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WEIU reporter goes to Washington

Barbara Harrington celebrates Veterans Day, with vets in D.C.

By Geoffrey ZuHone

Distant field work often involves short-notice, high-profile events and people that require expertise to deliver a well-developed news story. Such an event occurred Veterans Day for WEIU reporter Barbara Harrington.

Senior journalism major Harrington said she was out in

the field covering a story Monday Nov. 8, when she received a call about a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity." Harrington was invited to cover a national event for Veterans Day Nov. 10 and 11.

It was for the central Illinois honor flight to Washington, D.C.

"The purpose of the honor

flight is to take as many World War II veterans, free of cost, to visit the memorial before it is too late for them," Harrington said.

As a journalist, Harrington didn't expect the story to be as challenging as it was.

"It was easy to connect with these veterans because they have been through so much, but it was hard not to get emotionally attached," Harrington said.

It was also challenging for Harrington because she was alone on this story.

"I was a one-man band. I was shooting footage by myself and many times there was no way to use the tripod. It was too much for one person to do," said Harrington.

Harrington said the first day

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Shown here, an Army veteran mourning the loss of a soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. According to the cemetery's records, Arlington is home to more than 300,000 deceased.

Photo by Barbara Harrington

Christmas carepacks for local troops overseas

By *Ellie Sternaman*

WEIU-FM and TV, in partnership with the VFW Ladies Auxiliary, gathered items to send to local service men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan. It's part of the 2nd annual Christmas Carepacks For Our Troops, Nov. 11-24.

Ke'an Armstrong, publicity director for WEIU, said the VFW Ladies Auxiliary approached them last year and asked to partner with them in an effort to reach out to those who are sacrificing their lives for our country.

"The military and their families sacrifice their lives every day for us," Jenness Drummond, chair of the VFW's family support, said. "We owe a lot to them, and this is just a small thank you."

Last year, EIU's campus community and local businesses showed overwhelming support by donating more than 80 care packages during the holiday season.

Thank you letters as well as cards were written by several of the local service men and women expressing their gratitude and generosity for the many items supplied to them.

Drummond said they extended their goal from last year in hope of receiving more support from the Charleston/Mattoon community as a whole.

"We had quite a few donations this year," Armstrong said. "The EIU ROTC donated more than a dozen Wal-Mart bags and two big boxes full of things. The floor of our conference room was covered by the generosity of others," she

added.

The Charleston VFW Ladies Auxiliary packaged and sent the Christmas Carepacks during the first week of December.

Items donated included packaged cookies, packaged nuts, hard wrapped candy, small "fake" Christmas trees, Christmas ornaments, toiletry bags/shaving kit bags, sta-

tionary, envelopes, Christmas cards, puzzle books, playing cards, games and other nonperishable items.

WEIU and the VFW are thankful for the community's support in showing our troops how much they are appreciated, according to Armstrong.

Graphic courtesy of packitup.org



PACK IT UP

Graduating seniors in WEIU TV and Radio

News Watch Seniors

Emily Mieure - Anchor/Reporter

Kathleen Jones - Anchor/Reporter

Courtney Kerch - Director/Technical Director

Katie Glaze - Producer/Production Asst.

Joe Astrouski - Reporter/Producer

Cameron Hoppman - Weather Anchor

Matt Draus - Production Assistant

Radio Seniors

Sam Sottosanto - D.J./Morning Show Co-host

Katie Glaze - D.J.

Sports Seniors

Kyle Clore - Director for EIU Football/Basketball Broadcasts

The importance of CNN and its ratings

CNN ratings have fallen, but does it affect the station's reporting abilities?

By *Barbara Harrington*

With dismal ratings and the recent firing of CNN's U.S. President Jon Klein, the buzz in the television news industry is all about what's next for the news corporation.

The "most-trusted name in news" has seen a decrease in viewership over the past year, seeing the biggest losses during its primetime hours. Most recently, the network introduced two new shows — "John King USA" and "Parker Spitzer" — in an attempt to reach more viewers and compete with polarized cable news outlets Fox and MSNBC.

But, according to Nielsen TV Ratings, CNN's strategy isn't working. Compared to 2009, when Campbell Brown's show aired during the 8 p.m. hour on CNN, average viewership is down by 35 percent.

This decrease not only means CNN is losing viewers during primetime, but it also puts "Parker Spitzer" well behind all of its competitors — "The O'Reilly Factor" on Fox, "Countdown with Keith Olbermann" on MSNBC and "Nancy Grace" on sister network HLN.

But according to Janice Collins, a broadcast journalism professor at Eastern, low ratings aren't necessarily a problem for CNN.

"I think that just because popular trends amount to higher ratings for certain shows doesn't mean they're actually giving viewers quality content," said Collins. "There seems to be a trend toward personality-driven shows that happen to mention news, rather than news shows foremost who happen to be delivered by cer-



Trademark symbol of CNN, the station known for its round-the-clock coverage and primetime shows. CNN is also the namesake of the CNN Effect, when stations go to 24 hour coverage of all its issues.

Graphic courtesy of cnn.com

tain personalities."

Collins said it's the emphasis on personality-driven news that's turned her on to PBS and CSPAN — news outlets where the events and the facts are news, not the anchors. Unlike Collins, many consumers are branching off to non-traditional news shows that use satire or partisanship to entertain. But Collins said there is still a place for CNN on cable.

"CNN still is the one place, for the most part, that you can still turn to that actually as its primary goal is to give you news, not so much opinion, but just news," she said.

Katie Jones, a senior communication studies major, said she doesn't watch CNN often. But she said it's not because she doesn't like the content, it's because that's how the channel is designed.

"It's a 24-hour channel, so of course there is going to be some repetition," said Jones.

"But the way the shows are formatted, you're not supposed to sit on the couch all day watching CNN Newsroom. You're supposed to tune in during the day to see if the world blew up and then come back during primetime to see in-depth reporting."

While other cable news outlets excel in entertaining viewers, both Collins and Jones said CNN excels in informing viewers, especially in breaking news situations. Collins said when news first breaks, CNN has the most well-constructed, accurate reports. And that's why Collins said it's so important, even at a time when it's being bashed for its low ratings, for CNN to stay around and stay true to its founding principles.

"There has to be one central place where individuals can — even if there's just a few — individuals can still get their news and get it objectively and impartially as much as pos-

sible," she said.

LaMar Holliday, a senior journalism major, said he thinks 24-hour news outlets, including CNN, tend to over hype breaking and entertainment news, which is why he relies on the leading local channels in the area to deliver him the latest in urgent situations. But, like Collins, Holliday said he thinks CNN plays an important, if not vital role in today's media environment as the "middle ground."

"[Journalists'] jobs are not to make viewers' minds up for them. It's to present the facts, present the evidence and let the public make their determination of the information provided," said Holliday.

In his opinion, Holliday said CNN does just that — presents the facts. But he said that doesn't mean that the news outlets shouldn't make some improvements.

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LaMar Holliday selected for 2011 Meredith-Cronkite Fellowship

By Geoffrey ZuHone

Senior journalism major LaMar Holliday will spend a week in January working in Phoenix as part of a fellowship program for top minority broadcast journalism students.

The program is sponsored by the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University and the Meredith Corp., a national media and marketing company.

Meredith-Cronkite Fellows will be creating and producing on deadline for the local CBS television station, while also examining ethics and leadership in the newsroom, according to the fellowship website.

The site also said that students not attending the Cronkite School are awarded a \$2,000

stipend for expenses during the fellowship.

Each year 12 fellows in total are chosen for the experience,

half from the Cronkite School and half from other colleges and universities throughout the country.

Holliday will be spending one week in January at Arizona State University

Photo Courtesy of WEIU



**Watch WEIU-TV
Weekday nights @ 5:30
Campus-wide and
Local Coverage**

Washington D.C.

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they visited Arlington Cemetery, the Kennedy Memorial, and saw the Women's Military Service Memorial."

Because Harrington was by herself, she could not interview while holding the camera out in the field. She then took advantage of the veterans having dinner that night as a chance to get to know them.

"I was constantly talking to people that night," Harrington said. "At WEIU we invest the time to get to know people and it really pays off in the end."

Harrington said that Veterans Day was spent at the World War Two Memorial that morning.

"I was reporting that morn-

ing at the memorial right along side CNN and CSPAN," Harrington said. "This really reaffirms what I have felt about the WEIU program. We are right there along with everyone else."

For Harrington, one of the most memorable parts of the trip was traveling.

"The veterans told their stories while we traveled and it was emotionally moving to hear them," she said.

Harrington felt she made a difference for the veterans by telling her own story about them.

"These memories are going to live on through the stories that we do about them," Har-

CNN

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"If they're really trying to go after ratings, then maybe they do need to switch up their talent or their lineup or their appearance," he said. "But on the other hand, if they want to keep the same content as being fair, balanced and objective, then ratings shouldn't matter," he said.

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2434**

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Editor:
Geoffrey ZuHone
gwzuhone@eiu.edu

**The Agency
Director:**
Barbara Harrington
theagency.eiu@gmail.com

**Associate
Director:**
Beth Steele

Adviser:
Terri Johnson
tljohnson@eiu.edu

Story ideas should be e-mailed to the editor at gwzuhone@eiu.edu.