille

Local television and radio news stations are addressing economic struggles within our communities as unemployment numbers, home foreclosures and bankruptcy filings change our access to capital. The stations are engaging these audiences with financially themed news series.

Executives at Hearst Television Inc., formerly Hearst Argyle Inc., a media group based in New York, NY, realized that the economy was becoming the dominant daily news story as problems surfaced in the fall 2008.

“Our thought was how can we help each other to do a better job at this? How can we make sure that we’re really doing what we can to help people in our communities?” said Candy Altman, vice president of news.

Their efforts to frame the local economic news coverage, give it a broad title and concrete ideas produced “Project Economy,” a public-interest series template for its 28 local television stations to address issues, such as unemployment and local business struggles. At the beginning of 2009, the stations were advised to adjust the new series to the needs of their local markets, include one economy story in a newscast and to hold one job fair by April.

“As we started to organize our job fair here in West Palm Beach, the management team really saw that there was as much of a need for a job preparation fair,” explained Kyle Grimes, news director at WPBF-TV in West Palm Beach, Fla. The station’s intent was to arm people with information as the nation recovered from the economic turmoil. It arranged a partnership with the local Workforce Alliance and held a fair that involved interview preparations, resume writing workshops and career advice.

“We have had, to date, over 80,000 people participate in our job fairs around the country,” Altman said.

In addition, the media company’s strategy included establishing the “Project Economy” brand as a presence on news stations’ websites. It also shares economic news packages across its stations in a weekly news feed. Many stations are embracing the concept.

“This is an important part of what our job is now. It is the ultimate definition of local in our brand,” Michelle Butt, news director of WBAL-TV in Baltimore, Md., said of her news team’s response.

A large public broadcasting initiative placed its financial literacy focus on multimedia content. The Corporation of Public Broadcasting in Washington, D.C., funded the public media economy collaboration managed by National Public Radio and The NewsHour. It consists of 12 public media organizations, such as KQED and WNYC. The collaboration serves the public’s needs through wide-ranging stories on the economic crisis from a local, national and global perspective.

Marketplace in Los Angeles Calif., for example, undertook four initiatives, according to Managing Editor George Judson. It provided short explainers or “decoders” on complex terms, such as derivatives, on-air; video decoders involving illustrations, a blog that surveys the top business stories of the day and an on-air series that tells how Americans became addicted to consumer debt, focusing primarily on credit cards.

Partners of the initiative create online tools and resources, such as blogs, podcast, widgets and applications. Youth Radio is working on a social media application called “Temptation Converter.”

“The idea is to provide a way for young people to convert purchases they are tempted to make (e.g. premium denim, limited-edition running shoes) into a personalized list of what they can get for that money that has long term benefits for themselves and their community (e.g. portion of tuition, interest if put away in a savings account etc.),” said Rebecca Marin, senior producer of youth radio in Oakland.

Members of other media news groups also are making a difference, such as KPHO-TV in Phoenix. It is one of Meredith Corporation’s 12 local media affiliates. Phoenix is virtually at the epicenter of the housing meltdown and the station has covered issues related to foreclosure, mortgage refinancing and short sales, said Michelle Donaldson, news director.

“On the other side of the spectrum, we tasked ourselves with finding a way to inject hope into our newscasts at a time when so many of the stories we covered felt hopeless,” Donaldson said. The station started a project called “Pay It Forward.” Each week, the station gives a viewer $500. The viewer has only an hour to give the money to someone in need of financial help.

The efforts to educate the public are having a significant impact on the African-American community and other minorities. Studies have shown that African Americans place less emphasis on saving. For example, an examination of saving behaviors of African American and Hispanic households by Annamaria Lusardi, a professor of economics at Dartmouth University, found that these households are less likely to hold high-return assets, such as stocks and business equity, or even basic assets, such as checking accounts.

Managers of news stations that are participating in financial news ventures are offering the following advice for other programmers considering plans that address the economy amid the bustle of their daily news coverage, shrinking staff and evolving newsrooms:

• Read up on economic and financial topics.
• Listen and think about the needs of your audience and their circumstances.
• Personalize financial stories.
• Keep the language simple and use analogies.
• Find creative ways to engage the audience.
• Develop partnerships for a greater impact.

Brigitte Yulle is a financial and business writer based in Florida.
Will health-care reform lead to health-care equality?

An NABJ student panel discussion
Health Care’s Need for Equity

By Alexander Chang

On March 22, the House approved a $938 billion health-care bill that two days later was signed by President Barack Obama. The signing signaled the first step to offering national health care to all Americans, something previous administrations had failed to accomplish.

Despite the many years it took to bring about major health-care reform, the media have long been aware of the medical disparities that exist among many of the nation’s racial minorities. Weeks leading up to the historic legislation, the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) hosted a conference regarding the inequalities of health-care policies and health coverage. One panel discussion, “What Really Happened to Health Reform, and What Happens Next?”, probed health inequities and possible solutions.

The discussion was led by Brian Smedley of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, Eleanor Hinton Hoytt, president of Black Women’s Health Imperative, and Rea Pañares, director of Minority Health Initiatives, Families USA.

Panelists noted that inequality with current health coverage lies in a lack of equal health benefits for people of color, people of rural communities, people with low incomes, people who are uninsured, and women. These inequities could stem from geographical restrictions, existence of food deserts and unavailable access to healthy food, linguistic barriers, and costs of health care.

“If we look at the changing demographics of the United States, right now people of color are a third of the U.S. population,” said Smedley. “In about 2030, the projection is that half of the U.S. population will be people of color, so there will be no majority. Our health care systems have to be prepared to deal with this growing diversity. And the evidence is that right now our health-care systems are not prepared because the playing field is not leveled.”

The goals of the health-care bill were clear according to Smedley. The goals were: to expand coverage towards the estimated 46 million uninsured Americans; to contain costs due to rising costs of health care being unsustainable; and to improve the quality of care. Smedley said the government will be unable to achieve these goals without making equity a central objective of legislation, and that expanding coverage alone is not sufficient enough to eliminate disparities in health coverage.

“If all else is equal. If everybody had the same insurance status, same income, and same education level, would people of color get the same quality of care?” said Smedley. “Our studies show that conclusively that the answer is ‘no.’ People of color get lower quality of health care, even if access is equal with everybody.”

Hoytt said the lack of equal access extends to the inequalities of health coverage toward women, noting that previously women were required to pay higher health insurance due to gender rating.

“Where is equity? That’s gender rating,” said Hoytt. “If I had been a victim of domestic violence, it is not okay for that to have been [labeled as] a pre-existing condition and therefore health insurance companies do not cover it. It does not matter what the condition is if you have the illness, you would have been, or could have been, and still may be penalized.”

Panelists said that the delays in passing health-care reform could stem from conservative fear that health advancements will not be made due to the lack of privatized coverage, economic fears in that costs of health care will not be sustainable, and because of misappropriated views of higher liabilities among minorities. But issues surrounding the costs of medical expenditures and economic arguments are dismissable, said Smedley.

“Between 2003-2006, direct medical expenditures, we paid about $230 billion in that four-year period because of higher health-care costs associated with health disparities, and with indirect costs the total bill becomes $1.24 trillion,” said Smedley. “The fact that we have unequal health outcomes, unequal access to health care, and inconsistent health-care quality, means it costs our nation $1.24 trillion in a four-year period to allow these inequities to exist. So there’s a cost in doing nothing.”

The panel said that inequities in health coverage can be helped and would not need a revolution but simple necessary steps such as: place-based strategies to increase investments in communities that have experienced disinvestments and increased funding towards public transportation; more people-based strategies so people can have more opportunities to move out into communities with higher opportunities to avoid gentrification and increase in housing mobility programs. Also, place-based investments are plausible because they create tax incentives, like grocery stores into communities that experience a food desert.

“One thing that is likely to be in the bill is more funding for community health centers,” said Pañares. “The President’s proposal (contains) about $11 billion more for community health centers, and we know that community health centers treat a large population of immigrant population.”

“Typically when we talk to people in the general public, you tell them that there are long-standing racial and ethnic health inequities,” said Smedley. “What they automatically think, almost reflexively, people think about bad genes or bad behavior but I want to bust those myths. There’s more genetic variability within so called racial groups than between racial groups. Race is not a genetic construct, it’s a social construct.”

Alexander Chang is a journalism student at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Consequences from incarceration pose a significant threat to communities of color

By Lilly Hartmetz

The National Association of Black Journalists hosted a conference on health disparities regarding policies, politics, and practice at the Barbara Jordan Conference Center in Washington, D.C. From March 4-6, panelists provided print, broadcast and online journalists the tools to report on health-care reform and underserved communities.

On March 5, Speaker Henrie Treadwell, Ph.D., senior social scientist and associate director of development in the National Center for Primary Care at Morehouse School of Medicine, addressed health care policy for the reentry population from prisons.

Disparities in health care for the reentry population bring up multiple problems regarding equity. Not only race, but location, gender and economic statutes are substantial factors. Approximately one in every 100 Americans is incarcerated, according to Treadwell.

Almost 6 percent of state inmates in 2004 reported having a mental impairment, according to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics. Treadwell argued that there is a huge stigma, or “permanent lynching of a person’s identity,” associated with mental health.

The public’s primary source of knowledge about an illness, particularly mental illness, is the mass media, which generally give the public a distorted and negative perception of people with mental illnesses. Many people do not realize what a large percentage of the population is affected with mental illness.

In Georgia alone, 20% of people suffer from a mental health disorder. Also in Georgia a felony for a drug-related offense means you will never be able to get food stamps again, so a number of mentally unhealthy and uninsured felons have no access to food stamps.

Incarcerated or not, black men have a 1 in 16 chance of contracting HIV including people participating in only low-risk behavior. HIV is increasing among all races. According to the New York State Department of Health, African Americans are 3.5 times more likely to be infected with HIV than whites. African Americans also have a longer average life expectancy than whites. In 2000, 45.3 years is the average life expectancy compared to 71.1 years for whites.

“Extra money for community health centers will not help. We need health care reform,” said Treadwell. “We need to help the black community.”

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Consequences from incarceration pose a significant threat to communities of color (continued)

Of every four people will suffer from a form of mental illness at some point in their lifetime. The statistic is a reality that was shared, along with personal stories, by members of the panel, “Stigma and the Media: Reporting on Mental Health” during NABJ’s recent Health Disparities conference in Washington. During the session, experts provided journalists with tools essential to help them report more accurately on one of America’s quietest health subjects.

According to Dr. Annelle Primm, director of Minority and National Affairs for the American Psychiatric Association, mental illness is a disorder or impairment in thinking, behavior, mood or a combination of these three components. Schizophrenia and bi-polar depression are examples of common mental illnesses.

Pete Earley, the author of “CRAZY: A Father’s Search Through America’s Mental Health Madness” vividly remembers watching his son sink into a mental abyss. He told the story of how his son, who suffered from severe mental illness, was denied treatment from the hospital because his son was not seen as a major threat to society or to himself. Still, Earley, a former Washington Post reporter, knew something was wrong, and watched in awe as his son was arrested, just two days later, for breaking into their neighbor’s house to take a bubble bath.

“We think people with mental disorders are going to turn into zombies and eat us,” said Earley. “You shouldn’t have to go to jail to get good mental-health care,” who had a friend tell him that the best way to get help, if you’re mentally ill, is to get arrested.

Julio C. Abreu, director of Government Affairs for Mental Health America, believes these institutions are not equipped to deal with mental illnesses. He has family members in jail for reasons similar to Early’s son. He suggested that jail diversion is to blame for jailed youth who do not receive the proper treatment for their dilemmas. Jail diversion is a process in which juveniles are sentenced to community service instead of jail time because there are not enough resources to house or treat them.

“Law enforcement should know how to respond to people in trouble who are doing weird stuff,” said Abreu. “People had to die in order for programs like CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) to evolve.”

Abreu praises the CIT, a program in Houston, as one of the few programs in the nation that trains officers how to efficiently respond to crises involving the mentally ill. According to the Houston Police Department Web site, CIT has trained 900 regional and state officers in the 40-hour program upon graduation from the police academy.

Abreu added that 80 percent of youth in Juvenile-Domestic Jails suffer from mental disorders and will die 25 years earlier than a person without a mental illness. Because half of people with a mental disorder will have a mental issue by age 14, he asked the journalists in the room “what is our appetite for stories?”

“Journalists should try to find someone from a higher socioeconomic status to try to beat the stigmas of mental illness,” said Earley, who stated that society assumes people with mental illnesses are minorities of lower-income backgrounds. He told journalists not to use the illness as justification for behaviors and punishments.

Primm said that regardless of race, the way symptoms are presented sometimes makes misdiagnosis of mental illnesses for patients and misrepresentation of patients by the news media far too common.

In depression, for example, tiredness or weakness instead of typical sadness is responsible for the misdiagnosis in the Asian-American community. For African-Americans, anger causes a misdiagnosis and labels them as an aggressive, bad or unfriendly ethnic group when really depression is the issue. The need for a cluster of symptoms is needed to make a proper diagnosis, but unfortunately some psychiatrists use very few stereotypical symptoms to make an inadequate diagnosis.

“Handle mental health in the same way we do other illnesses,” said Primm. “It’s just as common as those illnesses… bring it out of the closet.”

She also pointed out that journalists should avoid reinforcing negative stereotypes and sensationalizing stories.

Early emphasized that his son didn’t do anything to deserve the illness.

“It can happen to anyone,” he said. “People assume it can’t happen to them.”

Adrienne Bowers is a journalism student at Virginia Commonwealth University.
WASHINGTON, D.C. — Health challenges faced by African-Americans are often reported by the news media, yet many of these stories, such as the impact of HIV/AIDS, all seem to have the same ending: Although HIV/AIDS continues to have a disproportionate impact in minority communities, people of color still tend to take the disease lightly.

That was just one of the messages presented during NABJ’s Media Institute’s Health Disparities Conference March 4-6 in Washington. The three-day conference brought together health care professionals, policy makers and people who are dealing with chronic or major illnesses. Its goal was to provide the dozens of journalists in attendance with tools to help them more effectively report on the impact of health care reform and health policy on undeserved communities.

During the “HIV/AIDS in Communities of Color” discussion, Vanessa Johnson, deputy executive director of National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA), said “telling stories is a very effective way to open people’s eyes and save lives.” Johnson was diagnosed with the virus that causes AIDS 20 years ago, and found that being an advocate and sharing her story has helped save the lives of many people she has encountered, she said.

The HIV/AIDS topic is an example of how important health issues drift to the back burner because messengers constantly drop the ball, panelists suggested. The media get tired of reporting the same thing and society is tired of hearing the same thing.

But Lashawn McIver, a Center for Policy Analysis and Research and HIV/AIDS Research fellow, says “AIDS is still an epidemic! It’s a very serious matter and people of color are taking it too lightly. Phil Wilson, founder and executive director of the Black AIDS Institute says many people have decided that “AIDS is a black person disease.”

The discussion included information about new developments in screening, prevention and managing life with AIDS.

Wilson created the Greater Than AIDS Campaign www.greaterthanaids.org, which promotes higher self-esteem in people of color to rise above the statistics and to take better precautions against becoming infected with HIV/AIDS. It is an outlet to unite the communities of color to take a stand against AIDS.

Journalists must know what new studies are taking place and understand the latest statistics, screenings and prevention methods because it is their job to report it to the public. The conference room grew quiet when Dr. Henrie Treadwell of the National Primary Care Center at the Morehouse School of Medicine noted during a later panel discussion that the “real story with HIV/AIDS is from prison.” Incarcerated men can contract the disease and, when released, carry it back home to their wives, girlfriends, and partners by having sex with them not knowing that they are carrying the disease.

Treadwell said this trend is the result of failed policies throughout the system. Medicaid is terminated when prisoners are released and once HIV/AIDS tests are administered, there is little effort to inform the released prisoners of their test results. They are placed back in society with no readjustment help and many of them end up right back in prison, said Treadwell, adding that the cycle needs to be cured.

Black communities have failed at getting these messages across, said Eleanor Hinton Hoytt, president of Black Women’s Health Imperative. When it comes to complicated issues such as health reform it is the messenger that matters, she said. Black leaders and journalists should take into account that whoever is on the receiving end should be able to identify with the messenger and the messenger should be able to identify with whoever is receiving the message.

Hoytt suggested that black leaders hold town hall meetings in their communities as a way to connect with the public. Tell the truth especially when dealing with young people; be identifiable. The youth is more willing to listen and trust a messenger who looks like them, talk their language, and who has been where they are now.
NABJ National Headquarters Open House

The entrance to the new NABJ Headquarters features its trademark logo above photographs of Presidents Bill Clinton, George Bush and Barack Obama, all of whom have addressed NABJ members.

Associate Representative Aprill O. Turner and NABJ Membership Manager Veronique Dodson take a break from planning the April 15 Open House at the headquarters.

NABJ Communications Chairwoman Dawn Roberts of Philadelphia listens as Member Carole Norris Greene of Catholic News Service discusses the early days of NABJ in Philadelphia and nationally.

NABJ Founders Joe Davidson and Paul H. Brock reminisced about the first 35 years of NABJ and looked to the challenges now facing the largest organization of journalists of color.
The National Association of Black Journalists celebrated its official open house on April 15 in Knight Hall at the University of Maryland. The next day, the Association of Black Media Workers/Baltimore and the Washington Association of Black Journalists co-hosted an afterwork event coordinated by Region II Director Charles Robinson.
I am one of those techno geeks that loves to experiment with the latest tools that can help me do my job as a journalist. One of those sites is Twitter, where I’m at @AvWeekBenet. I know many journalists out there wonder why they should bother using Twitter, saying things like, “I don’t want to read or post about what I just ate for breakfast.”

I decided to try using the micro-blogging site Twitter back in September 2008. Twitter enables you to send and read messages of up to 140 characters. The plan was to test it out by live blogging from an industry conference. I used Twitter to send out observations from the conference and post links to my stories and blog posts about the event.

The reaction was positive, so I decided to continue. I also learned that Twitter is more than just what you ate for breakfast; instead, it’s one of many social media tools you can use to enhance your efforts to get that story.

Nicki Mayo (@nickimayonews) is a reporter and multimedia journalist for YNN Buffalo, part of a statewide network of Time Warner Cable 24-hour news channels, who began using Twitter a year ago to get the word out about her stories and her start-up news station. “It was the hot buzz back when I joined it,” she said. “My station is a start-up, and people didn’t know what YNN Buffalo was. If you didn’t have us, you didn’t know we existed.”

Mayo uses Twitter three to five times a day to do news blasts and Web updates. She also uses it to post the station’s headlines of the day. “I’ve found you can gauge how newsworthy a story will be by posting it on Twitter early in the morning. It’s a virtual man-on-the-street interview,” she said. “I’m a one-woman band, and I don’t have time to waste on stories that don’t work.”

It takes time to develop contacts, but with Twitter, reporters can reach out more quickly, said Mayo. “But it’s a give and take. I will pass along other stories that might be of interest to my followers,” she said. “Sources can also direct message you to give you information on stories you’re working on.”

Mayo used the Jan. 12, 2010, earthquake in Haiti as an example. “I used Twitter to ask about relief projects and got messages from my followers on what the community was doing,” she said.

Natalie McNeal, owner of TheFrugalista.com blog, a former reporter for the Miami Herald and a Web producer for PBS’s Nightly Business Report, has been on Twitter since November 2008. “One of my girlfriends is a blogger and told me I had to do it,” she recalled. “At the time, I was consumed with Facebook, but she said Twitter was great for networking and was becoming the next big thing. I love it, and it’s become one of my favorite platforms.”

McNeal uses Twitter to promote daily posts for her blog. “I also use it to raise the profile of the Frugalista brand. I have built up my contacts list, so when I apply for jobs, I can use this to promote myself,” she stated. “I also have a personal list of stories I’ve edited because they still deal with finance, so it becomes like a newswire. People know if they hire me, they will see my following. Most of my followers are people who want to save or manage their money better, and a potential employer will want access to that.”

Raschanda Hall is the global media relations manager for New York-based BusinessWire and has been on Twitter since January 2008. “When I joined, I was doing it for my company, but I was doing it on my own,” she said. “I like looking at new technology like Twitter, which is a great way to connect with people outside Chicago, where I’m based.”

No one was using Twitter back when Hall started. “I heard about it at conferences, and first used it to connect with large news operations like CNN, along with marketing firms,” she said. “Twitter was a great tool to give me a way to identify big people in the social media space and put my toes in the water.”

Hall said her job is media relations and all that entails. “I use Twitter to connect with journalists to see what they are looking at and see trends that may help BusinessWire’s clients,” she explained. “I share news tips and story ideas that journalists may be interested in. I also look at best practices.”

The value of the customer service side of Twitter cannot be underestimated, especially for those working for a company or an agency, Hall said. “Before Twitter, I had a limited audience to get out my releases and news. I could use our newsletter or the actual BusinessWire, but now I can take my valuable information and give it to a wider audience,” she stated. “And it positions me as a brand and as an expert. You can’t underestimate what Twitter does for brand building and being an expert outside of working for your company. BusinessWire is a resource for public relations in many different ways, so we want to be able to share information on media relations to be helpful.”

All three users offered tips for those interested in becoming active on Twitter. Stay human, but keep it professional, said YNN Buffalo’s Mayo. “It can go past just the people who are following you,” she observed. “Fill out your profile, add a picture and use a backdrop — but not something you’d regret being seen by your job. It’s a good way to brand yourself.”

McNeal says journalists need to think about what will happen if they don’t choose to use tools like Twitter. “This is the direction where things are going. It’s how people are getting their news,” she stated. “Twitter is another platform to put out your content. In a newspaper, everyone wants to be on the front page, but you can put your story on a Twitter stream and get it out there instantly.”

Some people say they don’t have time to tweet, but McNeal advises journalists to make the time. “Twitter gets bad press for being just about what people ate, but it’s much more than that. Find Twitter streams that have value and create your streams with value,” she said. “I create my own value through @dealchat, a weekly online Twitter chat every Wednesday from 8:00-9:00 p.m. Eastern time. You need to give it a chance and figure out how to make it work for you.”

It is never too late to join Twitter, Hall emphasized. “The most important thing you can do is listen, and Twitter lets you do that. If you’re journalist, you can see what you can cover on local issues and find story ideas,” she said. “On the PR side, you can see different angles of stories, and use Twitter to listen and engage.”
A COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY
The National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) is an organization of nearly 4,000 journalists, students and media-related professionals that advocates for diversity in newsrooms and in news content. We are committed to providing quality programs and services for black journalists worldwide.

As a NABJ member, you’ll receive these valuable resources and benefits:

- Year-Round Personal and Professional Development Opportunities
- Access to NABJ Jobs Online
- Access to the NABJ Annual Career Fair
- Leadership and Mentoring Opportunities
- Regional and National Networking Opportunities
- Industry Information and Action Alerts
- Scholarship and Internship Opportunities
- Discounts on Convention Registrations, Regional Conferences and NABJ Media Institute programs
- Participation discount for annual Salute to Excellence Awards Contest
- Student Services Support
- Members-only Web Access, including Online Membership Directory
- Free subscription to NABJ E-News, our weekly electronic newsletter
- Free subscription to NABJ Journal, our quarterly magazine
- NABJ Annual Report

PURPOSE OF APPLICATION □ New Membership □ Renewal

1. WORK / SCHOOL
MEMBERSHIP PROFILE (please print clearly)

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3. COLLEGE/GRADUATE STUDENT MEMBERS

□ Freshman □ Sophomore □ Junior □ Senior □ Graduate Student

Graduation Year: ____________

□ High School member (see next page)

4. RELEASE INFORMATION

Indicate preferred mailing address:

□ Home □ Work/School

NABJ occasionally receives requests for our membership mailing list to disseminate vital industry and educational information to NABJ members. Would you like to be included in such mailings?

□ Yes □ No

5. MEMBERSHIP DEMOGRAPHICS

a) What is your gender?

□ Female □ Male

b) What is your age group?

□ 16-24 □ 25-34 □ 35-44
□ 45-54 □ 55-64 □ 65 and over

c) Which best describes you?

□ Executive □ Management
□ Staff □ Student

d) Which of the following fields do you work in primarily?

□ Newspaper □ Magazine □ Newsletter
□ Television □ Radio □ Online Media
□ Educator □ Student □ Public Relations

e) How many years have you worked in the industry?

□ 0-2 □ 3-5 □ 6-10
□ 11-20 □ 21+ years
Membership Invitation

6. PROGRAM INTERESTS MARK ALL THAT APPLY.
- Speakers Bureau
- Mentor Program
- Student Development Program
- Media Institute
- Internship Program
- Scholarship Program
- Other

7. VOLUNTEER INTERESTS
- Fundraising
- NABJ Journal
- Task Force/Committees
- Advocacy
- Communication
- Other

8. MEMBERSHIP TYPES & DUES
- Full Member ........................................ $100
  Working journalists, including reporters, editors, photographers, newsroom managers, etc. who produce, gather and disseminate news for newspapers, television and radio stations, magazines, wire services, etc. and full-time freelance journalists.

Multi-Year Membership – FOR FULL MEMBERS ONLY
- Two Years ($180)
- Five Years ($450)

- Premium Full Member ................................ $150
  Same as full member eligibility plus additional benefits to include: VIP express registration at NABJ annual convention; acknowledgement in convention program book and journal; NABJ premium member lapel pin and special gift.

- Lifetime Full Member ................................ $3,000
  Full life membership, plus free yearly convention registration; VIP express registration; VIP seating for members who purchase tickets to the Salute to Excellence Gala, Hall of Fame Luncheon and Sunday Brunch; exclusive invites to NABJ special Convention events and programs including President’s reception and NABJ Corporate Partners Reception; Green Room Access at NABJ Events; Photo opportunity with VIPs and Special Guests at NABJ Events; Exclusive NABJ Film Festival Event Tickets; acknowledgement in convention program book, NABJ Journal and Web site; a lifetime full member lapel pin; a framed lifetime membership certificate; discounts to Media Institute programs; 5% Discount on NABJ Merchandise

- Emeritus/Retired Full Member ..................... $79
  Full members who have retired from active work in the journalism field, but who are still participating in the organization.

- Associate Member ............................... $75
  Part-time freelance journalists, journalism educators, public relations and other media-related professionals.

- Student Member ............................... $40
  Full-time students in an accredited college or university.
  Course of study must be in the communication field, preferably journalism. (Copy of student ID required.)

- High School Member ........................... $35
  Intended course of study must be in the communications field, preferably journalism. (Copy of student ID required.)

9. PAYMENT METHOD
- Visa
- Master Card
- American Express
- Check
- Money Order

Account Number

Expiration Date
Billing Zip code

Cardholder's Name (as it appears on the card – please print)

Signature of Cardholder

10. SUBMIT APPLICATION

VIA WEB
A fast, easy and secure way to join. Go to www.nabj.org and click on Join NABJ. Credit card payments only.

VIA MAIL
NABJ: 301.445.7101
National Association of Black Journalists
P.O. Box 630946
Baltimore, MD 21263-0946

VIA CREDIT CARD/CHECK
Secured website for credit card payment and/or the convenience of personal check by mail.

Please allow two weeks for processing.

Membership Dues Total .................. $

Plus my tax-deductible DONATION to support:

2007 NABJ Freedom Fund $ 
National Scholarship 
Internship Fund 
Student Development Program Fund 
Support a Student to Attend NABJ Convention 

TOTAL $ 

Dues may not be deductible as charitable contributions for income tax purposes; however, dues may be considered ordinary and necessary business deductions. Consult your tax advisor.

For NABJ Office Use

Membership # ___________________________ Category ___________________________
Fee ___________________________ Prior Exp. Date ___________________________
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