

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

BY TOM BIVINS



Summer finally made it, which for those of us in the West means four months of fire roasting while the rest of you get boiled, broiled, steamed, or poached, depending on where you live. These days, there doesn't seem to be a safe haven from the elements anywhere.

I'll be in England for a week or so in July where, as far as I know, the impending Brexit will be the only climate that needs to be dealt with. After that, it's the usual summer of writing, editing, submitting and... oh, AEJMC, Washington, D.C.

I almost forgot. Nearly a week in the "swamp" that still hasn't been drained. And I was so hoping it would be by now.

The swampiness, of course, has long been part of our political discourse, and has bred a sort of "fake news" belief that Washington is actually built on a swamp. The swamp metaphor, by the way, is just that. Our nation's capital was NOT built on a swamp. At worst, it had a few marshes, which were judiciously filled in over the years, as was the "Washington Canal," which had become a *de facto* sewer by the 1840s, and a creek, which was not filled and instead now literally flows under Constitution Avenue.

So, according to several stalwart sources, including *Smithsonian* magazine and *The Washington Post*, the myth of Washington being located in a swamp is a "wild exaggeration." Nonetheless, as the *Post* points out, "For two centuries, our mythical swamp has been a handy introduction to arguments for lowering our expectations of government, the very business that the Constitution expected a Federal City to facilitate."

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Have we lowered our expectations? Are we sinking into a swampy acceptance of how government works—or doesn't? I hope not. At least I don't see it in our educators or in our students who, although disheartened and sometimes discouraged that the future they expected to be waiting for them in public communication has somehow been tainted, are more resilient than I might have hoped.

No doubt there are still marshes to be drained, and maybe even sewers to be filled in. But, as the corps of engineers has done in the city of Washington even up to the present day, we as professional communicators need to continue to build levees to keep out the periodic flow of misinformation and blatant lies that threaten our fragile republic.

As I teach my students, a lie is asserting something you know to be false, with the intention of leading someone to believe you. "Sincerely spoken lies," on the other hand, are those based on misinformation or carelessness. Both are still lies, yet the latter may be excusable if there is an innocence inherent in the speaker of the lie. However, in today's environment, those two manifestations of untruth are daily conflated for reasons beyond innocence. For, if you refuse to seek facts and instead seek rationalization, a lie is still a lie.

If we are to resist immunity to the difference between lies and the truth, then we must continue to build the metaphorical levees, which like the physical levees that



Illustration titled, "If you want to get rid of mosquitos, drain the swamp that breeds them." (1909) (Library of Congress)

prevented the geographic seat of our government from literally becoming a swamp, will fend off the encroaching tide of subjectivism in which the truth is what you say it is.

Hopefully, our students will become that corps of truth engineers who will not only reinforce the bulwarks of democracy, but will also lead the real job of draining a swamp that has long since ceased to be a metaphor.



Never a swamp, Washington, D.C. is one of the most exciting cities in the U.S., visited by over 19 million people last year.

# LOOKING BACK, AND LOOKING AHEAD

BY CHAD PAINTER, DIVISION HEAD



I am beginning to reflect on the past year of the goals, accomplishments, and seemingly never-ending to-do list as the end of my term as division head starts to wind down. The past five years of service have been fun, eye-opening, and often exhausting, and I am grateful to our members for entrusting me with the care of the division.

Our biggest achievement this year, and what I hope will be my lasting legacy as division head, is the launch of a mentorship program. In our inaugural year, we had six mentor-mentee pairings, a number that I hope grows in Year 2. I reached out to participants, and here is what they had to say about their experiences in the program:

- **Kathleen Bartzen Culver:** I am grateful to the Media Ethics Division for piloting the mentorship program this year. My mentor, Wendy Wyatt from the University of St. Thomas, has helped me a great deal. I am navigating a new path, and her suggestions and calm reassurance have been key. I hope to have the chance to return the favor by mentoring someone else one day.
- **Deborah Dwyer:** In a few short months, the Media Ethics Division mentorship program has already proven invaluable to me. Connecting with a seasoned academic who provides guidance on topics such as navigating the stresses of a doctoral program, strengthening research agendas, and thinking strategically about the job market has made me more confident and effective. I feel I have a lifelong mentor and future colleague in my mentor; he is always just an email or phone call away!
- **John Ferré:** Meeting Kim Kelling through email has been a pleasure. Kim, as you know has finished her Ph.D. at Missouri and is moving to begin her position as an assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. Kim asked me for suggestions about ways to integrate discussions on ethics into undergraduate courses, so I sent some ideas to her. Later, Kim interviewed me for the MED newsletter's "Five Questions with" column.
- **Kimberly Kelling:** Through the MED mentorship program, I was connected with Dr. John Ferré from the University of Louisville. Via email, he was able to help me understand diverse ways to integrate ethical conversations into undergraduate classrooms and answer any other questions I may have had on teaching, research, or the job application process. Although I graduated this past May, I look forward to continuing our

conversations about academia and meeting him (in person) this upcoming AEJ.

- **Erin Schauster:** I think you did an excellent job pairing mentor and mentee based on common research interests. I've enjoyed getting to know Rhema and discussing her dissertation research. We met a couple times and she followed up by sharing her work so I was able to provide comments and feedback. We've also been able to talk about her involvement in AEJMC, which led to a moderator appointment in D.C. that will allow her to attend the AEJMC job talk. Based on my experience, I believe this program will have long-term impact as we continue to recruit new members, nurture existing relationships, and encourage involvement in MED.
- **Wendy Wyatt:** A nice thing about the program as you set it up is that it could be customized. My mentee, Katy, had a really specific (short-term) need that I hope I was able to help her with.
- **Rhema Zlaten:** Erin Schauster and I met twice in person this year, and we also e-mailed back and forth quite a bit. Her mentorship has been invaluable! She provided critiques of my dissertation research that really helped me keep moving the process along, and she has also shared professional and teaching advice. She has checked in on me and located resources for me, and she has offered to help me as I prepare my job talk and go onto the market this year. Thanks for starting the program and for all of the help as I transition from Ph.D. candidate to a future tenure track employee.

The multi-tiered mentorship program links senior faculty, junior faculty, and graduate students within media ethics. In the program, mentees are paired with mentors who share similar research, methodological, and institutional interests. Mentors meet on an informal though regular basis (via Skype, phone, or whatever works best for the pair) with their mentees to discuss questions and concerns related to their career path. For instance, mentors provide feedback on dissertation or research work in progress, tips on creating stellar job applications or tenure and promotion materials, and advice on phone and campus interviews—though this list is far from exhaustive.

I also want to highlight a couple of other smaller, though significant, accomplishments. First, we will revive the division social this year. It will be 8:30-10:30 p.m. Tuesday, August 7 (directly following the members' meeting) at Matchbox Chinatown, 713 H Street NW—about a 10-minute walk from the conference hotel. The division is

providing pizza and salad, and there will be a cash bar. Seating is limited, so be on the lookout for an RSVP email closer to the conference. Second, Tom Bivins, Erin Schuster, and I have worked together to increase content for the quarterly newsletter and to expand contributions and submissions beyond division officers for a more lively, robust conversation. Speaking of conversations, the [Media Ethics Educators Facebook page](#) and the MED Google Group are great places to engage in ethical conversations, ask questions and seek advice, and promote your scholarship.

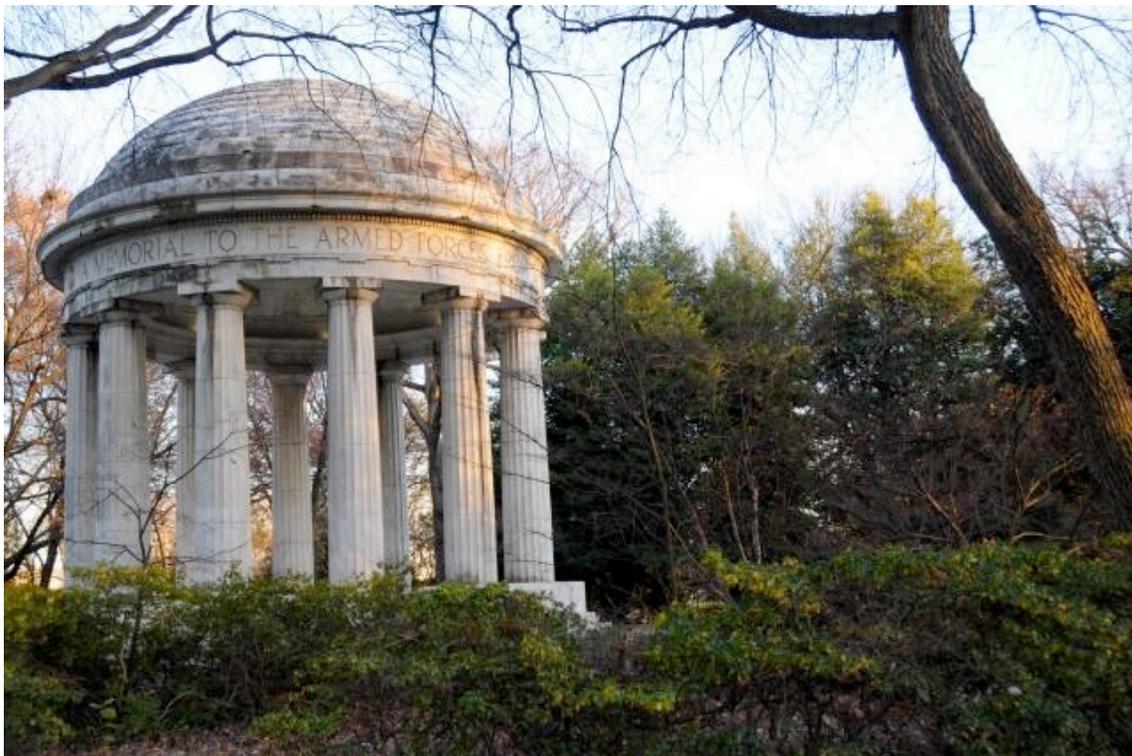
There is still plenty of more work for division members to do moving forward. Our biggest priority must continue to be increasing submission numbers for the refereed research paper competition, and we will be discussing the issue again at the members' meeting (6:45-8:15 p.m. Tuesday, August 7). I believe three interrelated areas are at the heart of issue. As a division, we need to encourage members to become more active participants, increase graduate student participation, and clearly articulate the scope of media ethics research while publicizing that identity to the larger AEJMC community.

I also would like to see more innovative programming, both in terms of panel topics and format. The Online News Association created a nice template for interac-

tive (collaborative document, facilitated discussion, workshop, training), active (speed demos, town hall/ask me anything, masterclass), and passive (bold idea, lightning talks, debate, panel) session formats, and I hope MED can lead AEJMC toward more creative panel sessions. Here a description and examples for each type of session:

<https://ona18.journalists.org/2018/02/16/get-creative-session-format/>.

Finally, I hope MED continues to explore restructuring the duties of the Teaching and PF&R chairs, as well as the Graduate Student Committee. In regards to teaching, the biggest goals are overhauling and updating the [Teaching Ethics Resources website](#) and continuing conversations about relaunching the teaching-centered preconference. For PF&R, we need more focused programming for professional practice faculty and working journalists, as well as strengthened relationships between the division and professional practice faculty and working journalists. This year, we expanded the Graduate Student Liaison to a six-person Graduate Student Committee; moving forward, we need to better define the role and responsibilities of the committee to better serve the division and more fully benefit committee members.



*Editor's note: This is currently the only reminder in the nation's capital of the over 116-thousand American soldiers who died during our brief involvement in World War One (1917-1918). But, unlike most of the memorials in Washington, you have to look for it. It stands in West Potomac Park in a grove of trees between the Reflecting Pool and Independence Avenue. In many ways, it exists as a remembrance of a long-ago time, and has suffered off and on from years of neglect. A new memorial is planned, and it's an exciting venture, but like this one, won't be built on the Mall with the other notable memorials, and is the result of exclusively private donations. A [very fine website](#) is dedicated to the new endeavor; however, this original still captures the the sadness of that distant war. I recommend a visit.*

# GREAT PROGRAMMING PLANNED FOR AEJMC CONFERENCE

BY MARLENE NEILL, RESEARCH CHAIR



## Mark Your Calendars for Twitter Chat

September is Public Relations Ethics Month, and the Media Ethics Division will be collaborating with several other organizations for a Twitter chat regarding ethics education on Sept. 18 at 8 p.m. eastern. Other participating organizations include the AEJMC Public Relations Division, the PRSA Educators Academy and PRSA Board of Ethics and Professional Standards.

We look forward to seeing everyone at the conference in Washington, D.C. Here is a list of Media Ethics programming.

## Monday, August 6

**8:15 to 9:45 a.m. / M000**

Research Panel Session

Media Response to Fake News, Ethically Listening, and Virtues

### Moderating/Presiding

Rhema Zlaten, Colorado State University

- *Fake News and the Fourth Estate: The Role of Editorial Messaging in Repairing the Journalistic Paradigm*  
Deborah Dwyer, North Carolina-Chapel Hill
- *Ethically Listening to Different Perspectives: News Fixers' Thoughts on the Dangers They Face in the Field\**  
Lindsay Palmer, Wisconsin-Madison
- *Facebook and the Virtue of Friendship*  
Jeffrey Maciejewski, Creighton

### Discussant

Kimberly Lauffer, Ball State

\* Professional Relevance Award

**11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. / M032**

### Magazine Media and Media Ethics Divisions

PF&R Panel Session

Whistleblowers, Encryption, and Mass Surveillance: Protecting Sources and Press Freedom in a Digital Age

### Moderating/Presiding

- Vanessa Gregory, Mississippi

## Panelists

- Nikki Usher, George Washington
- Stephenson Waters, Florida
- Patrick Lee Plaisance Pennsylvania State
- Andy Kroll, senior reporter for *Mother Jones*, Washington D.C.

Educators and scholars know how the Internet is disrupting news production and delivery, but we've been slow to examine how electronic communication is changing newsgathering itself. As *Wired* magazine noted last year, sources take great risks when they send emails or share files with reporters, yet most journalists have yet to adopt encryption tools that could provide communications safeguards. We'll explore the nature of reporting in the digital age, examine the threat electronic surveillance poses to press freedom, discuss best practices for secure communications, and propose teaching and research ideas.

**3:15 to 4:45 p.m. / M063**

### Newspaper and Online News and Media Ethics Divisions

PF&R Panel Session

Data Journalism in the Trump Era: Accessing Data and Uncovering Stories

### Moderating/Presiding

Stan Ketterer, Oklahoma State

## Panelists

- David Fallis, Deputy editor for investigative reporting, *Washington Post*
- Adam A. Marshall, Knight Foundation litigation attorney, Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press

- Griffin Palmer, Data journalist, New York Times
- Ryan McNeill, Data journalist, Reuters, New York
- Katy Bartzen Culver, Wisconsin-Madison

**5 to 6:30 p.m. / M077**

### **Media Ethics and Scholastic Journalism Divisions**

PF&R Panel Session

**Ethical Objectivity vs Minority Identity: Obstacles to Diversity in College Student Media**

#### **Moderating/Presiding**

Margot Susca, American

#### **Panelists:**

- Angie Chuang, Colorado
- John C. Watson, American University
- Wayne Dawkins, Morgan State
- Karla Kennedy, Florida International

## **Tuesday, August 7**

**1:30 to 3 p.m. / T059**

### **Media Ethics Division**

Refereed Paper Session

**Accuracy and Objectivity in Media Coverage: Ethical Expectations and Actual Practice**

#### **Moderating/Presiding**

Lee Wilkins, Wayne State

- *Electoral Reckonings: Press Criticism of Presidential Campaign Coverage, 2000-2016\**  
Elizabeth Bent, Kimberly Kelling and Ryan Thomas, Missouri
- *Fair Balance or False Balance: Accuracy or Impartiality in Climate Change Reporting*  
Kristin Timm and Richard Craig, George Mason
- *The Discursive (Re)Construction of the Objectivity Norm*  
Tim Vos, Ryan Thomas, Amanda Hinnant and Yong Volz, Missouri
- *How “Activist” Ethics at the New York Times Overcame the “Chilling Effects” of Libel*  
Ali Mohamed, United Arab Emirates
- *An Ethic of Advocacy: Metajournalistic Discourse on the Practice of Leaks and Whistleblowing 2004-2017*

Brett Johnson, Elizabeth Bent, and Caroline Dade, Missouri

#### **Discussant**

Lindsay Palmer, Wisconsin-Madison

\*Top Faculty Paper

**3:15 to 4:45 p.m. / T080**

### **Participatory Journalism Interest Group and Media Ethics Division**

PF&R Panel Session

**The Proof is in the Picture: Verification Techniques for User-Generated Content**

#### **Moderating/Presiding:**

Jennifer Brannock Cox, Salisbury

#### **Panelists:**

- Mandy Jenkins, Storyful
- Nicole Dahmen, Oregon
- Michael Martinez, Tennessee-Knoxville
- Ann Auman, Hawai'i

As news organizations shrink their reporting staff and citizens become amateur reporters on social media platforms, more emphasis must be placed on verifying submitted content. Storyful collects and manages photos and videos for organizations throughout the world, including *The Wall Street Journal*, *ABC News*, *Mashable*, and hundreds of others. Before providing these organizations with multimedia content to fit their storytelling needs, Storyful team members verify the content, focusing on the examination of who is sharing, where they are sharing from, and when. Storyful members will share their strategies for both educators and journalists for examining content submitted by citizens.

**5 to 6:30 p.m. / T089 Room Name**

### **Media Ethics Division**

Refereed Paper Session

*Ethical Issues in Media: Past, Present and Future*

#### **Moderating/Presiding**

Patrick Plaisance, Pennsylvania State

- *How “Activist” Ethics at the New York Times Overcame the “Chilling Effects” of Libel*  
Ali Mohamed, United Arab Emirates
- *An Ethic of Advocacy: Metajournalistic Discourse on the Practice of Leaks and Whistleblowing 2004-2017*

Brett Johnson, Elizabeth Bent, and Caroline Dade,  
Missouri

**Discussant**

Jenn Mackay, Virginia Tech

**6:45 to 8:15 p.m. / T105**

**Media Ethics Division**

Business Session: **Members' Meeting**

**Wednesday, August 8**

**8:15 to 9:45 a.m. / W015**

**Commission on the Status of Women and  
Media Ethics Division**

Teaching Panel Session

On the "Other Side:" How to be a Good Advisor to  
Your (International) Graduate Students from an Ethical,  
Feminist Perspective

**Moderating/Presiding**

Stine Eckert, Wayne State

**Panelists:**

- Lee Wilkins, Wayne State
- Bonnie Brennen, Marquette
- Linda Steiner, Maryland
- Earnest Perry, Missouri
- Federico Subervi, Researcher
- Sahar Khamis, Maryland

**1:45 to 3:15 p.m. / W047**

**Media Ethics Division**

Refereed Paper Session

Ethics in Advertising and CSR: Relationships, Stereotypes  
and Authenticity

**Moderating/Presiding**

John Ferré, Louisville

- *This Corporation Cares: Considering Ethics in Communicating Nonprofit CSR Relationships Online\**  
Virginia Harrison, Pennsylvania State
- *Still No End to Gender Stereotypes in Advertising: A Content Analytical Comparison of Different Channels*  
Kathrin Karsay, Jörg Matthes, and Valerie Fröhlich,  
Vienna
- *Ethics of Authenticity: Travel Influencers and the Production of Sponsored Content*  
Mariah Wellman, Ryan Stoldt, Melissa Tully and  
Brian Ekdale, Iowa

**Discussant**

Jack Breslin, Iona

\*Top Student Paper

**11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. / R018**

**Thursday, August 9**

**Media Ethics and Mass Communication and Society Divisions**

Teaching Panel Session

*10 Cool Ideas You Can Use RIGHT NOW to Teach Ethics,  
Fake News (and Maybe Even Organize Your Life)*

**Moderating/Presiding**

Jan Leach, Kent State

**Panelists:**

- Alyssa Appelman, Northern Kentucky
- Christina Smith, Georgia College  
Katy Bartzen Culver, Wisconsin-Madison
- Nicole Kraft, Ohio State

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**AND FROM WENDY WYATT THIS NOTE ON A SESSION OF INTEREST**

**First Amendment Award session honors Jodi Kantor, Megan Twohey and Ronan Farrow—Tuesday, August 7, 1:30-3 p.m.**

Ronan Farrow (The New Yorker) and Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey (The New York Times) are this year's recipients of the AEJMC First Amendment Award. The three reporters broke the Harvey Weinstein story and inspired the global #MeToo movement. Farrow, Kantor and Twohey, who have also recently been named Pulitzer Prize winners, will talk about their work and the shift in the cultural conversation about sexual harassment/assault that has followed.

# CO-SPONSORED PANELS AT AEJMC

BY ERIN SCHAUSTER, VICE HEAD/PROGRAMMING CHAIR



Want to learn about obstacles to diversity, weedvertising, how to be a good advisor and more? Mark your calendars for the following Media Ethics Division, co-sponsored panels in Washington D.C., August 6 – 9.

- Whistleblowers, Encryption, and Mass Surveillance: Protecting Sources and Press Freedom in a Digital Age (Magazine Media Division / Research) Monday, August 6, 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m., Room M032
- Data Journalism in the Trump Era: Overcoming Roadblocks to Uncover Truth (Newspaper and Online News / PF&R) Monday, August 6, 3:15 to 4:45 p.m., Room M066
- Ethical Objectivity vs Minority Identity: Obstacles to Diversity in College Student Media (Scholastic Journalism / PF&R) Monday, August 6, 5:00 to 6:30 p.m., Room M080
- Ethics Issues Against a Backdrop of Disruption (Media Management, Economics & Entrepreneurship / PF&R) Tuesday, August 7, 8:15 to 9:45 a.m., Room T021

- The Ethics of Weedvertising: Duties and Obligations of Ad and PR Professionals (Law and Policy / Research) Tuesday, August 7, 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m., Room T050
- The Proof is in the Picture: Verification Techniques for User-Generated Content (Participatory Journalism / PF&R) Tuesday, August 7, 3:15 to 4:45 p.m., Room T087
- On the "other side:" How to be a good advisor to your (international) graduate students from an ethical, feminist perspective (Commission on the Status of Women / Teaching) Wednesday, August 8, 8:15 to 9:45 a.m., Room W016
- 10 Cool Ideas You Can Use RIGHT NOW to Teach Ethics, Fake News (and maybe even organize your life) (Mass Communication and Society / Teaching) Thursday, August 9, 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Room R0181

Also, please mark your calendar for the MED members' meeting and off-site social. The MED Members' Meeting is Tuesday, August 7, 6:45 to 8:15 p.m. in room T111, followed by an off-site Social at 8:30 p.m. at Matchbox Chinatown, 713 H St NW, Washington, DC.

If you have any questions about panel programming, please email me at [erin.schauster@colorado.edu](mailto:erin.schauster@colorado.edu). I'm looking forward to seeing everyone in August.

# TO COVER OR NOT TO COVER?

BY NICOLE KRAFT, PF&R CHAIR



The video featured a potentially intoxicated sophomore sorority girl, sitting in a fast-food restaurant, lamenting the loss of a boyfriend. Filmed by an unidentified companion, she states in her 10-second video, "F\*\*\* yourself you are hooking up with a black girl," she says. "That's weird. That's weird as f\*\*\*. F\*\*\* you."

The video ended up in the possession of the woman referenced in the recording. She, in turn, posted it on Twitter with the comment, "Its crazy that racism still exists here [on campus] can't believe the color of my skin is "weird." The tweet was subsequently shared hundreds of times, each retweet more critical than the last. The subject of the video started receiving threats of violence, even death. Fear and anxiety made

her afraid to leave her dorm room. Within days she left the university. Her life has not been the same since.

This may seem like a tale of how social media can damage relationships and reputation, and it is. This may seem like a story of cyberbullying, and how words can open a floodgate of hate, and it is. But this is also a tale of the power of the written word, the role of public interest in determining news value, and what responsibility student media has to also serve those who may not be able to serve themselves.

Student media became aware of the video about a week after its posting, as it went from random tweet to viral phenomenon. The debate ensued whether or not to cover it, and the scales toward publication tipped when editors reached student government officials who said they condemned the racist comments. Some editors felt that statement escalated the news value—the story now

had proximity, relevance, human interest and controversy. It gained currency when an unaffiliated online campus publication covered the story. A student journalist got in touch with the woman who was the subject of and poster of the video and obtained a quote. The undergraduate student government video president offered a quote. Retweets tagged the sorority of which the sophomore speaker was a member, so the editors reached out there, too, for comment. When concerns were raised about the ramifications for the woman in the video, the student journalist defended her position.

Argument for publication: This was news, because everyone was talking about it.

Arguments against publication: People say stupid things on social media that they later regret. The speed and ease of posting leave the less experienced to make mistakes they no doubt later regret. There are a variety of costs for that—loss of public standing, loss of jobs, loss of friends—but it does not mean it is worthy of turning into news broadcasted around the globe.

Argument for publication: This was news, because students need to learn from mistakes on social media.

Argument against publication: It is not news, because it had no relevance to readers beyond its salacious nature.

In the end, the article ran. And, a young woman's life has never been the same. In addition to the original story, the student paper published her public apology and plea to be forgiven. But the hatred continued to spew. It lasted weeks—criticizing her body, her dress, her intoxication and her perceived racism. She stayed away from campus and tried to reclaim her life.

The news staff went on that year to publish many incredible stories filled with important news that campus needed to know. They revealed scoops, exposed wrongs, unveiled hidden heroes and made our students better informed about the world around them.

But this article sticks with me.

We hammer home news value as a cornerstone of journalism, helping to determine what information the readers need to know. We also drill in the ethics of reporting, including the SPJ Code of Ethics. And I believe some key aspects of the Code did not get the attention they deserved in this story, specifically those categorized under “Do no harm”:

Balance the public's need for information against potential harm or discomfort. Pursuit of the news is not a license for arrogance or undue intrusiveness.

Show compassion for those who may be affected by news coverage. Use heightened sensitivity when dealing with juveniles, victims of sex crimes, and sources or subjects who are inexperienced or unable to give consent. Consider cultural differences in approach and treatment. (I'd add intoxication to this.)

Realize that private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than public figures and others who seek power, influence or attention. Weigh the consequences of publishing or broadcasting personal information.

Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity, even if others do.

Consider the long-term implications of the extended reach and permanence of publication. Provide updated and more complete information as appropriate.

Without media coverage, this story would have faded into social media oblivion. But, nearly a year after publication of this story, and it remains the top story in a Google search of the young woman's name. Papers as far away as New York and England—yes England—picked up the story.

How long should an irresponsible comment, stimulated by teen heartbreak, captured on mobile video and shared by a third-party reflect on and impact a life? I hope every student journalist will ask that question the next time they consider writing and publishing such a story.



## FIVE QUESTIONS WITH... ERIN SCHAUSTER

BY TARA WALKER, MEMBER GRADUATE STUDENT COMMITTEE



Erin Schauster is an Assistant Professor of Advertising at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and the incoming head of the Media Ethics Division. She received her doctorate from the University of Missouri School of Journalism. Between earning her bachelors and master's degrees, Schauster worked as an account executive at advertising agencies in St. Louis and Nashville. Dr. Schauster's research employs qualitative methods such as ethnography and interviews to examine the way ethical decision making in advertising is impacted by organizational culture. Additionally, her research looks at the changing organizational structures and practices of the advertising and public relations industries and the implications for both education and normative decision making.

Within these overarching topics, Schauster also looks at message ethics, business ethics, virtue ethics, moral psychology, organizational leadership and values. Her work has been published in a range of multidisciplinary books and journals, including *American Behavioral Scientist*, *Journal of Advertising Education*, *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, and *Persuasion Ethics*. She is also currently participating in the MED mentorship program, providing guidance and advice for graduate students. I asked Erin five questions about her teaching and research, as well as her experiences with the Media Ethics Division.

**How and when did you become involved with the MED?**

It was 2014, AEJMC in Montreal. Jenn Burseson Mackay walked up to my poster, introduced herself as the head of the MED division, and encouraged me to attend the business meeting and to get involved in the division as the newsletter editor. I remember the meeting vividly, because she led it like a boss, and I love opportunities to work with and learn from smart, confident female leaders. Plus,



Erin Schauster

she and other members were so welcoming and supportive of my work, it was a no-brainer to join.

### What projects are you excited about right now?

Last AEJMC, David Craig invited me to work on a longitudinal study with four other media ethics scholars. Over the next three years, we're collecting life stories, personal traits, ethical ideologies, virtuous character and moral reasoning of college graduates, during the first few years of their media careers, so that we can better understand the factors that influence moral development. And this fall, I'm excited to wrap up a similar project I've been conducting over the past couple years with marketing communication executives in leadership positions.

### What are you reading lately?

I have three books on my reading list this summer, related to the two projects I mentioned. I just started reading *Moral Psychology, The Evolution of Morality: Adaptations and Innateness* edited by Walter Sinnott-Armstrong. And I plan to re-read *Good Work: When Excellence and Ethics Meet* written by Howard E. Gardner, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and William Damon, and *Some Do Care* by Anne Colby and William Damon.

And for fun (as if *Moral Psychology* isn't fun enough ...), I'm borrowing from my husband's library, which includes a collection of Jonathan Franzen books. I just finished *Freedom* and started *Purity*.

### Last year you won an award from the MED for teaching. Can you talk a little bit about how you incorporate the study of ethics into the classes you teach?

When teaching advertising and public relations practices, it's important to expose students to the ethical nature of the situations and problems they'll encounter, and to prepare them with tools and the confidence to problem solve. For example, when my class learns about consumer behavior, and how to identify, reach, and tailor a message to a target audience, we also discuss vulnerable target segments, consequences of reaching unintended audiences and stereotypes to name a few ethical problems.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 11)

In Sustainable Brands, the ethics class I teach, students explore and discuss the ethical nature of marketing communication practices through cases. Discussion is a great way to help students build their problem-solving skills and confidence, and I encourage them to explore solutions by reminding them that there's no single right answer, but many ways to articulate an ethical defense. After reviewing ethical theories such as discourse ethics, Kantian ethics, and utilitarianism, students put their knowledge into practice by responding to a local client project, which gives them another opportunity to defend their recommendations.

### What's your best advice for graduate students who want to research and teach in this area?

What I love about ethics research is that it can be your primary intention for a study or a supplement to your work, which means each project you design and conduct, might result in multiple papers. For example, Marlene Neill and I worked on a project recently that just came

out in *Current Issues and Research in Advertising*. Our study intended to examine the ethical implications of emergent practices in advertising and public relations, but we first approached the topic from industry perspectives on a range of emergent practices and then narrowed in on the ethical implications of these practices (see *Journal of Media Ethics*, vol 32, no 1), and, based on participant responses, decided to focus in on a single practice, native advertising (see *American Behavioral Scientist*, vol 60, no 12).

When teaching, it's important to recognize that along with building your students' confidence, you're building your own as well. Ethics is not always an easy or comfortable subject to teach; be prepared to get a range of perspectives each time you teach the class and to encourage discussion so students feel comfortable sharing their views. The more you incorporate ethics discussions in the classroom, the more confident you'll feel moderating them over time.



## CONFERENCE FOCUSES ON BUILDING BRIDGES, COMBATting MOTIVATED REASONING

BY KATHLEEN BARTZEN CULVER



In a day that led off with climate change denial and ended with coverage of Roy Moore in Alabama, the Center for Journalism Ethics had plenty to explore as we tackled "Division, Denial & Journalism Ethics" at our 2018 conference at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in April.

Justin Gillis, who covered climate science for the *New York Times* and is now at work on a book, was the keynote speaker and challenged the audience to tackle false balance in environmental and other science journalism. He said the urge to present "both sides" of climate change is far less prevalent than when he first started reporting, yet he sly sees it, particularly in cable news.

As the keynote conversation turned to audience engagement and the public's role in journalism today, Gillis applauded the *Times*' approach to coming on stories, in which every comment is moderated before posting and readers play an active role in promoting important comments. Because of this approach, he said, he read almost every comment posted to any of his stories, which sometimes numbered in the thousands. Comments even led to story ideas.

Following Gillis, we explored important ideas through two panels: "Deep divides: Bridging the gap with ethical journalism" and "Denial: Your Truth and Mine." Transparency, fact-checking, openness and courage repeatedly

arose as themes. The Center for Journalism Ethics tries to emphasize a mix of practitioners and researchers across panels, hoping to serve as a bridge between insights gleaned from scholarly work and the daily practices of journalism.

We were proud to award the Anthony Shadid Award for Journalism Ethics to John Shiffman and Brian Grow of Reuters for their work on "The Body Trade." If you haven't explored this series, which covers the vast and largely unregulated industry that buys and sells the bodies of the recently deceased, it's well worth your me.



Leading science journalism researcher and educator Sharon Dunwoody asks Justin Gillis to reflect on the ethical aspects of his work.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 12)

The nominations for the five finalists cover the decisions reporters and teams made and are excellent resources for classroom case studies and discussions. All of them are linked from our story covering the finalists.

The day ended with a final panel focused firmly on solutions. Michelle Holmes, who serves as the vice president for content at Alabama Media Group, reflected on her organization’s coverage of Roy Moore and allegations of sexual misconduct against him. She emphasized innovations in news coverage as ways to keep audiences engaged. She and Jane Elizabeth from the American Press Institute suggested news organizations embrace “fact memes” – engaging and visual efforts to combat mis- and disinformation online.

The panels would make for excellent teaching resources for Media Ethics Division members. They’re available online, and we would love to hear from you if you make use of them. Here in the Center, we’re spending the



Panelists ask “Is there a future for deliberation?” at the 2018 Center for Journalism Ethics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. From le: Jane Elizabeth, American Press Institute; Michelle Holmes, Alabama Media Group; Marty Kaiser, Democracy Fund; and Carline Watson, NPR.

summer in an effort to update past conference content – ranging from ethical sports journalism to covering issues involving race and ethnicity – so students and educators can access them. If you have questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at [kbculver@wisc.edu](mailto:kbculver@wisc.edu).



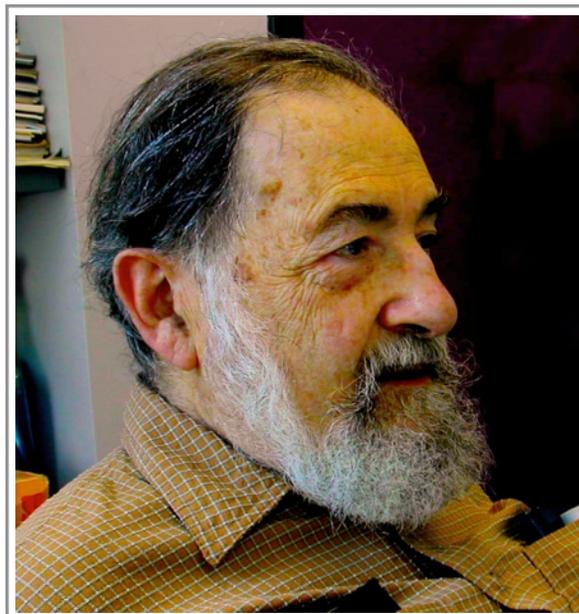
## IN MEMORIAM: JOHN MICHAEL KITROSS

BY TOM COOPER (AND FOR THE STAFF OF MEDIA ETHICS MAGAZINE)

Although MEDIA ETHICS magazine feels drawn to honor the passing of any great contributor to our field, we feel especially compelled to honor John Michael Kittross, since he edited this magazine so well for almost thirty years. Indeed “Mike” was one of the catalysts who inspired the birth of what was in 1987 a fledgling newsletter called MEDIA ETHICS UPDATE before becoming part of the magazine’s advisory board later in 1987 and then its second editor in 1989.

Mike had already been a highly successful editor of THE JOURNAL OF BROADCASTING from 1960-71 and several books and articles when he began editing MEDIA ETHICS. So we were most fortunate that he brought his eagle eye and love for ethics to our publication. Mike was a professor and Provost of Emerson College at that time and was a primary supporter of the first Media Ethics Summit conference which was co-sponsored by Emerson College and the Times Mirror Newspaper Organization in 1987. It was at that Summit that the idea for Media Ethics Update, a newsletter connecting all of those in that field, was hatched by a team of scholars including Dr. Kittross,

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 13)



Mike Kitross

Don Gillmor, Clifford Christians, Ted Glasser, David Gordon, and Tom Cooper, who because the first editor and later the co-publisher when Mike took over as editor. In an end-note on his C.V., Professor Kittross self-described in this way:

I am a bibliophile, gadfly, iconoclast and curmudgeon. I also am a news junkie and care about my community. I am unafraid of numbers and technologies. I am constantly curious, maintain rigorous academic and editorial standards, and believe that what I do is important. I'm a better editor than writer. During my career in the academy, my goals included helping my colleagues and students achieve their full potential.

Although on many occasions his self-created “gadfly, iconoclast, and curmudgeon” appellation led Mike to intense debate, he also had a soft side known to his close friends and was fond of reminiscing and playing the role of grand raconteur.

As a professor at Temple, Emerson, and elsewhere Mike was known for high standards and rigor and gained the reputation as an exceptional editor. Indeed I recollect President Jackie Liebergott at Emerson College presenting him with multiple documents over the years and saying to him : “Here’s a red pen. You know what to do with it.” Many presidents, professors, and other professionals completely trusted Mike with the “red pen” and almost all of us who received his criticisms conceded that he always greatly improved our articles and chapters.

Kittross had quite a colorful career including teaching at the U.S.Army’s school of psychological warfare, grow-

ing up within the New York public school system, and watching his father and colleagues print on mechanical printing presses. He loved every aspect of communication and it is no wonder that many professors adopted his history of broadcasting text co-authored with Christopher Sterling entitled STAY TUNED.

His scholarship was all but universally considered first class and his resume lists many books, articles, consultancies, conference papers, professional memberships, editorial boards, and honors including one from the Broadcast Educators Associations and another from one of his alma maters, Boston University. In addition to receiving his Masters at B.U. and his Bachelors degree at Antioch, Mike was also very proud of his Ph. D. from the University of Illinois, Urbana.

Those of us who worked closely with Dr. Kittross owe him a great debt for all that he taught us about editing and standards. He also gave us many memories of what it means to fight hard for the values and ideas you feel are significant and for ethical principles of great worth.

Mike will be greatly missed and his colorful, gruff, inquisitive spirit will never be duplicated. On behalf of the permanent staff of MEDIA ETHICS and of the many editorial and productions assistants, contributors, board members, and sponsors, we offer our sympathy to the Kittross family and give posthumous thanks to Mike for giving the best years of his life to making MEDIA ETHICS a quality publication.

We salute his leadership in contributing and refining substantial scholarship which was and is so important to our field.



## NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### POYNTER-KSU MEDIA ETHICS WORKSHOP

BY JAN LEACH, TEACHING CHAIR



Every day, more than 115 people in the United States die after overdosing on opioids, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse at the National Institutes of Health. The death count includes those who abuse or are addicted to prescription painkillers, heroin and synthetic opioids such as fentanyl. Such a serious social crisis generates serious journalism.

In Ohio, there were 5,232 overdose deaths in the 12 months ending June 31, 2017, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Clearly, the opioid epidemic is not going away any time soon. But many media professionals, including student journalists and others, are unprepared to report responsibly on the causes and consequences of opioid abuse, addiction, treatment and death.

The 14th annual Poynter KSU Media Ethics Workshop will address ethics issues involved in covering opioids at a day-long program on Thursday, Sept. 20 at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Kent State University. The Workshop – titled “Opioids: Ethics Emergency?” – will feature a keynote address by the three lead journalists from

The Cincinnati Enquirer's 2018 Pulitzer Prize-winning project Seven Days of Heroin. Kelly McBride, the Poynter Institute's vice president, and Al Tompkins, Poynter's senior faculty member for broadcasting and online, will moderate and facilitate major parts of the program. MED chair Chad Painter also will participate.



The Media Ethics Workshop will address other topics such as victim shaming, medical and non-medical responses, public relations tactics and more. New this year will be a best practices session focusing on how journalists and other media might approach addicts, experts, survivors, and how to determine what is new and newsworthy in an ongoing social crisis that now ensnares all demographics and law enforcement, legal, medical and social responses.

You and your students are invited to attend the Workshop, which is extremely affordable: just \$20 for educators and free for students. If travel is not convenient, you can watch a live stream of the entire event or any of the sessions on the event website (which will launch in mid-July.)

For information or questions, contact MED teaching chair Jan Leach, associate professor at KSU and Workshop organizer, at 330-672-4289 or [jleach1@kent.edu](mailto:jleach1@kent.edu).

## THE MED TEACHING WEBSITE - [WWW.TEACHINGETHICSRESOURCES.ORG](http://WWW.TEACHINGETHICSRESOURCES.ORG) - NEEDS AN UPDATE AND YOU CAN HELP.

BY JAN LEACH

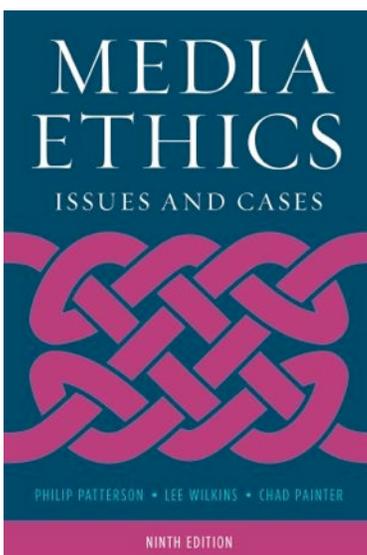
I created the site in 2011 and updated it annually for a few years. Now, though, most of the original content remains and we need fresh, new material to make the site useful to our members and others who teach media ethics, journalism ethic, visual ethics and combined law and ethics courses.

So, here's a pitch for all of you to send me ONE teaching idea to add to the MED site. This can be an activity, a project, a syllabus, a grading rubric, anything that your colleagues might incorporate into their classes and lesson plans.

I've got the submissions from our two Teaching Excellence Award winners: Erin Schauster (2017) and Nicole Kraft (2018) that will be added soon. And I'll link to some of the teaching articles in our newsletter. I also plan to add tips and tools to the site after this year's teaching panels from the AEJMC conference in August.

But to make the site vibrant, practical and a go-to destination for us and for educators who are surprised with an assignment to teach ethics, we need more. So, think about what works in your classes and send ONE new idea to me via email (address below) by July 23. I'll upload everything and send updates to the Google group.

Questions? Contact MED teaching chair Jan Leach at 330-672-4289 or [jleach1@kent.edu](mailto:jleach1@kent.edu).



*Media Ethics: Issues and Cases, 9e* will be released by Rowman and Littlefield this summer. Several members of the media ethics division of AEJMC have contributed cases to both this edition and the previous editions of the work since 1991.

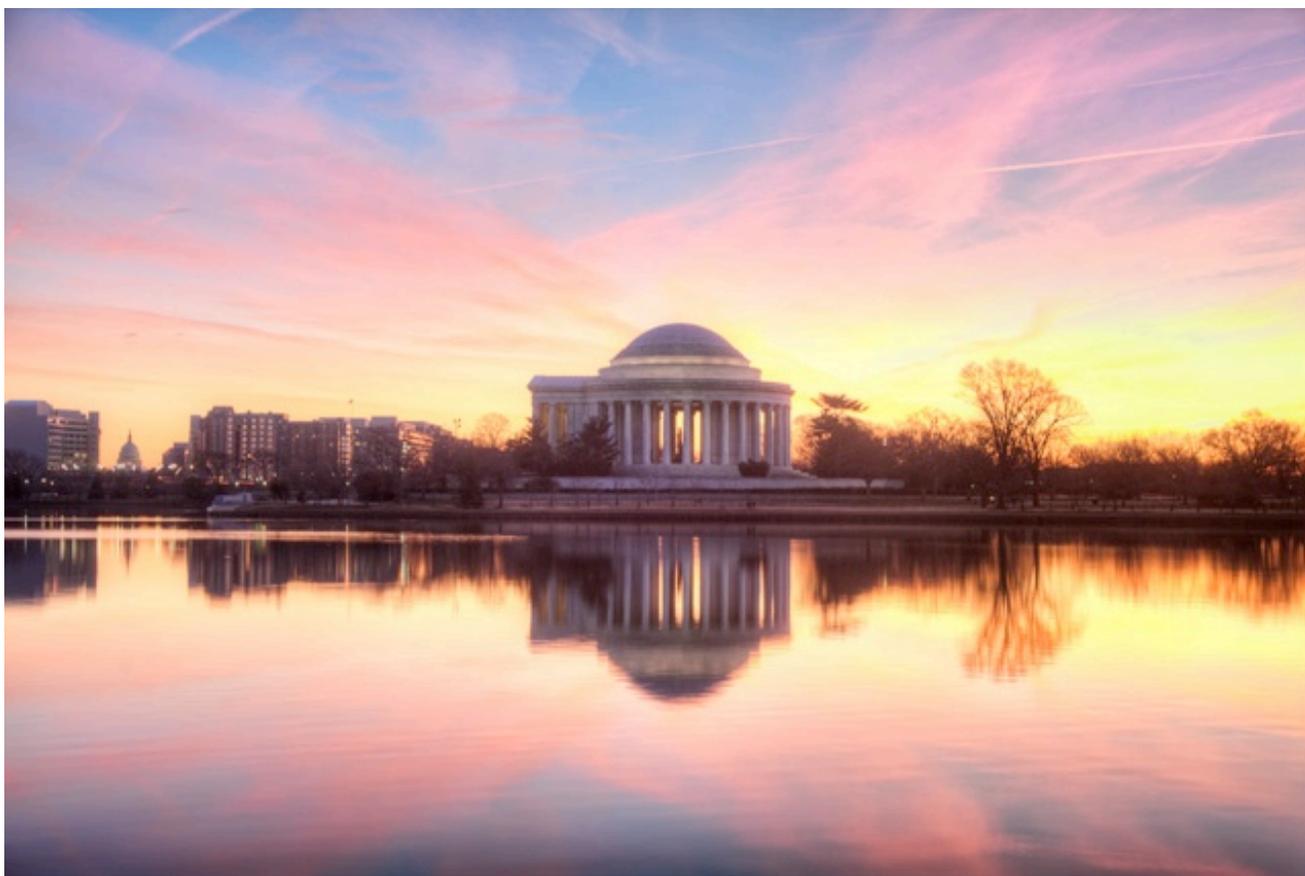
Following the tradition of earlier media ethics texts, the book utilizes case studies—many of these guest-written by authors who lived in close proximity to the events of the case. Most cases are from actual events and the few hypothetical cases are based on real events. New cases examine such diverse topics as Sinclair Broadcasting and “must-runs,” “doxxing,” “digital necromancy,” “weedvertising,” robo-reporting, issues surrounding first-person shooter games and social media such as Twitter, a look at mediums such as the *Daily Show* and the *Onion* as well as cases looking at films as diverse as *Spotlight* and *Get Out!* More than half of the cases in the 9th edition are new.

Each case includes ever-expanding pedagogical questions. Questions at the lowest level deal with the actual details of the case. At the widest level, the questions ask the student to debate some of the largest issues in society such as justice, race, fairness, truth-telling, media's role a democracy and many others. The questions were not an-

swered in the textbook: it is left to the student and the professor to arrive at an answer that can be justified given the ethical underpinnings of the text.

The book begins with a chapter on moral philosophy theory and concludes with a chapter on moral development theory. The chapters are topical and cross all mediums including such chapter titles as “Loyalty,” “Media Economics,” and “Privacy.” A timely new chapter in the ninth edition is entitled “Social Justice.” *Media Ethics: Issues and Cases, 9e* is a true media ethics textbook and not simply a journalism ethics book. Changes to the ninth edition include a new publisher and a new co-author. Current adopters will find that the premise of the text and a significant minority of the cases remain unchanged.

Each of the authors bears a significant debt of gratitude to colleagues and mentors—many of them current or former members of the AEJMC Media Ethics Division. This text has been a real community effort. The authors of the book are Philip Patterson of Oklahoma Christian University, Lee Wilkins of the University of Missouri, and Chad Painter of the University of Dayton.



*The Jefferson Memorial in West Potomac Park, on the shore of the Tidal Basin of the Potomac River.*

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