

Ethical News

The newsletter of the AEJMC
Media Ethics Division

Winter 2001
Vol. 5, No. 2

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Panels set for 2002 convention

David S. Allen

vice chair/program head

The Ethics Division will sponsor nine panels and three research sessions during the 2002 convention in Miami Beach, including a mini-plenary on "Terrorism's Attack on Freedom."

The mini-plenary, co-sponsored by the Law, Mass Communication & Society, and Communication Technology & Policy divisions, will be held at 1:30 p.m. Aug. 9.

Programming was completed on Nov. 30, when representatives from all of AEJMC's divisions and interest groups gathered in Dallas for the annual winter meeting. While MED has secured a spot on the program for the following programs, panel participants have not been finalized. If you have an interest in participating in any of the panels, contact either me or the contact person list-

ed for each panel below:

◆ **Tuesday, Aug. 6**

8 a.m.-5 p.m.: Preconference workshop, National Workshop on the Teaching of Ethics in Journalism and Mass Communication, Bill Babcock and Ed Lambeth

◆ **Wednesday, Aug. 7**

10 a.m.: "Ethics is the Reason: Newsroom Diversity Attempts Fail Because of a Failure to Recognize Cultural Differences in Ethics," Ginny Whitehouse (co-sponsored by Community College Journalism and Minorities and Communication)

1:30 p.m.: "Teaching Ethics, or Teaching About Ethics? Assessing the Impact of Ethics Courses on Students," Kristi Bunton

5 p.m.: Research paper session

◆ **Thursday, Aug. 8**

8:15 a.m.: Research paper session

11:45 a.m.: "Do Methods Matter in Studying Ethics?" Peggy Bowers

3:15 and 5 p.m.: Joint sessions with International Communication Division: "Inflaming Anger, Ignoring Context in the News" followed by "Global Ethics for the World Press," Lou Hodges

6:45 p.m.: MED Business Meeting

◆ **Friday, Aug. 9**

7 a.m.: MED Executive Committee Meeting

1:30 p.m.: Mini-plenary, "Terrorism's Attack on Freedom," MED liaison Sandra Borden

5 p.m.: Speaker, to be announced, (co-sponsored by Cultural and Critical Studies)

◆ **Saturday, Aug. 10**

10 a.m.: "Supermarket Tabloids-The Real Story," MED liaison Beth Blanks Hindman (co-sponsored with Visual Communication Division)

11:45 a.m.: Research paper session

1:30 a.m.: "Beyond Codes & Cases: Teaching Public Relations Ethics," Peggy Bowers (co-sponsored by Public Relations Division).

The Carol Burnett awards are no laughing matter

Stephanie Craft
research chair

It happened to catch the tail end of a "Carol Burnett" special on television the other night. In addition to wondering how it is possible for Carol Burnett to look exactly the same as she did 25 years ago when I watched her show with my parents, I began thinking about the Carol Burnett Fund for Responsible

Journalism. OK, so that last part isn't true. But it's late in the semester, folks, and I am finding it difficult to keep my mind from wandering. Please keep reading for details regarding the Burnett research competition for graduate students, which is sponsored by the Carol Burnett Fund for Responsible Journalism, the MED, and the University of Hawaii.

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MED now on the Web

[http://jcomm.uoregon.edu/
%7Etbivins/aejmc_ethics/home.html](http://jcomm.uoregon.edu/%7Etbivins/aejmc_ethics/home.html)

The Media Ethics Division now has its own Web site. Visitors can read the latest Division news, peruse the current newsletter, prepare for upcoming conferences, read media ethics abstracts from the last AEJMC conference, and link up to interesting

Web sites dealing with ethics topics.

The site was designed by Tom Bivins, at the School of Journalism and Communication, University of Oregon. "It's just a start," Bivins said. "We're hoping

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Send items for the next issue of **Ethical News** to:
Sandra L. Borden, newsletter editor: sandra.borden@wmich.edu

Ethical Briefing

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sandra.borden@wmich.edu

AEJMC Southeast Colloquium seeking judges for submissions

Judges are being sought to review submissions to the 27th annual AEJMC Southeast Colloquium, which will be held March 7-9 in Gulfport, Miss.

The research paper competition will be conducted in the following five areas: history, law, magazine, open and newspaper. Any

full-time college faculty member in journalism or mass communication may volunteer to serve as a judge for the Southeast Colloquium.

Judges will receive papers to be evaluated before Dec. 25 and will be expected to complete an evaluation form for each paper and mail, fax or e-mail the evaluation to the appropriate research paper coordinator by mid-January. Faculty

who submit papers to the competition may still serve as a judge, but only for a division to which they did not submit a paper. The identity of authors will not be revealed to judges, and judges' identities will not be revealed to authors. Judges may also serve as panel moderators or discussants.

All sessions of the 27th annual AEJMC Southeast Colloquium will be held at the Grand Casino Gulfport Oasis Hotel, Gulfport, Miss. The colloquium will begin with a reception Thursday night, March 7, 2002.

Research paper presentations, special panel sessions and meetings will run all day Friday and Saturday, March 8-9. The \$85 registration fee includes the opening reception, two luncheons and breaks between sessions. Paper presenters, panelists and attendees must pay the full \$85 registration fee.

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Assessing ethics, and the ethics of assessment

David S. Allen
vice chair/program head

Several years ago, when I was teaching at another public university, I was appointed to the department's assessment committee. The mission: develop a way to assess teaching and learning across the curriculum. But after more than a year of meetings, surveys, and focus groups, I never could find the answer to one fundamental question: Why are we doing this?

I know that, for my former colleagues, there were several ways to answer that question. Of course, we all knew the right answer: If we want to be effective teachers and scholars, there has to be some way to assess (measure) the learning (outcomes) that takes place in the classroom. But why? Why do we want to measure our effectiveness?

To that question, several answers always came forward. The most frequent reason for assessment was a purely pragmatic one: If we don't develop an assessment instrument, the state will develop one for us. Whether that threat was real or perceived, I have no idea. Still, it was the fuel that powered the engine of assessment. At times this perceived pressure reached levels of absurdity. For example, when it was suggested that assessment be primarily conducted through a survey instrument, questions were raised about the potential negative results. What would happen if we used an instrument that in the end made us look bad? How would that impact our funding and standing within the university? As one of my colleagues wryly responded: "If we can't design a survey that makes us look good, we should surrender our Ph.Ds."

There were other ways to answer the question. Some were truly concerned

about the quality of teaching and learning that was taking place, although, from what I could tell, they were clearly in the minority. Some saw assessment as a way to punish and/or control faculty who were perceived as not teaching what they were supposed to be teaching. And, in turn, those faculty who were the object of punishment and/or control saw assessment as a threat to their academic freedom. Still others saw assessment as a threat to their creativity. Would assessment take into account new teaching techniques, and would faculty be punished for trying and failing?

In the end, a short survey instrument was produced--an instrument so general and vague that it was of little help to any-

When education becomes rationalized, we tend to focus on the means, not the ends.

one truly interested in assessing teaching and learning. The results of these yearly surveys are compiled and trotted out every five years or so to justify to the state that the department is truly assessing teaching and learning and that (surprise) our faculty are effective teachers and our students are learning something. Sadly, there was little discussion--in fact, I can't remember any--about how faculty might use this information to improve teaching and learning.

I tell this tale not to criticize my former colleagues--I was as much responsible for the results as anyone else. Rather, I tell it to get us all to think about why we do, or need to do, assessment. And I believe the answer lies in finding answers to the question posed at the beginning: Why are we doing this?

Finding an answer is often not easy. Over the years, assessment seems to have developed a scientific meaning. I assess my teaching, and the learning that takes place within the classroom, on a daily basis. I often return from a class saying,

See Assessment, page 4

Global Journalism and the Myth of the Nation-State

Deni Elliott
Professional freedom & responsibility chair

September 13, 2001, President George W. Bush said, "We have just seen the first war of the 21st Century."

I assume that he meant that this was the start of the first war of the 21st Century, as it is hard to have a war without at least two nations or recognized factions engaging in military conflict. Indeed, within a day, U.S. news media had cleaned up the President's quote to make it more sensible. Nevertheless, more than a month past the aerial attacks of 9/11 neither President Bush nor U.S. news media seemed to have language that worked to describe political armed conflict in the 21st Century. Bush's declared "war on terrorism" is undoubtedly meant to be less metaphorical than previous administrations' war on drugs or war on poverty, but "war on terrorism" includes significant departures from what used to be meant by the concept of war.

There was nothing wrong with the U.S. President responding to the suicide attacks on U.S. citizens with vows of military response. There was nothing wrong with U.S. citizens who responded to opinion polls by saying that they wanted revenge. But, there is something very wrong with the U.S. news media reflexively taking on the

TO READ MORE:

This article is excerpted from a presentation at the Washington & Lee Conference on Global Journalism, October, 2001. For the full text, see:

<http://ethics.acusd.edu/Resources/PhilForum/Terrorism/Elliott.htm>

government's military language as its own. There is something very wrong with U.S. media provide only a nationalistic perspective rather than global perspectives on this story or on others that involve globally relevant issues. ...

The Role of the Press in Reporting State Actions

So, what does it mean for journalism to act globally in times of such crises? Basically, they should stop being nationalistic.

News organizations should not reflexively adopt governmental language or conceptualizations. For example, when U.S. news media repeated governmental claims that the U.S. borders had been "tightened" in response to the 9/11 attacks, news media also had an obligation to explain to citizens what kind of border protection was possible and what was not. Travel could be restricted by closed borders,

Anthrax could not.

And, while the U.S. government may call the current conflict a "war on terrorism," news media need to remind citizens that what is being bombed is a rhetorical label, but a war-torn country called Afghanistan, that innocent civilians are being killed, and that people there are fearful of picking up the food offerings that the U.S. military

is dropping between bombs because the country is the most heavily mined in the world. It may also be worth news media reminding citizens that the U.S. government is one of

the few that refuses to participate in a worldwide ban against landmines. ...

News organizations should not become the nation's cheerleaders. The mainstream coverage that followed 9/11 included the news industry in full patriotic garb. Newspapers carried full-

Sept. 11 attacks on U.S., challenged colloquium

Brian Richardson
Washington and Lee University

A global event more profound in its impact than any in more than a decade — perhaps since World War II — was a source not only of tragedy but of irony and frustration for a group of scholars gathered at Washington and Lee University early in November.

The small, close-knit university community had lost two alumni and several friends in the World Trade Center/Pentagon terrorist attacks. The conference, "Global Media: The Quest for Universal Ethical Standards," lost the participation of a number of international scholars and had to curtail its activities and scope of inquiry substantially as a result of what has come to be called 9-11. Flights were canceled, and some institutions, worried about safety, pulled back funding for participants. As a result, an inquiry into the possibility of identifying ethical universals in an emerging global community was circumscribed by an event that underscored the very importance of that inquiry.

Nonetheless, conferees from as far away as India were excited and encouraged by the two-

Citizens ... need news media to play a role different from outraged citizen or an extension of government.

Ethical Briefing

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If you go:

- ◆ **What:** 27th annual AEJMC Southeast Colloquium
- ◆ **When:** March 7-9
- ◆ **Where:** Gulfport, Miss.
- ◆ **Info:** HistoryDiv2001@yahoo.com

Colloquium, from page 2

The Grand Casino Gulfport Oasis Hotel is on 3215 West Beach Boulevard. The hotel offers a special colloquium rate of \$99 per night plus 10% tax. Attendees must reserve their rooms by Feb. 4, 2002, to be assured of a room as well as to receive the special rate. Phone for reservations at 1-800-354-2450. The hotel overlooks the Gulf of Mexico and features a full-service spa and salon, eight restaurants, a sports bar, Kids Quest, Grand Arcade, shops, and entertainment. The hotel runs a free shuttle to and from the Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport.

The airport is served by six airlines—ASA/Delta, Continental Express, Northwest, Southeast, Air Tran and Canada 3000.

Print out the registration form at: <http://abrahamson.medill.nwu.edu/sec/2002/SECregistrationform.jpg>. For information, contact David R. Davies, School of Mass Communication & Journalism, Univ. of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-5121. Phone: (601) 266-4258. E-mail: HistoryDiv2001@yahoo.com. On the Web: <http://www.southeastcolloquium.org>

AJHA seeks nominations for journalism history book award

The Awards Committee of the American Journalism Historians Association seeks nominations for the AJHA book award to recognize the best in journalism history or mass media history published during calendar year 2001.

Qualifying books must have been granted a first-time copyright in 2001. Entrants should submit five copies of their books to the book award coordinator by March 1, 2002. Send materials to Earnest L. Perry, Jr., AJHA Book Award Coordinator, Texas Christian University, TCU Box 298060,

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The ethics of assessment

Assessment, from page 2

"Well, that didn't work." But when I attempt to justify techniques that I have used in my classes to colleagues, I struggle. I have no numbers.

That is the real problem facing assessment. As it too often is used, it turns the philosophy of education into a technology that is more concerned about calculability and efficiency than education, or what Max Weber would call formal rationality or sociologist George Ritzer would call the "McDonaldization" of education. When education becomes rationalized, we tend to focus on the means, not the ends. As Neil Postman argues, the technology of modern education prevents us from thinking about the question, "What is learning for?" Instead, it forces us to focus on technical issues, such as how the information is delivered (p. 171).

As a result, it changes the focus of the discussion.

As an administrator once told me in an attempt to justify an increase in the size of my ethics classes, a good teacher can teach 100 students just as effectively as 20 students. This, of course, is probably true.

However, the larger issue of what students take away from the class, and why those students are there, is ignored.

This is not to argue that assessment is inherently evil and should be abandoned. I believe it is vitally

Assessment without
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is to reduce it
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important that we continue to think about and study teaching and learning. It is to argue, however, that assessment without some clear understanding of its purpose (as well as the goal of education) is to reduce it to a technology—a technology that, at best, is often a meaningless exercise and, at worst, one that masks its influence and power.

MED has new site on the WWW

Web, from page 1

for submissions from anyone in the Division who is interested in posting information on the site."

Of particular interest are announcements of upcoming conferences and events, tips on teaching ethics, course syllabi, Web site links (class Web sites, professional sites, etc.), commentary, and virtually anything else that might be of interest to members.

Visit the site today, and learn more about your Division and what's going on in the world of media ethics. The site is linked to the AEJMC "Organizations" page and can also be accessed at the URL below.

Bivins can be reached at tbivins@oregon.uoregon.edu for more information.

http://jcomm.uoregon.edu/%7Etbivins/aejmc_ethics/home.html



The MED Web site will carry news, teaching tools and tips, and other content of interest to members.

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Ethical Briefing

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AJHA, from page 4

Fort Worth TX 76129. E-mail:
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The award will be given at AJHA's 2002 annual convention, to be held in October 2002 in Nashville, Tenn.

Submissions sought for online WPI journalism ethics forum

The World Press Institute (WPI) is calling for manuscripts for a new journalism ethics forum to be hosted on WPI's Web site.

The forum, called "Global Journalism Ethics," will present brief analyses of ethical issues and principles that are relevant to journalism. The goal is to prompt discussion among Web site visitors and WPI's global network of journalists. Comments will be posted. The forum will be launched in early 2002.

E-mail submissions to the editor, Stephen Ward, University of British Columbia at sjward@interchange.ubc.ca. Submissions should be brief - approximately the length of two computer screens, or a maximum of 1,000 words. Submissions should include suggestions for links.

The World Press Institute, founded in 1961, brings 10 journalists annually to the United States for four months of intense interviews, briefings and travel.

The forum can be found at:
<http://www.worldpressinstitute.org>.

Articles on terrorist attacks sought for ethics Web site

Ethics Updates is now hosting a new series, "Philosophers Speak Out..." at <http://ethics.acusd.edu>. The first of these is on "War, Terrorism, and Peace." This will serve as a clearing house where philosophers, especially those in ethics and political and social philosophy, can share their work very quickly and easily.

Authors retain all copyright and material can be removed at any time. An attempt will be made to post within 24 hours of receiving your submission. You may send either articles or papers (preferably in Word or Rich-text format) to post, links to pieces that already are on the web, or simply bibliographical information on pieces that are

Burnett awards for student papers

Burnett, from page 1

The Carol Burnett/University of Hawaii/AEJMC Prize comes out of an endowment by the comedienne, who earmarked proceeds of her successful libel suit against the *National Enquirer* to promote responsible journalism.

"We hope it's an incentive to encourage more research" by graduate students, said Tom Brislin, chair of the University of Hawaii journalism department and administrator of the fund.

The author of the winning paper in this competition will receive a \$350 cash award and a \$150 stipend to help defray costs associated with attending the 2002 AEJMC convention in Miami. The runner-up will receive a \$150 cash award. In addition, the winner will be invited to accept his or her prize at the KTA Awards luncheon at the convention.

Graduate students from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill swept last year's prizes. The winner was Robert L. Kerr for "Impartial Spectator in the Marketplace of Ideas: The Principles of Adam Smith as an Ethical Basis for Regulation of Corporate Speech." Taegyu Son's paper, "Leaks: How Do Codes of Ethics Address Them?" was the runner-up.

Other past winners and runners-up include: Erik Forde Ugland and Jack Brislin of the University of Minnesota for "The Moral Authority of the Minnesota News Council: Statements of Principle and Uses of Precedent"; Patrick Lee

Plaisance of Syracuse University for "The Concept of Media Accountability Reconsidered"; Keith Goree of the University of South Florida for "Teaching Moral Development"; and Marie Lee of Western Michigan University for "Ethics of Crisis Response Strategies."

As the variety of topics addressed by winners in previous years suggests, a wide range of topics is appropriate for the competition. Papers addressing ethical issues in advertising and public relations, as well as news gathering, are encouraged. Also, interdisciplinary (e.g., law and ethics) and inter- or cross-cultural papers are welcomed.

The Burnett competition will be conducted concurrently with the division's regular faculty paper competition. Student research is not considered separately from faculty research. Rather, student and faculty research compete equally for presentation slots in research sessions at the convention. The top two papers in the Burnett competition, however, are guaranteed research slots.

Papers should conform to the rules outlined in AEJMC's Uniform Call for Papers. In addition, papers should be no more than 25 pages, excluding bibliography. Burnett entries should be marked "Burnett Competition" on the title page only.

Please send papers to: Stephanie Craft, School of Journalism, 76K Gannett Hall, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211. The postmark deadline is April 1.

The Burnett prize comes out of an endowment by the comedienne, who earmarked proceeds of her successful libel suit against the National Enquirer to promote responsible journalism.

not available on the Web.

Media Ethics deadline

Submissions for the spring 2002 issue of *Media Ethics* are due Feb. 15.

Media Ethics is a quarterly periodical that publishes opinion articles, notices, reviews bibliographies and case studies.

The magazine is published by the Department of Visual & Media Arts at Emerson College. Send manuscripts to: Editor, *Media Ethics*, c/o Department of Visual & Media Arts, Emerson College, 120 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02116-4264. Direct inquiries to media_ethics@emerson.edu. Manuscripts should not exceed 1,200 words.

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day exchange. Four senior fellows were joined by four media ethics scholars. All eight presented papers. Senior fellows included former Indian Supreme Court Justice P. B. Sawant, who has chaired his nation's news council and serves as president of the World Association of Press Councils. Sawant's paper, "Accountability in Journalism," argued for the establishment of news councils globally. Fellow Deni Elliott, Director of the Practical Ethics Center at the University of Montana, traced the evolution of nation-states, argued that they are anachronistic in nature, and urged journalists to abandon jingoist cheerleading in the wake of 9-11. Similarly, Fellow Anantha Bibili, professor of journalism at Texas Christian University, dissected the way journalists frame stories about other cultures.

The gathering, co-sponsored by Washington and Lee,

Nation-State, from page 3

page flags. Television news anchors' lapels sprouted ribbons and banners. Television news graphics rippled with red, white and blue and gave greater legitimacy to the administration's pet phrases, "Attack on America," and "War on Terrorism."

As was the case with the 1991 Gulf War, journalistic rhetoric became more vehement as public approval ratings for governmental action soared. On the Fox News Channel Tuesday (a week after the aerial attacks), anchor Jon Scott told Wolfgang Ischinger, the German ambassador to the United States, "We look forward to working with your country in wiping out these terrorists." On "Late Show with David Letterman," the same

Brigham Young University and Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, publisher of the *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, had been envi-

day, CBS anchor Dan Rather said, "George Bush is the president, he makes the decisions, and, you know, as just one American, he wants me to line up, just tell me where."* ...

Citizens, of this country and all others, need news media to play a role different from outraged citizen or an extension of government. The role necessitates a kind of self-reflection that means that the difference between whom news media label "terrorists" and whom they call "militant Palestinians" should be a difference larger than the national difference between civilians killed in the World Trade Center and those killed in a restaurant in Jerusalem.

* Rutenberg, J. and Bill Carter (2001). "Draping Newscasts With the Flag." *The New York Times*, Sept. 20, p. C8.

sioned as a two-day colloquium and retreat comprising eight senior fellows and a subsequent two-day conference of those fel-

lows and other ethics scholars who would present refereed papers for discussion. The colloquium had to be canceled, and the meeting was restructured as a two-day conference comprising the fellows and remaining conferees.

Dr. Louis Hodges, Knight Professor of Ethics in Journalism at Washington and Lee and the organizer of the event, said it fell short of his goal to identify ethical universals for global journalism. Perhaps that was inevitable in the restricted time frame, but the conference did achieve another goal.

The conference was the second in a planned decade-long series of meetings that began last year at Brigham Young University. The overarching goal of the series is to identify and nurture young media ethics scholars and their work. For the emerging scholars who could attend Global Media, the conferees offered invaluable feedback and direction.

Send items for the next issue of **Ethical News** to: Sandra L. Borden, newsletter editor: sandra.borden@wmich.edu

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