

# On the RECORD



**PROFILE: John Jemmott's work in South Africa**

# From the Director



Photo: Kyle Cassidy

When the Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC) was established in 1993 our founders, Ambassadors Walter and Leonore Annenberg, wanted us to increase the impact of the scholarship produced in Penn's Annenberg School for Communication, which is our home. They hoped that in the process we would use what we know about communication to improve the well-being of those in the U.S. and throughout the globe.

In this first issue of *On the Record* we showcase two of the programs of which we are particularly proud: John B. Jemmott's South African Adolescent Health Promotion Project and Martin Fishbein's Effects of Media on Adolescent AIDS-Related Behavior.

John heads APPC's Center for Health Behavior and Communication Research. Marty directs Health Communication. On the project profiled here he is working with colleague Amy Jordan, who directs our Media and the Developing Child research.

In shorter form we also bring you highlights from two of our programs on the front lines of improving the dialogue of democracy in the U.S., FactCheck.org and Justice Talking. In coming months we will feature some of the other researchers whose work is central to our mission, including an issue focused on the programming generated by our partnership with the Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands.

Our activities are made possible by the support that APPC draws from the endowment established for us by the Annenberg Foundation, by the generous support of federal agencies, including the National Institute of Mental Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and by the grants awarded to us by foundations, notably the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Flora Foundation. And APPC would be little more than a name were it not for the dedicated work of the 54 individuals who staff our projects.

*On the Record* is our way of telling you a bit more about who we are and what we do.

Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Ph.D.

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Established in 1993, the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania conducts and disseminates research, hosts lectures and conferences, and convenes roundtable discussions that highlight important questions about the intersection of media, communication and public policy.

The Policy Center, which has offices in Philadelphia and Washington D.C., conducts ongoing research in the areas of political communication, information and society, media and the developing child, health communication and adolescent risk. Its research helps to bring difficult problems into focus.

### ON THE RECORD

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Cover photo: Sixth-graders in Mdantsane, South Africa, celebrate with new backpacks after completing an education program designed to reduce risky sexual behavior. Prevention efforts, like this one designed by John Jemmott, hold the hope of stemming the spread of HIV, which infects one out of every 10 South Africans.  
South Africa photos: John and Loretta Sweet Jemmott

# Profile:

## John B. Jemmott

An estimated 5.4 million South Africans, more than one out of every 10 people, are infected with HIV. At the current rate of infection, more than half of the children under the age of 15 today will die of the disease within the next decade.

John B. Jemmott hopes to improve those odds.

For the past five years, Jemmott, director of the Center for Health Behavior and Communication Research at the Annenberg Public Policy Center, and his wife Loretta Sweet Jemmott (Penn Nursing), have been doing battle with the disease in South Africa's Mdantsane Township using the most effective weapon in existence: Changing risky behavior.

The Jemmotts and a small team of U.S. and South African researchers have been working with more than 1,000 sixth-grade students in Mdantsane and nearby Berlin in the Eastern Cape Province. Their goal is to devise a curriculum, tailored to the Xhosa culture, which offers comprehensive sex education (including abstinence, reduction of partners and condom use). Integral to the instruction are messages encouraging youth not to engage in risky sexual conduct. In South Africa such behavior is often a death sentence.

The results thus far look promising. Retention rates among participating students are extremely high (98 percent); parental involvement in the effort is strong, and local facilitator/teachers have bridged some daunting cultural hurdles. (In the Xhosa language, words for reproductive organs are considered obscene, so English terms had to be "Xhosa-ized.")

Low-cost antiretroviral drugs have belatedly become available, but they reach just a

small percentage of those at risk. (In South Africa, only about 200,000 people currently are enrolled in treatment programs.) At the same time, the number of reported new cases of AIDS continues to climb. "We're never going to be able to catch up," warned Dr. Willo Pequegnat, an HIV/AIDS expert at the National Institute of Mental Health, which funds the Jemmott research. Encouraging those still uninfected to practice safer sex, abstain from sex, or enter into a mutually monogamous relationship may slow the spread of a disease that is decimating entire communities.

Although the adolescent health project in Mdantsane is nearing an end (the programs are now self-sustaining and the data gathered are being analyzed), the Jemmotts won't be leaving their work in South Africa any time soon. In September the National Institutes of Health awarded them \$4 million to conduct a five-year study to develop an effective intervention for adult men to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted disease. Again, the key will be education and behavioral change.

The new project won the blessings of community leaders in Mdantsane, in part because of the Jemmotts' commitment to the local youth there. That's been a hallmark of the couple's work, which began more than two decades ago with research studies among at-risk teens near the Penn campus in West Philadelphia and has grown to include a broad array of behavior change campaigns.

"If you say adolescents and AIDS anywhere in this country, Jemmott is going to be the first name that comes up," said Dr. Pequegnat. "Together, they are one of the senior research teams."

"The individual skill-building programs

that the Jemmotts have developed are what we should be doing," Pequegnat added. "If you do any poll, parents and adolescents say they want to talk about sex. They just don't have the skills and don't know how to initiate the dialogue." That's as true in West Philadelphia as it is in Mdantsane.

### Teaming up on a new project

John Jemmott is a meticulous researcher and statistical analyst, said Dr. Pequegnat. Loretta Jemmott is the interventionist with tremendous people skills. "The two of them are really yin and yang."



Loretta Sweet Jemmott

The new project with men in Mdantsane intrigues John Jemmott, who recently returned from another visit to the impoverished township, which is home to 600,000 people. In the past, intervention studies here and abroad have largely overlooked men. "For the life of me I don't understand that," he said. "These are the guys who are not using condoms, especially in developing countries." That is the behavior he hopes to change through education and peer support. The outcome will be closely watched by international AIDS experts hoping to stem the spread of the disease that is ravaging much of sub-Saharan Africa.



**Cultural role-playing, with dolls as well as hats, is part of the Xhosa instruction program for sixth-graders to build self-esteem and respect. Because the Xhosa language does not include terms for certain parts of the anatomy, the Jemmotts and local facilitators had to “Xhosa-ize” English words.**

The Jemmotts bring something else to the table in addition to their research skills. “The fact that they are African-Americans gives them a great deal of credibility in the community,” said Dr. Ann O’Leary of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, who has collaborated with the Jemmotts on the Mdantsane project. They have become role models for the youth involved in the programs, as well as their fellow researchers. “They both have so much integrity in the way they conduct their research,” said O’Leary.

### Seeing a Need

John Jemmott began his work with HIV/AIDS as the first reports of the disease surfaced in 1981, when he was teaching health psychology at Princeton University. “I didn’t see much being done with African-Americans as far as HIV was concerned,” he said. Four years later, he met Loretta Sweet, who was doing her dissertation research at Penn on adolescent male sexuality.

“I thought if you want to have an impact on the HIV epidemic, the way to do it is through prevention,” John Jemmott explained. “Although I had never done an intervention study at the time, I felt that as a social psychologist I knew a lot about at-

titudes and behavior and interpersonal relations and motivation, and I thought that’s the area in which I would work.” It was also an area of interest to his future wife.

At the outset, the Jemmotts targeted an underserved population, hit hard by the disease. “African-Americans are very suspicious about research and researchers,” said John Jemmott. “The consequence is you have much less research and therefore you have fewer interventions for that community, interventions that we know are efficacious.” The same is true, with some variations, among this nation’s growing

they’re not teaching skills, and they’re not addressing motivation, then they’re probably not going to change behavior. Facts will make some people act, but not most people.” Add a program that enhances self-efficacy (or self-confidence) to change behavior, encourages people to take control of their lives and educates them in their choices and the chances of success rise.

He also is eager to bring adult men into the prevention effort. Traditionally, women and children have been the focus of most health interventions. “It’s always been that way,” he said. But men must also be part of any equation, particularly in male-dominated societies such as exist in many developing nations.

Recent focus groups in Mdantsane show the South African men sampled to be “very, very receptive” to the message delivered by the Jemmotts. “The men felt they should play a bigger role than they were playing in the lives of their children. One reason they said that they weren’t was because of the economics. Sometimes they had to go away and work, and so they really weren’t there to be involved in the rearing of their children,” said John Jemmott.

The men also were uncomfortable talking about sex, a subject considered taboo in Xhosa society. “We stress to them the importance of talking to their children about these health issues and try to give them the skills to do it.” By working together in groups with a trained local facilitator, the men build confidence to broach difficult subjects. The message they take home is this: Our cultural taboos are killing us. We must do this.

Many prevention efforts fail because they don’t change behavior in the long term.

Latino population. The couple is currently working to tailor their intervention messages to Latino adolescents, another demographic group at high risk of sexually transmitted diseases.

Many prevention efforts fail because they don’t change behavior in the long term, said Jemmott. He relies heavily on Annenberg colleague Martin Fishbein’s Theory of Reasoned Action to formulate his interventions. (See page 7.) “To the extent that

The Jemmotts also hope to obtain grant funding to conduct two follow-up studies of the sixth graders who participated in the intervention programs, tracking them until they turn 14, the average age of the first sexual encounter among South African adolescents. The studies, requested by the local advisory board, will measure what factors influence a person’s decision to have sex and determine if the intervention efforts were successful over time.

Over the years, the Jemmotts have built an impressive track record that proves people can and do adapt their health behavior when given support, said Dr. Mary Jane Rotheram, director of UCLA's Center for HIV Identification Prevention & Treatment Services, who has worked in South Africa and has followed the Jemmotts' efforts there and in the U.S.

“Prevention is the only vaccine we have against HIV. Their work is critical to treating the biggest public health scourge of our generation and for two more generations to come.” ♦



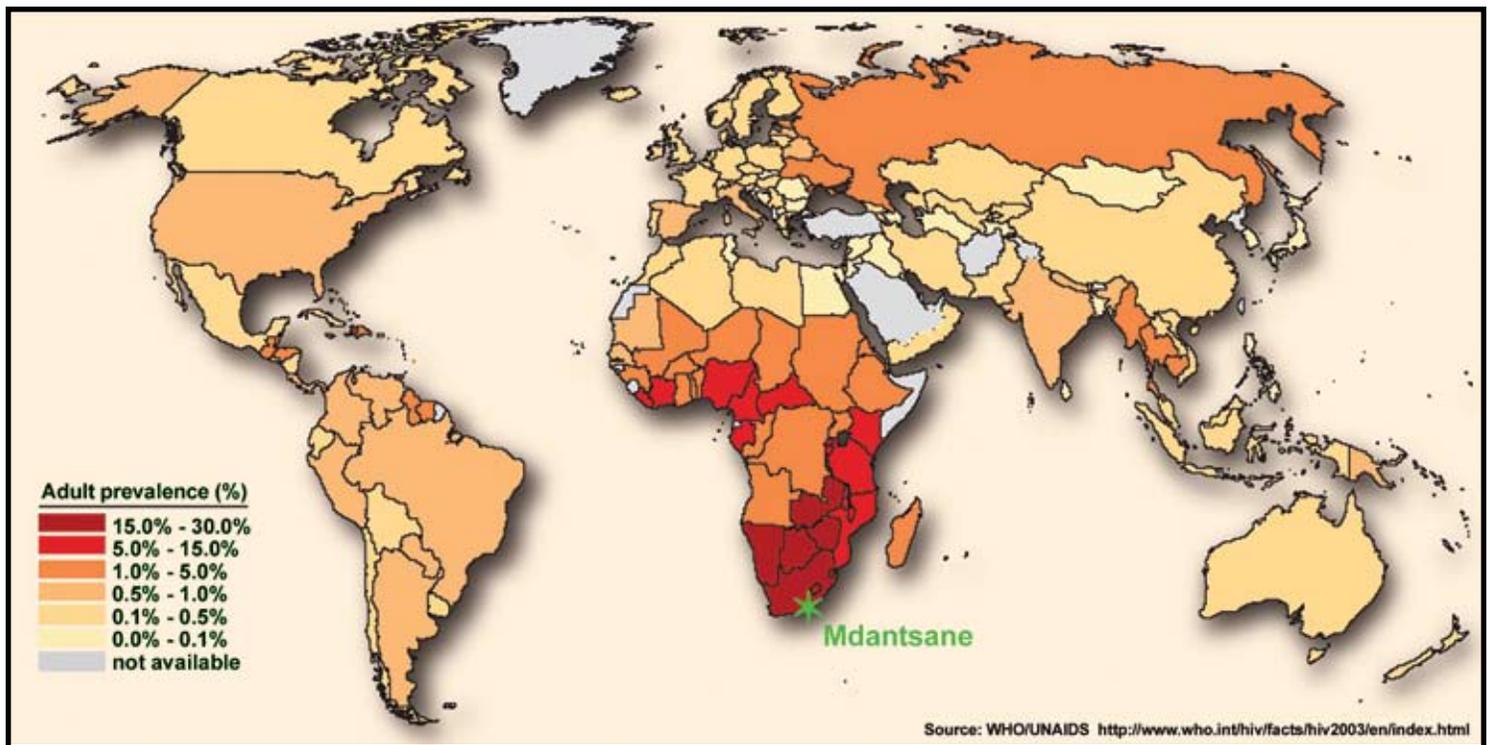
**Above:** This corrugated tin building is part of the school facilities in the impoverished South African community of Berlin, where the Jemmotts also conducted their educational program for sixth graders.



**Left:** Mdantsane in South Africa's Eastern Cape Province is the second largest black township in the country. Forty percent of the population is under the age of 15. Unemployment is high and the township suffers from a shortage of housing, schools, health care, safe drinking water and public infrastructure. Many adult males are forced to leave their families for extended periods of time to find employment elsewhere.

**Below:** Community support for the Jemmotts' efforts in Mdantsane was strong. Here, some local women visit the classroom in native dress to join students and program facilitators. Retention rates for students participating in the program were an astounding 98 percent. A colleague describes the Jemmotts as a “tour de force.”





HIV/AIDS is decimating sub-Saharan Africa. In South Africa alone, 5.4 million people have contracted the HIV virus. "Prevention is the only vaccine that we have against HIV," says one expert.



Above left: The Jemmotts trained local facilitators to work with youngsters. The training sessions were rigorous, but participation and interest levels among the adults were high. Here an instructor works with sixth-grade boys in Mdantsane. In Xhosa society, discussions about sex are considered obscene, but given the scourge of HIV, they are now considered essential for survival. "Our cultural taboos are killing us," said one man. "We must do this."

Above right: Youngsters in Mdantsane who participated in the Jemmotts' risk reduction program gather outside their school for a photo-op. The Jemmotts hope to obtain grant support to track these children until they reach the age of 14 to measure the long-term effects of the risk reduction education on their decision making.



Photo:  
Jen McCleary

Student coders Stephen Heyer and Elizabeth Gay cataloging sexual content in a film popular with teens. The data they gather is part of a first-ever multimedia coding effort.

# Sex Everywhere in Teen Media – To What Effect?

## Cataloging sexual content and its impact on adolescent behavior

A scene from *King Kong* was frozen on the screen as two student coders logged new data on a nearby computer. Seated in a cluttered cubicle on the third floor of the Annenberg School for Communication, the students were documenting every “sexual incident” in the movie – language, action, innuendo. Awaiting the same careful evaluation were episodes of *Desperate Housewives* and *Fear Factor*.

This coding project is part of a multi-year effort to analyze the sexual content of media popular with adolescents – movies, TV, music, video games, magazines – and determine its influence on their behavior. The project is funded with a nearly \$4.2-million grant from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. Ultimately, the research team from the Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC) hopes to answer this question: Does exposure to sexual content in the media affect adolescent sexual behavior?

The public and policy-makers have been quick to point a finger: Kids who see a lot of sex on TV or in the movies tend to engage in a lot of sex. Kids exposed to violence in song lyrics or video games react violently. Often, that has triggered impassioned demands for tough controls, regulation and censorship. Recall the outcry after the 1999 Columbine school shootings.

The Annenberg researchers don’t believe the relationship between sexual content and sexual behavior is as conclusive as some contend.

“When you actually look at the data, there’s very little evidence one way or the other,” says Martin Fishbein, director of APPC’s Health Communication Program and principal investigator of the project, known as the Annenberg Sex and Media Study. “The media get blamed for everything.” Existing research is flawed for another reason: It has focused on a single medium: song lyrics, for example. “But we live in a multimedia world,” says Fishbein. Especially kids, the masters of multitasking. They’re on sensory overload, listening to their iPods, playing with their Xboxes, a TV in the background, sexual content emanating from each. How much do they absorb? How is it filtered? What’s the cumulative effect?

That’s what the APPC team wants to measure via an in-depth theory-based survey and a theory-based content analysis of sex in the media. The study will be guided by Fishbein’s integrative model of behavioral prediction, a combination of the theories of reasoned action, planned behavior, the health belief model and social cognitive theory. It will measure the psychosocial variables that are assumed to be most relevant for predicting and understanding be-

havior, such as attitudes, self-confidence and peer pressure.

By standardizing the content categories, comparisons of such things as language, types of relationships, types of sex and long- and short-term consequences can be made across several media.

The survey takes into consideration developmental, gender and ethnic differences among the adolescents, which range from their tastes in pop culture to their intentions to engage in (or abstain from) sexual intercourse. It also calculates moderating factors such as parental supervision. The adolescents are asked about their media use, their own assessments of the amount of sexual content in the six media, prior sexual behavior and the outside factors that influence their intentions to have or abstain from sex.

In the end, Fishbein and his colleagues hope to determine which messages are harmful, which are innocuous. Ultimately, the research will provide authoritative tools to guide content choices.

“Lots of decisions are made in a vacuum without trying to understand the problems,” says co-investigator Amy Jordan, who is overseeing the coding aspect of the research. “They are a reaction to something...and as a result, bad decisions are made.”

## Seeing the big picture

For Fishbein, the media analysis project is just the latest in a long line of behavioral research initiatives. “This is an example of how Marty thinks,” says Jordan. “Big. He sees the importance of looking at the big picture.”

And this is definitely a big-picture undertaking.

Jordan, director of Media and the Developing Child, describes the project as “daunting.” The multimedia coding effort alone involves 125 television programs, 75 magazines, 120 songs and music videos and 30 popular movies. (Individual Internet usage cannot be coded and thus is not included in the content analysis.) Implicit and explicit messages about relationships, sexuality and sexual behavior in each medium are recorded. Simply creating and testing the coding mechanism has been a formidable task.

At the outset, 600 adolescents from the Philadelphia region are answering online questionnaires about their media usage, sexual activities and attitudes. “We haven’t had good measures of multimedia exposure to sexual content until now,” explains Fishbein. “Before you can even think of linking exposure to behavior, you’d better have decent measures of both exposure and adolescent sexual beliefs and behaviors. It’s only then that you can ask whether exposure actually influences the kids’ behavior.”

In addition to Fishbein and Jordan, the study also involves researchers Amy Bleakley and Michael Henessy, who are part of APPC’s Health Communication team. Henessy is statistician for APPC and the Annenberg School. For Bleakley, whose public health research involves adolescent sexual behavior, working in the field of communication is new – but is “a natural fit.” “The media can be used as an educator,” says Bleakley. “Kids need to learn about sex from somewhere...and they need good information.”

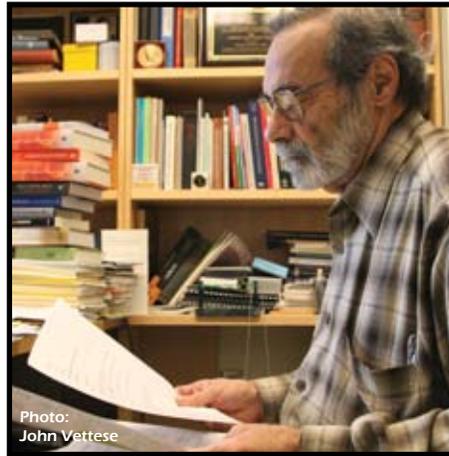
## An ‘Ah-ha’ moment

Although the field of behavioral psychology is now widely accepted across multiple disciplines, such was not always the case. A half-century ago, as a graduate student in psychology at the University of California, Los Angeles, Fishbein and others were frustrated by their inability to accurately

predict behavior. Some believed the task might be impossible; Fishbein thought otherwise.

“I think everybody’s entitled to one ‘Ah-ha!’ experience, one great insight in their lives,” recalled Fishbein recently. “Mine came one day when I said ‘You know, if you really want to predict what somebody’s going to do, you can just ask them. And they’ll tell you, and they’ll be pretty accurate.’”

Fishbein’s “Ah-ha” moment produced his Theory of Reasoned Action, still one of the most commonly cited explanations for human behavior. By one estimate, the theory has been cited in more than 2,500 research papers, explaining conduct as diverse as the use of seatbelts, recycling and union membership. Not long ago, the theory even earned a mention on the popular TV program, *NCIS*.



Martin Fishbein

Fishbein’s theory is the foundation of much research in the fields of health and political communication conducted at Annenberg. (See page 3.) With his arrival at APPC in 1997, scholars working in those areas had the expert sitting right down the hall, to strengthen their thinking and their work.

“Marty is always very generous with his data and his ideas,” says Bleakley. For young researchers, hoping to make their mark in the field, “he’s always there to help.”

## Making good decisions

It is 2 o’clock on a Thursday, and 11 graduate students are crowded in a conference room at the Annenberg School. The table is littered with bags of cookies, chips and candy, veggies, water bottles and sodas. Scattered among the students are Fishbein,

Jordan, Bleakley and Henessy. It’s time for a progress report for the coding effort and a pep talk for the grad students who are assisting in the massive project with their own pieces of research.

Fishbein squeezes in at the head of the table. There are some critical outstanding issues, he explains. Are the college-age coders assigning the same “sexual exposure score” to the music, videos and programs as the kids in the target audience? Another issue: How to translate the data gathered by the coders into a format usable in the statistical analysis.

If the survey ultimately is to succeed, those questions must be answered.

There is plenty of work to keep the students occupied, and Fishbein makes the rounds, divvying up tasks. At Annenberg, mentoring is an integral part of the learning experience.

Many of Fishbein’s students have been the lead authors on articles in major academic journals before completing their dissertations or during postdoctoral work, notes APPC director Kathleen Hall Jamieson. This project will be no different.

The students listen attentively as he doles out assignments. Research federal regulations on acceptable content and penalties for violations, he directs one. Have fines had any effect on content, he asks another. Read the literature, he advises.

Like pieces of a puzzle, the students’ research will contribute to the final results. As they move forward with their assignments, Fishbein offers some familiar advice: Think big. “Don’t focus on just doing papers for a conference,” he tells them. “If it’s not good enough to be published it shouldn’t go to a conference, so think about publication.” The students exchange delighted glances.

Back in her office, Amy Jordan discussed the significance of the research she and Fishbein are conducting. “Both of us recognize that important decisions need to be made on content,” she said. The two are co-editing a book on the subject that will be published later this year.

What is essential, notes Jordan, is that the best choices be made. “What we are trying to do is to create high-quality, peer-reviewed research that decision-makers as well as the public can understand.” ♦

# Constitution Boxes Arrive

In December, 22,300 educators around the country received an early holiday gift for their classrooms: A four-color boxed set of classroom resources called “Teaching the Constitution.”

Included in the glossy box are materials specially created to help educators teach about the most important documents in U.S. history, including books, hip pocket guides and DVDs.

Materials for “Teaching the Constitution” were produced at the direction of the Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands in cooperation with the Annenberg Public Policy Center’s Justice Learning, and published by Oxford University Press.

The books include: *Our Documents: 100 Milestone Documents from the National Archives*; *Our Constitution* by Donald A. Ritchie and JusticeLearning.org; *Our Rights* by David J. Bodenhamer, and *The Pursuit of Justice: Supreme Court Decisions that Shaped America* by Kermit L. Hall and John J. Patrick. The hip pocket guides include: *The United States Constitution, What it Says, What it Means: A Hip Pocket Guide* by JusticeLearning.org, and *Understanding Democracy: A Hip Pocket Guide* by John J. Patrick. The set of four Sunnylands Seminars DVDs include *Our Constitution: A Conversation*; *A Conversation on the Constitution: Judicial Independence*; *Key Constitutional Concepts*, and *Mandate: The President and the People*.

Among those receiving the boxed sets were 8,300 educators participating in Annenberg Classroom ([www.annenbergclassroom.org](http://www.annenbergclassroom.org)) and 13,200 boxed sets were sent to public high school social studies department chairs, civics and government teachers. Five hundred were sent to public school social studies teachers in Pennsylvania and 300 were sent to the National Constitution Center for distribution to teachers. ♦



# JUST THE FACTS



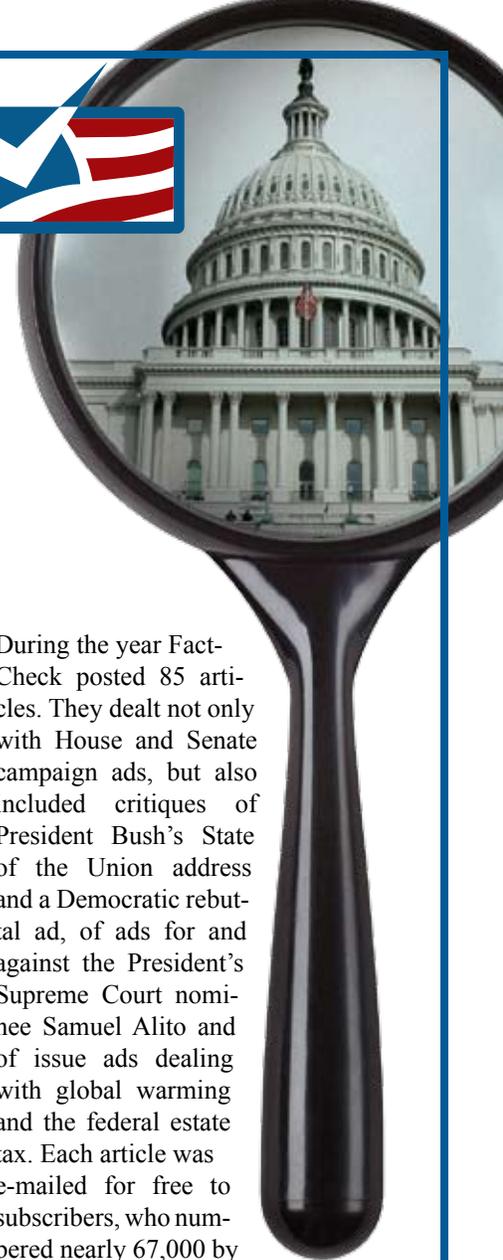
On Monday, November 6 – the day before Election Day – more than 50,000 people visited the FactCheck.org website to check out reports of false or misleading ads. It was the busiest single day of a very busy year for the Annenberg Public Policy Center project. In all, the site logged well over three million unique visits in 2006.

That may have had something to do with this year’s Congressional elections which brought an unprecedented torrent of attack ads, including many that twisted facts or departed from them entirely. “It was like drinking from a fire hose,” said project director Brooks Jackson.

In an article titled “The Whoppers of 2006,” Jackson wrote: “We found examples of disregard for facts and honesty – on both sides – that would get a reporter fired in a heartbeat from any decent news organization.” Political ads faked quotes, twisted words, misrepresented votes and positions, and engaged in fear-mongering and outright fabrication.

Also during 2006, FactCheck.org was singled out for honors by *The New York Times*, TIME.com and Kim Kommando, who bills herself as America’s Digital Goddess. TIME.com named FactCheck “One of the 25 Websites We Can’t Live Without.” (Others on the list included eBay, Amazon and Google.) A *Times* editorial praised FactCheck as “a nonprofit service that thinks voters should be treated as intelligent consumers entitled to the plain facts.”

At a ceremony in Paris in October, FactCheck was named one of the “top 10 who are changing the world of internet and politics,” chosen by 18,000 worldwide voters in a competition sponsored by PoliticsOnline and the World E-Gov Forum. And Kim Kommando, whose weekly call-in radio show is carried on 425 radio stations, selected FactCheck as the “cool site of the day.”



During the year FactCheck posted 85 articles. They dealt not only with House and Senate campaign ads, but also included critiques of President Bush’s State of the Union address and a Democratic rebuttal ad, of ads for and against the President’s Supreme Court nominee Samuel Alito and of issue ads dealing with global warming and the federal estate tax. Each article was e-mailed for free to subscribers, who numbered nearly 67,000 by Election Day.

Behind the scenes, the staff prepared for the launch later this year of a new project for high-school teachers and their students. The new FactCheckED.org site will help teach students how to apply FactCheck.org’s research techniques and critical analysis to the political and commercial advertising they encounter. FactCheckED.org will be an addition to the Annenberg Classroom project, and is funded by a two-year grant from the Flora Foundation. The new project is headed by former *Time* magazine correspondent Viveca Novak, who joined FactCheck.org as deputy director in June. Jackson and Novak are assisted by a staff of three researcher/writers, Justin Bank, James Ficaro and Emi Kolawole. ♦

## Work in Progress

An update on grant projects underway at APCC

### Pew Charitable Trusts Grant to Student Voices

In 2006, Philadelphia recorded 406 homicides. Many of the victims are young people. Not surprisingly, violence and its impact on the community are topics of special interest to the 225 Roxborough High School seniors now participating in the Student Voices Senior Project.

“It’s a major issue for everybody, but the kids are feeling it, too,” said Stephanie Wicks, a social studies teacher at Roxborough who leads the Student Voices program there. As part of their research, students plan to talk to a police officer and leaders of anti-gun/anti-violence groups.

In Philadelphia, the Student Voices program operates in all of the city’s 59 public high schools, funded by a three-year, \$100,000 grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts that began in 2005.

Teachers like Wicks see the benefit of the civic learning experience. “The students come in with no real idea of what civic participation is and why it is important to be engaged,” she said. “Some get apathetic; they say nothing’s going to change. Overall, though, the majority of them realize they at least have a voice.”

Wicks sees another benefit of the Student Voices experience: “It leaves them with more questions than answers, and that’s a good thing.”

### Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Grant Underwrites New Website

For the past year, a team of more than a dozen students working with the Adolescent Risk Communication Institute has been watching more than 600 hit movies, dating back to 1950, measuring how positive and negative health behaviors – from smoking to seat belt use – are portrayed in media popular with adolescents. Eventually, they will analyze television programs, music videos and Internet sites popular among teens for similar “messages.”

Starting this month, the initial findings, of interest to scholars and researchers on adolescent behavior, will be available on a new website, [www.YouthMediaRisk.org](http://www.YouthMediaRisk.org), funded through a five-year, \$100,000-a-year grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. ♦

## JUSTICE TALKING- PRESIDENT

In a packed auditorium at Penn’s Huntsman Hall in mid-November, former Oklahoma congressman Mickey Edwards and Duke University professor of law and public policy Christopher Schroeder debated the use of presidential signing statements for broadcast on NPR’s *Justice Talking*.

President Bush’s frequent use of signing statements – more than all of the previous U.S. presidents combined – has spurred bipartisan controversy. In August, an American Bar Association task force labeled this use of signing statements as “contrary to the rule of law and our constitutional system of separation of powers.”

Americans also are wary of the practice in which the president reserves the right to carry out only portions of a law enacted by Congress. Nearly three-quarters of more than 1,000 adults sampled in an Annenberg Public Policy Center national survey rejected that idea, saying the president should instead veto the legislation and send it back to Congress.

Edwards and Schroeder both said that President Bush has used signing statements recklessly. They also discussed the potential consequences of expanded executive power.

*Justice Talking* host Margot Adler also welcomed Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) for an interview and Q & A session with the audience. Senator Specter expressed particular concern over statements President Bush has attached to certain legislation, including an amendment regarding the use of torture on detainees.

A final question from the audience drew a sharp response from Specter. Referring to Bush’s decision to ignore Congress and allow torture, the questioner observed that Americans can sleep more soundly knowing that terrorist plots may be uncovered. “Ultimately isn’t that the best situation?” he asked. “No,” said Specter firmly. ♦



Top: Panelist Mickey Edwards, left, and Justice Talking host Margot Adler, right.  
Bottom left: Justice Talking producer Kathryn Korman.  
Bottom right: Senator Arlen Specter.

# ESSENTIAL SIGNING STATEMENTS



Panel host Margot Adler listen as Christopher Schroeder answers an audience question. Gilbert holds the microphone for an audience member.

Photos: John Vettese

## New APPC Website

The Annenberg Public Policy Center will have a new online appearance early in 2007, a redesigned website that will streamline dissemination of the center's current work as well as enhance access to the vast quantities of survey data and research gathered since APPC's founding in 1993.

The site will be capable of supporting audio and video feeds as well as an RSS delivery of new content as it is posted on the website. The site will be fully searchable and support a single user profile shared among all APPC-hosted programs, including *Justice Talking*, Annenberg Classroom and FactCheck.org.

For APPC staff and faculty, the new site will support the creation of online forums, blog spaces and an easy-to-use file sharing alternative to FTP. Spin-off sites, for special conferences or events at APPC or for individual grant projects, also can easily be created.

Researchers ultimately will be able to gain access to data sets of information on topics ranging from the quadrennial National Annenberg Election Surveys to children and the media. Until now this information has not been readily available. "Mostly it's been stuck in the vaults," said the APPC's Jon Stromer-Galley, who is building the website with Gary Gehman, APPC's web director. The new site was designed by Solution Media, of Philadelphia. ♦

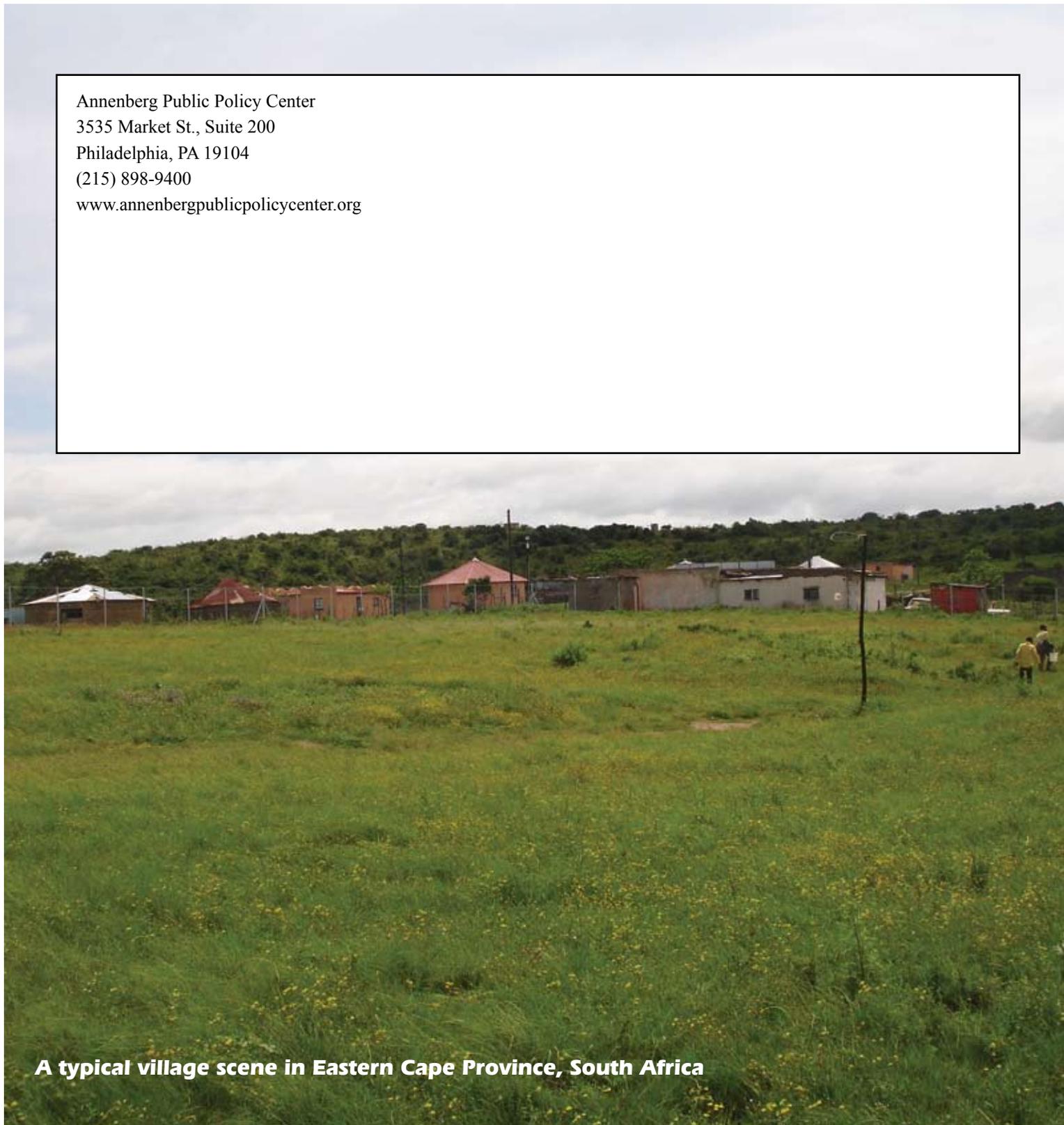


# On the RECORD

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**A typical village scene in Eastern Cape Province, South Africa**