

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

BY TOM BIVINS, NEWSLETTER EDITOR



Welcome to a new academic year! Of course, mine just started a little over a week ago at Oregon. But, then, it doesn't

end until the middle of June. It's a wash. Summer here is still in full bloom. June is just another rainy month.

Now to the serious stuff.

As I have looked around at other AEJMC division newsletters, I have noticed several differences: longer articles, more in-depth articles, and more articles on current topics with serious analysis. Our newsletter has often tended toward the "announcements" approach. Given the weight of our division's subject, I think we should be doing more.

With that in mind, we're instituting some changes to the MED news-

letter this year, designed to encourage more involvement and stimulate interest in our content.

First of all, we are inviting contributions of anyone in the division. In the past, we have restricted articles mostly to MED officers and the occasional outside announcement. But now, I'd like to invite the entire membership to submit articles for the newsletter. As long as the subject is media ethics, it's relevant. Newsletter articles are short by nature, so it shouldn't take all that much time to pick an idea and put it down in writing.

Another major suggestion came from our Vice Head and Programming Chair, Chad Painter. Actually, he telepathically stole the idea from a nearly simultaneous conversation JME editor Patrick Plaisance and I were having at AEJMC. No matter who gets credit, it's a great idea. Here's how Chad puts it:

"Our division includes more than 300 scholars researching and teaching in the field of media ethics. The division is committed to favorably im-

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# newsletter

Division Chair: **Ryan Thomas**

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MED newsletter is published quarterly by the Media Ethics Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication

pacting the media professions by promoting academic-professional partnerships, ethical analysis, and ethics education.

MED has a close relationship with the *Journal of Media Ethics* (JME). We would like to spotlight the articles published in JME in our division's quarterly newsletter, and in doing so increase exposure to ethics scholarship in our division, whether for research, teaching, or professional use.

To that end, we want to invite recently-published authors to write short summary/commentary pieces about their research, for publication in our newsletter. The pieces should be more 'journalistic' in style – think of it as an extended, informal, somewhat chattier version of your abstract! The goal would be to describe your findings, how your study adds to existing knowledge in the

field, the potential for practical implications, what important ethics issues are raised, etc.

Your participation is voluntary, and you do not need to be an MED or AEJMC member."

In addition to columns, articles, and announcements, we would like to showcase your photographs. Think about all the opportunities you have to take them of your colleagues (and yourself) at conferences and social events. If you have photos you'd like to share, please send them along.

As you can see, we have some great plans for this year's newsletter. I hope you all will contribute to our collective endeavor. Thanks,



## THE YEAR AHEAD

BY RYAN THOMAS, DIVISION CHAIR

Dear MED colleagues,



As I begin my tenure as Division Head, I am incredibly optimistic about the future of the division. Why? First, because we have such terrific members (our showing at the 2016 AEJMC conference was proof of this!). Second, because the importance of media ethics scholarship and teaching is so important in our changing society and media system.

In this column I want to look to the year ahead and outline some of the things I would like to accomplish. I hope that in a year's time, I am able to look back and say that we made progress towards these goals. I say "we" because these are collective goals that I hope to accomplish with you.

### Goal #1: Boost research submissions

Alarmingly, we received 18 submissions to our 2016 research competition (faculty + grad student papers). This is our lowest submission total since at least 2004, and well below our 2004-2016 average (39). We promoted the paper call in the usual manner this year as prior years, so there was no difference in what we did as a division leadership. This leads me to believe that the problem lies elsewhere.

The leadership team wanted to move quickly to arrest a potential decline. Our research chair, Erin Schuster, has begun revising the paper call to emphasize its inclusivity and challenge the perception some may have that we are a "journalism ethics" division only. We will do a

special call that will be framed specifically to capture submitters who do ethics research but don't normally consider us as their "destination" division. Erin has also been writing personalized emails to (a) every author who presented ethics research to other divisions in Minneapolis; (b) every author who has presented their research to MED in the last five years; and (c) every author who has had their research published in the *Journal of Media Ethics* in the last five years to encourage them to submit their research to us for 2017. We've also updated our directory of graduate programs and Erin will be contacting graduate directors soon to ask them to encourage their graduate students to send their research to MED. Erin has been doing outstanding work!

Our programming chair, Chad Painter, is also developing a panel idea that could be an annual event for us: A research panel on "Doing Ethics in X," followed by a special call the next year. For example, the 2017 conference could feature a panel on "Doing Ethics in Advertising," and then do a special call for 2018 on "Ethics in Advertising." Then in 2018, the panel could be "Doing Ethics in Visual Communication" followed by that special call in 2019. We also could promote the 2018 special call at the 2017 conference, and so on. This would also cement a relationship between our programming and research efforts. We are lucky to have such hardworking officers as Chad and Erin!

### Goal #2: Expand the division

This year, we are championing a "plus one" campaign where every member is encouraged to get one other person (a colleague, or better still, a graduate student) to:

- Join the division.
- Join the division's listserv and Facebook page.
- Submit a paper to the division's research competition.

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- Attend the division's business meeting at the 2017 conference.

If every member does this, we can grow our membership (which, frankly, boosts our coffers), boost our research numbers, and bring people into active membership and the life of the division. We need to be bringing graduate students and junior scholars into the division as a matter of urgency – they are the future of this division and of our field of study more generally.

Here is where I must be frank: Growing the division is your responsibility. The leadership team cannot magically bring additional members into existence. If you have a colleague who does ethics-related research but has never submitted his or her work to us, encourage them to send their paper our way! If you teach a graduate ethics class, have your students submit their papers to us! If you know somebody who usually sends their work to ICA or NCA but likes the sound of Chicago in August, encourage them to send their research our way! And if these people do submit their work to us, it is incumbent on all of us to ensure they feel welcomed in MED so that they regard it as a “home” division for them and will continue to be involved in the division.

### **Goal #3: Emphasize inclusivity**

Following on from the above, I really want to try for us to bring new faces and new voices into the life of our division. With thanks to editor Tom Bivins, we're going to do some different things with the newsletter this year. For one, we're going to feature more material from the wider membership so it is more than just a bulletin board of announcements and deadlines. We will also be strengthening the link between the division and the Journal of Media Ethics by encouraging authors recently published in JME to write short, column-style pieces about their research for us.

Secondly, as part of our overall effort to widen the range of voices in our division, we will not consider any panel proposals where all the panelists are male (i.e., such proposals will not proceed to the chip auction). In addition, we're encouraging all panel submitters to consider the diversity of their pro-

posed panel (e.g., race, nationality, age, etc.) to achieve the broadest spectrum of diversity possible. We will also be deliberate in putting together panels that feature newer faces so we don't always fall back on the same set of panelists.

We're going to make a point of recognizing our new submitters and panelists at the 2017 conference to help everybody feel welcomed in our division.

### **What you can do**

I want the MED to be a hub for sophisticated scholarship, innovative teaching ideas, and discussion of the issues that are pertinent to professional practice. None of this is possible without an active, engaged membership. I would like for you to be relentless evangelists for the division this year. I'll be reminding you throughout the year of our “plus one” campaign, and I hope you will take seriously your charge to expand our great division. You can serve our division in other ways, too: By submitting your own research and panel proposals to us, or by serving, when called upon, as a reviewer, moderator, or discussant.

### **Thank you!**

Finally, there are a few people I'd like to thank. First and foremost, I must thank my immediate predecessor as Division Head, Jan Leach, for all the work she has done for the division. Jan was enormously helpful to me when I was Programming Chair and continues to be an excellent resource for any questions I have! Thank you also to Jenn Burleson Mackay, another predecessor as Division Head, for all her assistance and advice over the past year as well. Finally, thanks to the people heading up the division leadership team this year – Chad Painter, Erin Schauster, Nicole Kraft, Lok Pokhrel, John Williams, Tom Bivins, Jan Leach, and Tara Walker – I am grateful for your service and I am looking forward to working with all of you!

Cheers,  
Ryan

## **SNAPSHOTS**

Associate Professor Jenn MacKay delivers an analysis of the ethics of editorial cartooning at AEJMC. On the panel were satirist and educator Chris Lamb, long-time editorial cartoonist Ed Fischer, and Tom Bivins, educator and cartoonist. The panel investigated questions of free speech versus self censorship, both historically and current. Given the recent violent reactions to such graphic satire as the “Danish” Muhammed cartoons and the killings at the French satire magazine Charlie Hebdo, the conversation that ensued was vigorous, to say the least.



# CREATING DIVERSITY MEANS INCREASING MEMBERSHIP

CHAD PAINTER, VICE CHAIR AND PROGRAMMING CHAIR



Diversity is an ethical issue, so the Media Ethics Division should take an active leadership role in encouraging and fostering diversity in AEJMC. One major goal of MED in 2016-2017 is to increase the diversity of the panelists in our programming.

To that end, panel proposers had to click a box stating that they read and complied with the "Fulfillment of MED Diversity Goals" in order to submit a panel idea via the Google Doc. Any panel proposal in which all of the panelists were male would be ruled ineligible and would not proceed to consideration for the conference. In addition, panel submitters were highly encouraged to consider the ethnic, national, and age diversity of their proposed panelists.

Gender, race and ethnicity, nation of origin, and age are a necessary and great start. The goal of diversity, ultimately, is to increase the breadth and depth of ideas presented and debated within the media ethics community.

To increase diversity of ideas, MED needs to increase the number of active participants within the division.

The first step was sending an invite to MED members who had not joined the Google Group or Facebook Media Ethics Educators Group. The good news is that the nudge increased membership in both groups. The bad news is that a lot of MED members still are not active in either group.

The second step, and I will be working with panel organizers to make this idea happen, is to go beyond the "usual suspects" when reaching out to potential panelists. I was very happy to see new or newly active members propose panel ideas, and I would like to see new or newly active members participate as panelists during the 2017 conference.

The third step is a initiative where every MED member should encourage one person, especially graduate students, to submit a paper to the MED research call, join the division, and attend the division business meeting during the 2017 conference.

We also are hoping finally to shed any lingering idea that we are the "journalism" ethics division by encouraging more panels and papers from the full spectrum of media ethics. One programming idea, which is still in the planning stage, is to program a "Doing Ethics Research in X" each year, followed by a special research call the following year. So, for example, in 2017, MED could co-sponsor a "Doing Ethics Research in Public Relations" followed by a special call for the 2018 conference.

Finally, and arguably most importantly, we value your ideas about increasing diversity within the division. What steps would you like to see MED take to increase the diversity of our membership, panelists, and topics?

## THE ETHICS OF REPORTING AND USING POLLING DATA

JOHN WILLIAMS, TEACHING CHAIR



Now is an excellent time to consider the ethics of reporting and using polling data.

The headlines blare, "Trump, Clinton in statistical dead heat."

Yeah? So what? I remember when the president was elected even though he lost the popular vote by half million votes. Al Gore defeated George W. Bush in 2000 by over 540,000 votes.<sup>1</sup>

Twelve years later, Mitt Romney was stunned, along with family and staff, at his defeat to Barack Obama in 2012. John Dickerson, writing for Slate, stated:

"Mitt Romney says he is a numbers guy, but in the end he got the numbers wrong. His campaign was adamant that public polls in the swing states were mistaken. They claimed the pollsters were over-estimating the number of Democrats who would turn out on Election

Day. Romney's campaign was certain that minorities would not show up for Obama in 2012 the way they did in 2008. "It just defied logic," said a top aide of the idea that Obama could match, let alone exceed, his performance with minorities from the last election. When anyone raised the idea that public polls were showing a close race, the campaign's pollster said the poll modeling was flawed and everyone moved on."<sup>2</sup>

Four years later, Donald Trump should not be a surprise to us. Through the summer of 2015 he was leading in public opinion polls. Yet, we could not suspend our disbelief.

This is a great time for media ethics classes to address the issues of surveying, polling and the reporting of public opinion. It is timely and relevant. It is applicable to journalism students, research methods classes, and topics in public relations and marketing. Here are a few tools and resources to help.

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The American Association of Public Opinion Research, the National Council on Public Polls, and the Research Industry Coalition have published their list of five “condemned survey practices.”<sup>3</sup> These are relevant for future public relations practitioners, market researchers, journalists and editors:<sup>3</sup>

1. Requiring a monetary payment or soliciting monetary contributions from members of the public as part of a research process.
2. Offering products or services for sale, or using participant contacts as a means of generating sales leads.
3. Revealing the identity of individual respondents to a survey or participants in a research process without their permission.
4. Representing the results of a self-selected "poll" as if they were the outcome of legitimate research.
5. Conducting a so-called "push poll," a telemarketing technique in which telephone calls are used to canvass potential voters, feeding them false or misleading "information" about a candidate under the pretense of taking a poll to see how this "information" affects voter preferences.

AAPOR also provides a checklist of minimum disclosure requirements for any report that is for public release. Again, these are relevant for public relations practitioners and market researchers, and can provide a guide to journalists and editors:<sup>4</sup>

- Name of the survey sponsor
- Name of the organization that conducted the survey
- The exact wording of the questions being released
- A definition of the population under study. What population is the survey designed to represent?
- A description of the sampling frame used to represent this population
- An explanation of how the respondents to the survey were selected
- The total sample size
- The method or mode of data collection
- The dates and location of data collection
- Estimates of sampling error, if appropriate
- A description of how the data were weighted (or a statement that they were not weighted), and any estimating procedures used to produce the final results
- If the survey reports findings based on parts of the sample rather than the total sample, then the size of the subgroups reported should be disclosed

The National Council on Public Polls provides a similar checklist, specifically for its “level I disclosures” of public reports of survey findings:<sup>5</sup>

- Sponsorship of the survey
- Fieldwork provider (if applicable)
- Dates of interviewing
- Sampling method employed (for example, random-digit dialed telephone sample, list-based telephone sample, area probability sample, probability mail sample, other probability sample, opt-in internet panel, non-probability convenience sample, use of any oversampling)
- Population that was sampled (for example, general population; registered voters; likely voters; or any specific population group defined by gender, race, age, occupation or any other characteristic)
- Size of the sample that serves as the primary basis of the survey report
- Size and description of the subsample, if the survey report relies primarily on less than the total sample
- Margin of sampling error (if a probability sample)
- Survey mode (for example, telephone/interviewer, telephone/automated, mail, internet, fax, e-mail)
- Complete wording and ordering of questions mentioned in or upon which the release is based
- Percentage results of all questions reported

On its website, the NCPP publishes an article by Sheldon R. Gawiser and Evans Witt on “20 Questions A Journalist Should Ask About Poll Results.” The full list of questions is useful for exposing future journalists and editors to the complexity of the polling process. Among the twenty questions are:<sup>3</sup>

<http://www.ncpp.org/node/4/>

- Who did the poll?
- Who paid for the poll and why was it done?
- How many people were interviewed for the survey?
- How were those people chosen?
- What area (nation, state, or region) or what group (teachers, lawyers, Democratic voters, etc.) were these people chosen from?
- Are the results based on the answers of all the people interviewed?

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- Who should have been interviewed and was not? Or do response rates matter?
- When was the poll done?
- How were the interviews conducted?
- What about polls on the Internet or World Wide Web?
- What is the sampling error for the poll results?
- What questions were asked?
- In what order were the questions asked?

Herb Asher, author of “Polling and the Public: What Every Citizen Should Know” (9th ed., Sage/CQ Press, 2017) declares that the Gawiser and Witt paper “be required reading for journalists.” (p. 187) The article can be found in a useful PDF entitled, “Covering Polls: A Handbook for Journalists,” prepared by the Media Studies Center.<sup>6</sup> ESOMAR/WAPOR publish a “Guideline on Opinion Polls and Published Surveys” (August 2014). ESOMAR is the World Association for Social, Opinion and Market Research, which publishes guidelines at [www.esomar.org](http://www.esomar.org). WAPOR is the World Association for Public Opinion Research. The guide can be found at [www.wapor.org](http://www.wapor.org). Of course, there is always, Wilhoit and Weaver’s classic “Newsroom Guide to Polls and Surveys” (C. Cleveland Wilhoit and David H. Weaver, 1990).

Here is an activity for media ethics students, useful for introducing students across the disciplines to polling and survey ethics, and for future journalists and editors.

- Have your students collect examples of media reporting of public opinion polls. News aggregation sites such as Politico and ReaClearPolitics are obvious starting points;
- Have the students read the Gawiser and Witt “20 questions” article and the “ESOMAR/WAPOR Guideline on Opinion Polls and Published Surveys.” A PDF of the Gawiser and Witt questions can be found at <http://professional.jodyb.net/pollq.pdf> (seven pages of text. The ESOMAR/WAPOR guidelines can be found at

<https://www.esomar.org/knowledge-and-standards/codes-and-guidelines/guideline-on-opinion-polls-and-published-surveys.php> (13 pages of text, in several languages).

- In class, perhaps in small groups, have students critique the media reporting of public opinion polls based on the recommendations of Gawiser & Witt, and ESOMAR/WAPOR. This could also be done as an outside of class activity, in preparation for the next step;
- Have the students, in teams, either in class or out-of-class, develop guidelines for minimum requirements for reporting on public opinion polls. You can either collect and evaluate the team proposals, or have the teams present their guidelines in class;
- As a final activity, the class could negotiate a “class-wide” set of guidelines for the ethical reporting of public opinion poll results.

If you decide to grapple with the ethics of polling and reporting of public opinion after November 8, you might have the students compare national polling (use the news aggregation sites) and the actual election outcomes. How good were the polls in tracking the actual decision of the American voter?

## NOTES

1. National Archives report on State Certifications of Ascertainment, [http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/2000/popular\\_vote.html](http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/2000/popular_vote.html)
2. John Dickerson, Why Romney Never Saw It Coming, [http://www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/politics/2012/11/why\\_romney\\_was\\_surprised\\_to\\_lose\\_his\\_campaign\\_had\\_the\\_wrong\\_numbers\\_bad.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2012/11/why_romney_was_surprised_to_lose_his_campaign_had_the_wrong_numbers_bad.html)
3. <https://www.aapor.org/Standards-Ethics/Survey-Practices-that-AAPO-R-Condemns.aspx>.
4. <https://www.aapor.org/Standards-Ethics/AAPOR-Code-of-Ethics/Survey-Disclosure-Checklist.aspx>.
5. <http://www.ncpp.org/?q=node/19>
6. <https://africacheck.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Covering-Polls-A-handbook-for-journalists.pdf>, among other sites.

## SNAPSHOTS

The second day of the conference started out rainy, especially troublesome for those not staying at the conference hotel. But, there were compensations.



# RESPECTING STUDENT PRESS FREEDOM

BY NICOLE KRAFT, PF&R CO-CHAIR



On any given day at our university, I cross the grassy, path-filled oval that is the heart of campus, and see the First Amendment in action.

The sidewalk is chalked with comments supporting or refuting issues and candidates. Preacher call out like carnival barkers, urging students to repent a variety of sins. We have proselytizing and random acts of food distribution. We have marches for the Black Lives Matter movement. We even have a resident bagpiper.

That First Amendment heart beats loud and strong, and feels like it will provide lifeblood forever.

Where that lifeblood gets thinner, however, is in our classrooms and even our student media.

In a recent sports media class, I asked my students why no one had reported the story of an athlete hurt in the course of competition.

The injury was horrific. The women's soccer goalie went out for save and collided with an opposing player. The result of that fairly routine play: the goalie suffered a lacerated kidney, broken rib and punctured lung.

She was carried off the field on a stretcher.

She spent two days in intensive care.

She remained in a hospital 700 miles from home, five days after the game.

But there was no article.

I knew of her injuries, because the player discussed them prolifically on her own social media accounts. She was inundated with much-deserved get well wishes from across the soccer community, including tweets from a member of the women's national team.

When I asked students why nothing had been written, they said the university asked them not to report it. The students were concerned publishing the story might compromise the relationship they have with our athletics department. They might not be happy.

Say what?

In one interview, a coach told a journalism student to state simply the player had a collision that impacted her kidney.

The message was soon curtailed even more.

"I wouldn't even say laceration," the coach instructed. "I'd say she took a hit to her midsection, and she is expected to make a full recovery."

Say what?

Keep in mind, this athlete has already revealed her own private medical facts. There is no HIPPA violation, no revelation of private facts, not even an ethical debate when it's the patient who reveals the information. The

injury was severe enough that her collegiate career was, unfortunately and tragically, over. It was her story share, and share it she did.

But the free flow of information stopped at our student newspaper's presses.

It was a conflict of interest they posited, since she was a journalism student herself.

It's news, I told them.

The university officials might get upset, they said.

It's news, I told them.

We don't want to invade her privacy, they said.

She broadcast this on all her social media channels in detail, I told them.

And it's news

In media law we discuss community censorship, where we don't need the government to curtail speech—the community does it by ostracizing the speaker. Think the Dixie Chicks and their comment about George W. Bush. How long before they toured again without conflict?

But this is even more chilling, for there is neither promise nor threat of censorship or retaliation. We are, for all intents and purposes, an extremely open campus where free speech is encouraged and cultivated.

But like a lot of student media, our message is moderated by the aura of those we cover, and the fear we may make people upset. They may not like us. We may be seen as confronting or challenging.

We are none of the above. We are simply reporting news.

Students often feel they walk a sensitive line. They are, in reality, part of the entity they cover. They want to be liked and respected in their community. When the community feels some coverage, no matter how newsworthy or objective, comes across as criticism, those same students can feel disloyal.

In reality, not covering a story, no matter how sensitive, is sacrificing all that we stand for as journalists—truth, justice and the transmission of information the people need to know.

Nine days after the injury, two days after the player returned home, our student media ran a story that outlined all of the details of her injury. It was uplifting and inspiring, and likely made those who knew her—and those who didn't—feel immense respect and appreciation for her sacrifice.

May student press freedom be equally respected.

# MEDIA ETHICS AND THE NEOLIBERAL TURN IN HIGHER EDUCATION

BY TARA WALKER, GRAD STUDENT LIAISON



I was at the opening reception for AEJMC this past August, and I started talking casually to a couple of brand new assistant professors. They told me about their areas of research and then asked about mine.

"I'm interested in media ethics," I said. The two of them exchanged smiles and chuckles.

"You'll get a job, for sure," one of them said. "That's a class that everybody has to take and nobody wants to teach."

"Yeah," said the other one, "That's smart."

I realize that these two professors aren't a representative sample of the AEJMC population, but for a first year Ph.D. student, this reaction was a little bit disconcerting. While it's encouraging to think that I'll be able to get a job when I'm done with school, I was confused that these assistant profs saw my interest in media ethics merely as a shrewd career move.

It's been discussed to death, but it's worth repeating here that we're living and working in a time when the university is up against a strong tide of neoliberalism. And according to this ideology, the university, traditionally thought of as a public good, has become merely an economic good. Consequently, students are more and more concerned with the economic payoff of their degrees. Rightfully so, to some extent. When I was in college, it always irritated me that people assumed my English major was synonymous with a vow of poverty. While I still don't appreciate their cynicism, it's true that I could have spent a little bit more time thinking about how I was going to make a living once I had my degree. Part of my attitude was a product of the times – this was pre-recession, and while the job market wasn't fantastic, it wasn't that bad. Although I was certainly an idealist, thinking that my love of literature would somehow see me through, it seems to me that now we've swung way too far in the opposite direction. Students are afraid to do what really interests them because of a looming, foreboding question: how will I pay off my loans?

I had a student in my office a couple of years ago when I was an adjunct, (a whole other can-of-

worms as far as neoliberalism goes,) who said that she hated her business major and really wanted to study psychology, but couldn't switch because she knew it wasn't practical. Maybe this student eventually changed her mind, or found a way to combine her interest in psychology with her business major. Or maybe, by the time she talked to me, she was truly convinced that if there is no clear economic payoff for something, it's not worth doing.

As a new grad student, I'm already daunted by the idea of the academic job search – the interviews, the job talks, the pensive hours checking the wiki. I know all the horror stories about newly minted PhDs who can't find jobs, and end back where they started, in the adjunct pit. I'm no longer that bright-eyed and bushy-tailed college student who believed that following her bliss was enough. But I do know that there is a lot more to higher education than a job at the end of the yellow brick road.

It's somewhat ironic that these two profs saw media ethics as a practical career move, when, for most of my life I've been criticized for being too much of an idealist. I realize that they weren't trying to make any grand statement about the economy, or the state of our field or neoliberalism in general. They were merely suggesting that I might have an easier time getting a job than some other candidates. But why did they believe this? I'm too new in this division to know enough about the job market to make an accurate guess, but there is an interesting connection to the fact that ethically minded, socially conscious messages are becoming popular in mass media. We could say that, for example, advertisers are becoming more aware of ethics in their messages, but they also know that people respond favorably to these socially conscious messages. Dove, for example, has benefitted tre-

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mendously from their “Campaign for Real Beauty.” Their sales have increased from \$2.5 billion in 2004, when the campaign started, to \$4 billion in 2014.

The co-opting of progressive, feminist messages by companies like Dove (“real beauty”), Pantene (“not sorry”), or Always (“like a girl”) is one of my areas of interest. It’s hard to tell whether the folks designing these ads actually care about redefining beauty or furthering feminist causes. A lot of consumers feel torn watching these ads because on the one hand, we like seeing advertising that challenges stereotypes but on the other hand, we’re wary of being taken advantage of by companies who are just telling us what we want to hear. As media ethicists, it’s our job to ask questions about these kinds of phenomena. It’s our job, not to just accept and encourage these types of messages in advertising, but to ask the harder questions about motive and intent. To look beyond the immediate economic effects of a mass-media message to the unintended consequences for our society. Mass media needs a conscience, and scholars in the Media Eth-

ics division at AEJMC provide that conscience through teaching and research. We can also bring a conscience to classrooms full of anxious students who live in fear that they’ll be unable to make their degrees pay off.

Now, more than ever, we need media ethics in the university. But our job as scholars is not necessarily to condemn everything as being unethical or to assume that every mass-media institution is evil, but to challenge people to see things in a new way. In the journalism, advertising, PR or media studies classroom, we can say, “wait a minute here...” We can encourage our students to pause before acting, to realize that just because we can do it, doesn’t mean that we should do it. The same goes for the university: just because something is lucrative doesn’t mean it should be done. We need to be critical of the neoliberalization of the university in the same way that we are critical of mass media. As media ethicists, we play a role in reminding students, colleagues and administrators that higher education has a purpose beyond stimulating the knowledge-based economy.

## RECENTLY IN JME

Beginning with this issue, we will be featuring short summary/commentary pieces about research published in the *Journal of Media Ethics* in order to increase exposure to ethics scholarship in our division, whether for research, teaching, or professional use. To that end we invite recently-published authors to write short summary/commentary pieces about their research, for publication in the newsletter. The pieces should be more “journalistic” in style – think of it as an extended, informal, somewhat chattier version of your abstract. The goal would be to describe your findings, how your study adds to existing knowledge in the field, the potential for practical implications, what important ethics issues are raised, etc. Your participation is voluntary, and you do not need to be an MED or AEJMC member. We hope we will have the opportunity to spotlight your research in a future issue.

This issue features Romayne Smith Fullerton’s and Maggie Jones Patterson’s “Telling Tales in the Shadow of Giants: Canada, Ireland, and the Ethics of Crime Coverage”

## “TELLING TALES IN THE SHADOW OF GIANTS: CANADA, IRELAND, AND THE ETHICS OF CRIME COVERAGE”

BY ROMAYNE SMITH FULLERTON AND MAGGIE JONES PATTERSON



Fullerton



Patterson

Consider this: it’s Queensday, 2009, in the Netherlands. Queen Beatrix and her family are processing through the small town of Appeldoorn in an open air bus, when a man

drives a car through the police barricade, killing seven people and injuring 10 more. Before he can reach his target, he crashes into a statue and sustains a critical head injury. He dies the next day, but not before confessing to police his intention to assassinate the royal family. Since Queensday is a national celebration, all Dutch media were present, and the episode was broadcast. The would-be

assassin’s guilt was not in question, but most media chose not to release his name. This is not a legal requirement, it’s an ethics policy, and it’s one that’s routinely followed. In the Netherlands, as in many Northern and Central European countries, naming persons accused of serious crimes is rare.

This was the story—and the media behavior—that initiated our current project, on which we’ve been working for the past six years.

We were intrigued: the practice seemed bizarre to two North American reporters-turned-academics. It’s diametrically opposed to how we in the United States and Canada would cover such a happening. Why, we wondered, would reporters voluntarily choose to protect a person accused of a serious crime? What purpose could

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 9)

this serve? And moreover, what did such an ethics practice suggest about cultural attitudes toward presumption of innocence, public right to know, and justice?

While we were initially surprised by the decisions reporters in the Netherlands made about not naming persons accused of serious crime, reporters there and elsewhere have been equally surprised by how North American journalists routinely do their jobs. One Dutch reporter, when told that we almost always publish or broadcast full names, ages, addresses and other identifying markers of accused persons, gasped and asked, "Why would you do such a thing?"

Although we are both long-time media scholars, we had no immediate response.

Our search for answers has, to date, led us to nine countries, chosen as representative of the media models outlined by Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini in their text, *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics: the Polarized Pluralist or Mediterranean (including Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece); the Northern/Central European Democratic Corporatist (including Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Finland, and Germany); and the Atlantic or Liberal model (including England, Ireland, Canada and the United States)*. In each country, we examine a selection of news coverage of high-profile crimes, perform close readings of ethics and legal codes, consider the influence of professional organizations, and interview journalists, editors, and academics—to date more than 150 people—about their differing crime coverage "rituals." We use this term because it suggests the unconscious, taken-

for-granted reporting habits and routines that seasoned reporters employ everywhere. But beneath these differing and often unexamined practices lie diverse attitudes about why journalists do what they do and how their reporting shapes citizens' reactions to criminals, crime and economic policies, the justice system, and democracy itself.

We have published a number of book chapters to date, and our most recent piece, "Telling Tales in the Shadow of Giants: Canada, Ireland, and the Ethics of Crime Coverage" is in the current issue of the *Journal of Media Ethics*. In this article, we work from our sample in Canada and Ireland as well as the two "giant" countries that cast a long shadow of influence over them—the United States and England respectively—to argue that the press council/ombudsperson self-governing structure recently implemented in Ireland and employed for decades in the Netherlands and Sweden, might help the Canadian press to push for greater independence from court controls. Canada's new national media council, just born this year, may help a fractious Canadian news media develop common ground, present a more unified front, and regain a deeper sense of its own stated mission.

In the "Shadow of Giants" article, we argue that the Irish are discovering how by foregrounding ethics, they can relax the battle against legal restraints and—to some measure—dig out from under the competitive pressures. Those pressures, heated up by the British tabloids that established a camp in Dublin, had tended to bury the Irish news media's identity, as well as their primary duty of public service.

## NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### NOTES FROM THE MEDIA ETHICS DIVISION MEETING AT AEJMC

BY JAN LEACH, TEACHING AWARD COMMITTEE CHAIR



#### #1 – MEMBERS' MEETING RECAP

MED members who met during the August convention offered myriad ideas for expanding membership, increasing research paper submissions and establishing a new teaching award. In addition, the division was proud to honor Professor Ted Glasser of Stanford University for Outstanding Service to the Division.

Glasser was selected by MED leaders as the winner this year of our award for outstanding service because of his long service to AEJMC and to the division. Stephanie Craft of the University of Illinois introduced Glaser with a moving, personal tribute. Surprising Glaser was a highlight of the meeting.

Other award winners were:

- Top Faculty Paper: Kati Berg and Sarah Feldner (Marquette), "Analyzing the Intersection of Transparency, Issues Management and Ethics: The Case of Big Soda."
- Top Student Paper: Christina DeWalt (Oklahoma), "Framing Ferguson: Duty-Based Ethical Discourse in the Editorial Pages of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch."
- Professional Relevance Award: Erin Schauster and Tara Walker (Colorado-Boulder) and Margaret Duffy (Missouri), "Moral Exemplars in Advertising: A Rhetorical Criticism of WPP Websites."



*Ted Glasser receiving his award for outstanding service from Stephanie Craft. Photo courtesy of Tara Walker*

Read on for a recap of the 2016 Media Ethics Division business meeting. MED members voted:

- Unanimously in favor of increasing AEJMC membership dues (NOT MED dues), per the AEJMC leadership proposal. This increases member dues by \$5 to \$120 for regular members. Student membership remains the same at \$50.
- To hold the 2020 annual convention in San Diego. Three cities offered by AEJMC leaders for consideration as possible sites for the 2020 convention were San Diego, San Francisco and Phoenix. In MED, there were 11 votes for San Diego, six votes for San Francisco and four votes for Phoenix. AEJMC officers had not made a final decision on the 2020 convention site as of late September. Next year's annual convention will be in Chicago.
- Unanimously voted to change the MED bylaws as recommended. See bylaws update elsewhere in this newsletter.
- Voted to organize and develop a Teaching Excellence Award. The new award will be given for the first time during the August 2017 convention. See information about the award application and requirements elsewhere in this newsletter.
- Voted to award \$100 for Top Faculty, Professional Relevance and Teaching awards starting with the 2017 convention. The top student paper already receives a small monetary award as part of the Carol Burnett prize. Previously, our winners received a plaque and our gratitude. Going forward, winners will receive a small monetary award.

- Voted to end our partnership with the Small Programs Interest Group (SPIG) for the annual Hot Topics session during conventions. We have alerted SPIG officers of this decision. Our own MED leaders are considering ways to sponsor a similar session.
- MED officers for 2016-17 were elected. They are:
  - **Division Head: Ryan Thomas**, University of Missouri ([thomasrj@missouri.edu](mailto:thomasrj@missouri.edu))
  - **Vice-Head/Programming Chair: Chad Painter**, Dayton ([cpainter1@udayton.edu](mailto:cpainter1@udayton.edu))
  - **Research Chair: Erin Schauster**, Colorado-Boulder ([erin.schauster@colorado.edu](mailto:erin.schauster@colorado.edu))
  - **PF&R Co-Chair: Nicole Kraft**, Ohio State ([kraft.42@osu.edu](mailto:kraft.42@osu.edu))
  - **PF&R Co-Chair: Lok Pokhrel**, Minnesota State-Moorhead ([lok.pokhrel@mnstate.edu](mailto:lok.pokhrel@mnstate.edu))
  - **Teaching Chair: John Williams**, Principia College ([john.williams@principia.edu](mailto:john.williams@principia.edu))
  - **Teaching Award Committee Chair: Jan Leach**, Kent State ([jleach1@kent.edu](mailto:jleach1@kent.edu))
  - **Social Media Chair: Katy Culver**, Wisconsin-Madison ([kbculver@wisc.edu](mailto:kbculver@wisc.edu))
  - **Newsletter Editor: Tom Bivins**, Oregon ([tbivins@uoregon.edu](mailto:tbivins@uoregon.edu))
  - **Graduate Student Representative: Tara Walker**, Colorado-Boulder ([tara.g.walker@colorado.edu](mailto:tara.g.walker@colorado.edu))

In addition to official votes, members also discussed ways to increase membership and refereed research paper submissions. New efforts already are underway.

## #2 – MED BYLAWS REVISION

The bylaws of the Media Ethics Division of AEJMC were revised in unanimous vote by members at the annual meeting in August 2016. The previous bylaws were adopted in August 1999, and had not been updated. Changes are as follows:

- Article IV, Section I
- Change the names of the Division's officers from "Head," "Head-elect," etc. to the more commonly used Chair, Vice Chair/Program Chair.
- Article IV, Section I

- Eliminate the office of Secretary/Treasurer because we have not elected anyone to this position for many years and do not need this office. Minutes of the annual meeting are kept by the incoming chair. When there is a mid-year meeting (usually at APPE), the MED rep takes minutes. The Division's newsletter is a good record of Division activities. Budget information is kept by Kathy Bailey at AEJMC.
- Article V, add subsection 1a under Section I
- Note that minutes of the annual meeting, any mid-year meetings and any special meetings will be included in the Division's quarterly newsletter, now published online.
- Article VI, Section I
- Add the office of Vice Chair/Program Chair to the executive board of the Division.

## #3 – MED NEW TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD

The Media Ethics Division of AEJMC is proud to announce the establishment of a new Teaching Excellence Award to recognize outstanding classroom teaching. The award will be given for the first time during the MED members' meeting in August 2017.

Any MED member who teaches media ethics, journalism ethics, ad/PR ethics or media law and ethics is eligible for the award. AEJMC members who are not MED members are invited and encouraged to join MED to be eligible for this award.

Applicants for the MED Teaching Excellence Award must have been teaching ethics for at least three years. The new award is not open to members of the MED Teaching Award Selection Committee. (For 2016-17, the awards committee comprises Jan Leach, former chair of MED, Kent State University; Ryan Thomas, current chair of MED, Missouri; John Williams, teaching standards chair for MED, Principia; and Genelle Belmas, associate professor, Kansas.)

Nominations, including self-nominations, consist of an application form, a syllabus-lesson plan-activity, a statement of teaching philosophy and three letters of recommendation. One recommendation must be from a student or former student. One recommendation must be from a faculty member or colleague, supervisor or department chair, dean or administrator when the nominee currently teaches. Nominations including the application form, materials and recommendations are due to Jan Leach via email at [jleach1@kent.edu](mailto:jleach1@kent.edu) by April 15. The winner will be notified on or before June 1 and is expected to attend the AEJMC annual meeting and MED meeting to receive the award.

## CHANGES TO JME

BY PATRICK PLAISANCE, JME EDITOR



There have been some changes at the Journal, and I wanted to inform folks about a few of them.

One is the design format of the Journal layout, which you may have already noticed. In an overhaul to achieve more consistency across all its journal publications, Taylor &

Francis has instituted a redesign that appeared in the 31:2 issue of the Journal. I hope you agree with me that the new layout, coupled with our recently modified title and more kinetic cover design, make for a more contemporary and engaging Journal. The redesign has not affected any of the editorial content, nor does it mean any changes regarding author submissions. But if you have strong opinions either way, I'm happy to hear them.

Secondly, the Taylor & Francis production staff is instituting its "Crossref" software system of checking the level of "similarity" that accepted articles may have with previously published work. This reflects a broader trend in academic publishing to address longstanding concerns regarding plagiarism and standards of academic integrity. But

again, this should not affect the vast majority of author submissions or the editing process at the Journal.

Third, the Journal will feature occasional "invited essays" alongside its regular peer-reviewed research. These essays will generally be by scholars addressing important theoretical issues confronting our field. The first such essay will appear in the next issue of the Journal, in fact: "Universals Without Absolutes: A Theory of Media Ethics," by Christopher Meyers.

And finally, I'm sad to announce that Kris Bunton of Texas Christian is stepping down at the Journal's Book Review Editor. I have been grateful for Kris' service, and I'm sure we all wish her the best in her new role as dean. Her successor will be Kati Berg of Marquette. After talking with several folks, I've decided to take advantage of this transition to rethink the role and content of the Book Review section of the Journal. Instead of featuring traditional reviews of new titles in the field, Kati will be offering thematic essays that discuss trends suggested by new titles in media ethics research. This might include an essay that collects and discusses new books on surveillance,

privacy and related topics, for example. Also, Kati will be putting together an “Ethics Elsewhere” feature, which will offer briefs and digests of ethics-related published scholarship in other fields. Look for this new content in 2017. Given all this, “Book Review Editor” doesn’t seem to suffice, so we’re changing Kati’s title to “Trends Editor.” For both elements, I’m sure Kati would be happy to receive

your suggestions. She and I are enthusiastic that these changes will make the new “Trends” section attractive to the Journal’s audience.

And of course, I’m always eager to hear any thoughts you have about our JME.

Patrick Lee Plaisance (Editor, *Journal of Media Ethics*)

## MEDIA ETHICS MAGAZINE CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

BY MIKE KITROSS, EDITOR



# Media Ethics

The Magazine Serving Mass Communication Ethics

ANALYSIS/COMMENT/RESEARCH    ANNOUNCEMENTS/REPORTS    BOOK REVIEWS/PUBLICATIONS

The latest issue of MEDIA ETHICS magazine has just been posted at [www.mediaethicsmagazine.com](http://www.mediaethicsmagazine.com) and features articles by AEJMC colleagues such as Stephen Ward and Marie Franklin. Contributors, advisory board members and sponsors have included AEJMC friends/colleagues such as Marie Hardin, Ed Wasserman, Jenn Burleson McKay, Denise Sevick Bortree, Tom Bivins, Cliff Christians, Jay Black, Jane Singer, Ralph Barney, Michael Bugeja, Peggy Bowers, Tom Brislin, Janie Harden Fritz, Shannon Bowen, Ron Arnett, Jane Kirtley, Lee Wilkins, Anantha Babilli, Paul Voakes, David Gordon, Susan Drucker, Gary Gumbert, and many others. ME editor and MED colleague Mike Kittross ([mkitross@msn.com](mailto:mkitross@msn.com)) welcomes queries and submissions (commentary, book reviews, announcements, debates, etc.) at any time. The deadline for submission of materials for the next issue is Oct. 17, 2016. Co-publisher Tom Cooper ([twcooper@comcast.net](mailto:twcooper@comcast.net)) welcomes new sponsors and feedback about all aspects of the publication/website. We wish to thank executive publisher, Cliff Christians, co-publisher Manny Paraschos, editorial and production assistant Corey Plante, and all of you in MED who are contributors, sponsors, and readers of MEDIA ETHICS magazine.

Respectfully, Tom Cooper, Manny Paraschos, Cliff Christians, and Mike Kittross

A MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATION  
FOR EDUCATION IN JOURNALISM  
AND MASS COMMUNICATION

