

Ethical News

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Media Ethics Division

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Publishing cartoons informs the public

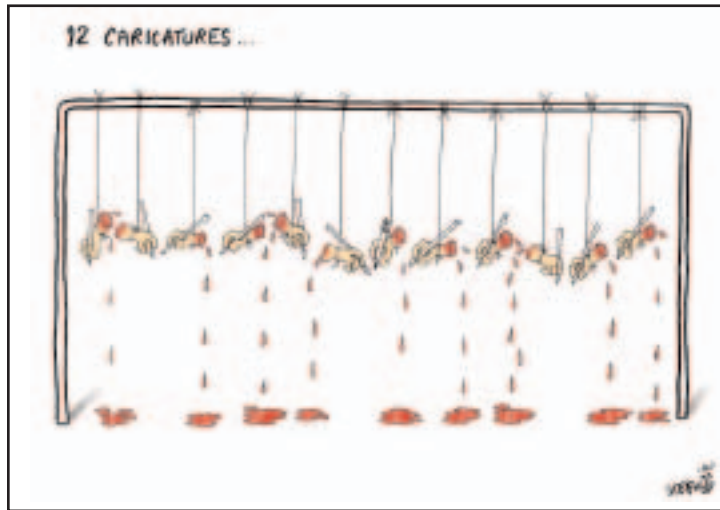
John Temple
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Rocky Mountain News

Does the violent response to the Danish cartoons of Muhammad provide a dramatic explanation for the decline in the number of editorial cartoonists in recent years at American newspapers?

I hope that's not the case.

But it would be easy to believe, based on the decisions of most editors and publishers. It would be easy to believe that offending some readers is not a price they're willing to pay.

With few exceptions, including *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Austin American-Statesman* and *Rocky Mountain News*, most newspapers decided not to show their readers any of the images, despite the fact that they're clearly newsworthy.



STEPHANE PERAY, *THE NATION*, BANGKOK, THAILAND (USED WITH PERMISSION)

Drawing ire

Do violent responses to Muhammad cartoons demonstrate the need for more restraint, or the need to push the envelope of free expression? Here are two perspectives on the issue.

See **PUBLISH TO INFORM**, Page 3

Sometimes 'responsible' means not to publish

Sandra Fish
Univ. of Colorado, Boulder

With freedom comes responsibility. Freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of the press – none are absolute freedoms.

Some of the exceptions are created by courts of law – consider obscenity and child pornography. Some are based on societal norms – rules against cursing in school. Others are self-imposed – newspapers avoiding printing the F-word, even when the vice president uses it on the Senate floor.

I'd argue that initial publication of the Danish cartoons belittling the Islamic prophet Muhammad should

have been one of those self-imposed exceptions.

And I question the rush to publish the cartoons by many American newspaper editors in the name of press freedom.

See **RESTRAIN TO RESPECT**, Page 3

MED tackles 'new payola' at 2006 APPE convention

Erik Ugland
division head

Journalistic virtues, media bias and the "new payola" were among the issues addressed by presenters at this year's convention of the Association for Practical and Pro-

fessional Ethics, held March 2 to 4 in Jacksonville, Fla. For the third year in a row, the Media Ethics Division sponsored panels and a paper competition in conjunction with APPE's annual meeting, giving its members the chance to share their work with an international, cross-disciplinary group of ethics scholars.

Cliff Christians, Sandy Borden, David Craig and Kristen Intemann all presented papers addressing journalism ethics questions, and several other MED members, including Ed Wasserman, Kathy Fitzpatrick and Jennifer Henderson, served on a special panel addressing the resurgence of payola and pay-for-play practices in the mass media.

To all of those who participated this year, congratulations and thanks. MED is especially indebted to David Boeyink who organized the division's paper competition. The partnership between APPE and

MED is a valuable one that will no doubt continue in the spring of 2007 when APPE convenes in Cincinnati.

In addition to providing a forum for papers and panels, APPE was also the site of MED's mid-year members meeting. The attendees addressed a few key issues, the most important of which dealt with the division's relationship with the *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*.

The first issue was the policy regarding *JMME*'s review and publication of the division's top

See **APPE**, Page 4

Help! Some advice for new professors who find they can't teach

Jack Breslin
teaching chair

Pity the poor Ph.D. on that first day in a college classroom. After three years (usually more) of scholarship and sacrifice, the newly minted assistant professor faces a sea of eager faces ready to learn.

Yet how does one inspire these students? Challenge them to learn from the wisdom of the ages and create their own innovative ideas? Broaden their narrow campus-centered perspectives into diverse global vision?

Or on the practical side – how does one write an airtight syllabus? Organize a lesson plan? Compose unambiguous and unbiased examinations? Create and execute imaginative classes? Not bore sleepy students with marathon lectures week after week?

Why do our primary and secondary school colleagues take multiple methods courses and practicums, while the college professor gets nothing? How does the young professor learn to be an effective teacher?

From the day that we filled out our doctoral program applications, we were told that a Ph.D. is a research degree. You learn how to do research, not how to teach in a classroom. Even though you would be required to teach between two and four classes every semester, mostly likely your tenure would succeed or fail on your publication record. Miss the quota and go look for another job.

As for what happens in the classroom, unless you curse or speak in politically incorrect terms, your only feedback will be an occasional observer and student evaluations, which are notably biased by final grades. Want more? Check out your page on ratemyprofessors.com, you “hot tamale” (a “looks” ranking).

Long before that first class as a professor, most graduate students wind up in a classroom either as a teaching assistant or instructor. You can adapt the syllabus and written assignments passed down by your colleagues. Then you simply imitate what you experienced in the

classroom – a dramatic, inspiring, brilliant lecture outlined on your overheads or PowerPoint slides. But if you’re not a gifted public speaker or English is your second language, those nasty student evaluations could crush your fragile teaching ego.

So how does the aspiring academic move beyond the basic lecture format? Where can you learn the basics about pedagogy and processes, such as teaching techniques, tools and methods? How can you grow as a teacher, as well as a publishing machine, once you get into the academic routine?

My teaching experience started during my undergraduate days as a cop for the CCD. Part of my seminary training involved weekly religious education classes for Catholic middle school youngsters. To prepare us for combat, there were workshops with some dynamic facilitators, who offered interactive educational experiences. My training as an American Red Cross water safety instructor focused on planning, demonstration and evaluation rather than lecturing young swimmers and lifeguards.

For my first adjunct assignment teaching feature writing, I followed the normal student-to-teacher progression by digging out notes from a graduate journalism class at the University of Georgia. But there was no yellowed notebook for my next adjunct gig teaching public relations case studies and Crisis PR. No preparation help was offered in the form of books or workshops, so I outlined the textbook with piles of lecture notes and primitive overhead transparencies. Outside of small group discussions, the class was 90 percent lecture.

That habit carried over to my teaching assignments at the University of Minnesota as a four-year Ph.D. hopeful.

Doctoral programs rarely include a mandatory teaching component. The University of Washington’s Department of Communication requires graduate students who serve as instructors or teaching assistants to take a series of three one-credit proseminars on pedagogy. According to the program Web site, the series is “designed to

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provide students with a pedagogical foundation they to develop their own teaching philosophy and style.” The courses also cover curriculum, lectures, discussions and assignments.

The Pennsylvania State University’s College of Communication previously required doctoral candidates to attend an in-house “Teaching Academy.” Students are now referred to a teaching certificate program offered by the Graduate School. Among the components is a “supervised teaching experience,” in which a graduate student would teach a section with mentoring from an advisor.

Other research schools, such as Minnesota, offer for-credit teaching courses outside the required Ph.D. communications courses. The Minnesota “Preparing Future Faculty” offers two core courses, “Teaching in Higher Education” and a practicum.

My first Minnesota semester I sampled the first core class session only to have the professor politely advise me that my experience made me “too advanced” for the courses. “I’m sure you’ll be a great teacher,” she complimented. Wanting more than praise, I attended several workshops offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning Services, such as “Getting Students to be Partners in the Learning Process.”

Teaching enrichment workshops offered by a variety of groups dedicated to promoting excellence in higher education provide an encouraging environment for discussion with professors from all disciplines. The longest running program, the Virginia Tidewater Consortium for Higher Education

[www.vtc.edu.edu], now in its 28th year, offers an annual Summer Institute on College Teaching in early June at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Va., which includes a certificate in college teaching.

“We came up the idea when there was talk about how people were trained for the classroom in higher education,” explained Lawrence Dotolo, the consortium president and associate professor at Old Dominion University.

“It gives the opportunity to sit down and talk about teaching and learning in a non-threatening environment,” Dotolo said. “We discuss a wide range of topics – philosophical issues, methods, class organization. There’s also testing, grading, nitty-gritty pedagogical concerns about teaching and learning, student-centered learning and teacher-centered learning.”

With a “big demand for this kind of experience,” the interactive program accepts only 30 participants from all over the country and the academic spectrum. For some new academics, the classroom experience can be a “rude awakening,” but the Institute can be a confidence builder by providing the research and reasoning behind teaching and learning, Dotolo said.

“From the comments we get, faculty really consider it a great experience,” Dotolo said. “They are very eager to learn and grow as teachers.”

“We all espouse that we are interested in teaching and learning, but we don’t get the opportunity to sit down or talk or we don’t take advantage of the opportunities offered on our own campuses.

“It’s an opportunity to sit down and talk about teaching and learning away from the distractions of the school year. We talk about what goes on in the classroom – how do you motivate students, get them to read assignments, get them to come to class?”

Two other groups offering college teaching training are the Colleges of Worcester Consortium, Inc. [www.cowc.org] and The Collaboration for the Advancement of College Teaching & Learning [www.collab.org].

Sometimes 'responsible' means not to publish

RESTRAIN TO RESPECT, from Page 1

Let there be no question that the violent reaction to the cartoons by some in the Muslim world is deplorable. But here's a question: Would those who hold up publication of the cartoons as part of the freedom to express unpopular beliefs also defend killing in the name of Allah as a practice of religious freedom? Of course not.

One of the key roles of the media

in civilized society is to help people understand their world, their governments and each other.

Our world today certainly faces threats from terrorists who claim to act on behalf of Islam.

But do those few represent the millions of other Muslims? Not necessarily.

And how much have the media done to illustrate that? Not so much.

We live in a world where it's much easier for the media and the public to paint issues with a broad brush, in an absolutist manner, than to try to understand and illuminate nuances.

By using Muhammad as a symbol, the Danish cartoons paint all Muslims as responsible for the terrorist acts of a few.

I wouldn't limit the effort to avoid degrading stereotyping to Muslims.

Here's another example. A Scott

Bateman editorial cartoon in January 2005 began with this line: "Here's a fun fact: many, if not all, Fundamentalist Christians believe in destroying the environment." I'm not sure how many newspapers ran that cartoon, but the one where I worked at the time did. And it offended some readers, who pointed out that this statement is not true and is certainly offensive.

It's true that newspapers in some Middle Eastern countries run editorial cartoons with wicked portrayals of Jews. Does that make it the right thing to do?

Stereotypes – based on skin color, clothing, a surname, an accent – are easy. But they are most often inaccurate.

No one will ever rid the world of misunderstanding and or the hatred some people will exhibit for others because of their faith, skin color, ethnicity, gender or some myriad of

other perceived "wrongs."

But we in the media can do a better job of trying to bridge the cultural divides among people of the world. We can portray people as individuals first and as members of one group or another as second, third, fourth – or not at all.

We can illustrate for our readers, viewers and listeners why some believe what they do and why others disagree with them. We can offer thoughtful commentary about the differences between the Western world and Islam, and how those differences can be resolved.

Yes, the freedom to use speech to insult, mock or taunt others based on their beliefs is protected in a free society. But when the news media insist on perpetuating such speech, we are being as absolutist as the Muslims who deplore free speech.

And in a world of absolutists, there is no common ground.

Publishing cartoons informs the public

PUBLISH TO INFORM, from Page 1

(In the interest of full disclosure: *The Rocky* linked to them from its Web site starting Feb. 2 and published an editorial accompanied by one of the Danish cartoons, one that I thought was actually humorous. You can find the editorial at RockyMountainNews.com, but this conclusion will give you its gist: "Freedom must imply the right to offend religious believers – as well as the members of every other organization or group. Otherwise, we will have ceded our freedoms to the veto of the most intolerant among us. The intolerant in Europe and throughout the Muslim world are now trying to exercise such a veto. They must not be allowed to succeed." Today [Feb. 11] we publish a second Danish drawing as part of a package of controversial cartoons in Commentary on Page 10C.)

The standard explanation by editors who took the opposite course, from The Associated Press, which

declined to distribute the cartoons on its wire, to National Public Radio, which wouldn't even link to them from its Web site, and most newspapers is that the drawings are offensive and that the story can be told just fine by describing them.

"I believe that our audience can, through our reports – on radio and the Web – get a very detailed sense of what's depicted in the cartoon. By not posting it on the Web, we demonstrate a respect for deeply held religious beliefs," Bill Marimow of NPR said.

Can you understand, now, why I ask the question about why cartoonists are disappearing from the staffs of American newspapers? The number is down in two decades from about 200 to the low 80s today, according to the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists.

Cartoons are, by their very nature, blunt instruments. They often upset, even outrage. I can tell you that based on the angry response I've had to field to cartoons by our Ed Stein and Drew Litton.

"Nearly all cartoonists worth their salt have enraged some portion of their readership, often when religious symbolism was part of the cartoon," Signe Wilkinson, a Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist with the *Philadelphia Daily News*, wrote in a column this week.

The consensus among American newspapers not to show the Danish

cartoons indicates that there may be some groups publishers are reluctant to offend. Cartoonists are difficult people to rein in, so the simple answer for a newspaper is to do without them, hence the sharp drop in the number of staff cartoonists.

Their decision in this case may come back to haunt newspapers when they're faced with whether to print something that might appear to be offensive to another group. If it's not necessary to show any of these cartoons, why would it be appropriate to print something that might offend, say, Catholics, to pick a religion that has taken a lot of hits in the past few years?

The New York Times published a lengthy piece by its art critic Michael Kimmelman about the cartoons headlined, "A startling new lesson in the power of imagery." You'd think an article with that headline would show the "startling new lesson." But no, instead it printed a photograph of a collage of the Virgin Mary "with cutouts from pornographic magazines and shellacked clumps of elephant dung."

Isn't it reasonable to ask whether that decision doesn't send the message that it's OK to offend Christians but not Muslims?

I question whether we're being given the full story about why some news organizations aren't touching the cartoons.

The missing word: Fear.

It would be impossible as a

responsible editor with correspondents in the Muslim world to see the violent protests and not be concerned about endangering your own staff.

An alternative newspaper in Boston, *The Phoenix*, put it bluntly. "Simply stated, we are being terrorized, and as deeply as we believe in the principles of free speech and a free press, we could not in good conscience place the men and women who work at the *Phoenix* and its related companies in physical jeopardy. As we feel forced, literally, to bend to maniacal pressure, this may be the darkest moment in our 40-year publishing history."

It's understandable other editors and publishers might not make a similar statement publicly, but it's hard to believe this concern didn't factor into their decisions.

Publishing offensive material doesn't mean that a newspaper endorses it. It can mean that a newspaper takes seriously its role of informing the public. That's what we hope to do in our special presentation ... in our Commentary section today [Feb. 11]. I hope you'll spend time with it, and understand that our intention is not to offend but to provide a context in which to view today's controversy.

This column originally appeared in the Feb. 11, 2006, edition of the Rocky Mountain News and is reprinted here with permission.

2006 Barrow Minority Doctoral Student Scholarship

Applications are now being accepted for the 2006 Barrow Minority Doctoral Student Scholarship. The scholarship includes a \$1,400 award and a free one-year membership in the Communication Theory and Methodology Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

The scholarship honors Professor Lionel C. Barrow Jr., of Howard University in recognition of his pioneering efforts in support of minority education in journalism and mass communication. The award is sponsored by the CT&M Division and made possible in part through contributions from the Minorities and Communication Division, the Commission on the Status of Minorities and personal donations, as well as royalties from sales of *Research Methods in Mass Communication* by Guido H. Stempel and Bruce H. Westley.

Minority students (U.S. citizens or permanent residents) enrolled in a Ph.D. program in journalism and/or mass communication are encouraged to apply. Applicants need not be members of AEJMC or the CT&M Division, nor does their work need to address issues of race. Applications will be judged on the promise the candidate's work shows for making a significant contribution to communication theory and methodology. To be considered for this scholarship, please send a curriculum vitae, a letter outlining research interests and career plans, and two letters of recommendation to:

Edward Horowitz, assistant professor
School of Communication
Cleveland State University
2121 Euclid Avenue, MU 239
Cleveland, OH 44115-2214

Submissions must be postmarked no later than June 1. Questions may be addressed to Horowitz at e.horowitz1@csuohio.edu.

MED tackles 'new payola' at 2006 APPE convention

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AEJMC papers. Top papers have occasionally been forwarded to the editors of *JMME* for publication review, and this year's paper call says that the top paper in the special topics category will be "considered for publication" in *JMME*. Some members have suggested that the language in the paper call is imprecise and that the broader policy need clarification.

As a result, the editors of *JMME* proposed a new policy, which was approved by the division. Beginning this year, all of the division's award-winning papers will be forwarded to the editors of *JMME* and given "fast-track" publication review. Papers will not be guaranteed a place in *JMME*, nor will winning authors be required to publish in that journal. The review process simply will be quickened for the award winners, if they so choose. Four papers will be given fast-track review: the top faculty paper, the top graduate student paper, the top special-topics paper, and the paper receiving the award for professional relevance. The hope is that this will provide an incentive for scholars to submit their work to the division while also giving *JMME* access to some of the division members' best work.

The editors of *JMME* also announced that they are seeking a new editor for the journal's "Cases and Commentaries" section and would

like to offer the job to a member of MED. Beginning this year, the "C & C" editorship will be a rotating, two-year appointment. The C & C editor prepares two case studies per year and solicits commentaries from four authors addressing those cases. The next editor's term will run from August 2006 through August 2008.

This is a great opportunity for our division members and one that will help sustain the connections between *JMME* and MED. Anyone who would like to be considered for this position, or who would like to nominate someone, should e-mail Erik Ugland (erik.ugland@mu.edu) prior to, or during, the members meeting in San Francisco. That meeting is scheduled for Friday, Aug. 4, from 6:45-8:15 p.m.

Two other key announcements were made at the meeting in Jacksonville. The first is that this year was the last in which papers could be submitted to MED in hard-copy form. Next year, all AEJMC divisions will move to an electronic submission and review system.

Also, the division will soon be creating an e-mail listserv so that division leaders can quickly and easily communicate with MED members. The listserv hopefully will be completed prior to the meeting in San Francisco. Anyone who does not want to be included on the list or whose e-mail address has recently changed should contact Erik Ugland soon.

The MED will need a new newsletter designer after the 2006 AEJMC convention (Bill Reader is hanging it up after five years). You'll get help. Interested? E-mail: erik.ugland@mu.edu.

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