



NORTHERN ILLINOIS NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION

ONLINE RESOURCES FOR JOURNALISTS

www.northernstar.info/nina

News, networking, training opportunities, a job hunter's guide, high school journalism resources and more.



If one morning I walked on top of the water across the Potomac River, the headline that afternoon would read: "President Can't Swim."



Lyndon B. Johnson



A road map for your paper's Web site

April 28 conference will focus on content, trends, opportunities

By Colin O'Donnell
NINA PRESIDENT

Did you know that in 2005, about 70 percent of Americans who went online said they used the Internet for news? That's 97 million adult Americans.

And the main area of growth last year appears to be how *often* people went to the Web. Everyday use grew seven percentage points to roughly one-third of users – 34 percent. That's according to the Pew Research Center and a just-released State of the News Media 2006 report by the Project for Excellence in Journalism.

Newspapers both large and small are spending more money and time in the so-called New Media. But they're not so new anymore and whether you are a reporter and editor in the newsroom, a publisher or executive or actually working day-to-day with online news sites, the Northern Illinois Newspaper Association spring conference is for you.

Co-sponsored for the first time by the Illinois Press Association, NINA's Spring Conference on Friday, April 28, will feature two nationally recognized speakers on what's happening with newspaper Web sites and what you need to do to make your site and your newspaper a success.

Rich Gordon, associate professor of journalism and chair of the new media program at the Medill School



Rich Gordon



Kelly Casalino

NINA SPRING CONFERENCE

WHEN

Friday, April 28

TIME

9 a.m. to noon

WHERE

The Daily Herald Office Center, 155 E. Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights

COST

\$25 for attendees from NINA or IPA member newspapers; \$50 for nonmembers.

Pay in advance or at the door.

TO REGISTER

Contact Dana Dietrichs-Kunkel at 815-753-1564 / dditrichs@niu.edu.

FOR MORE INFO

Contact Jim Killam at 815-753-4239 jkillam@niu.edu.

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Route to:

- Publisher
- Managing Ed.
- Newsroom
- Advertising
- Circulation

of Journalism at Northwestern University, will present, "The Internet: The First 10 Years, the Next 10 Years." Gordon, who oversaw the team that created The Miami Herald Internet edition

☆ See **CONFERENCE**, Back Page

Schools become safer when students enjoy free expression

By Randy Swikle

Ironically, the First Amendment was created to protect, yet many schools do not embrace it as an instrument of safety.

Some educators are afraid that students lack the maturity to safely apply the principles of the First Amendment. They fear youthful exercise of free expression may stir controversy that can cause discord and put people in legal, physical, emotional, moral, and/or professional jeopardy. They want harmony, not harm, in schools, and they believe that autocratic control is the answer. They, therefore, discourage most expression not sanctioned by authority.

However, any effort to maximize safety by minimizing the First Amendment is completely self-defeating. The First Amendment should be the principal route to safety.

Safety is best achieved not by completely shielding students from conflict but rather by teaching them how to confront conflict and manipulate the situation so that noble ends and peaceful resolution may be realized. Free expression fortified by ethics and responsibility can be a tool for conciliation. When adversaries apply the substance and spirit of the First Amendment, they are much more likely to exchange opposing ideas without engaging in violence. Democracy requires tolerance of diverse views, and that tolerance, protected by the First Amendment, is what promotes understanding, gives rise to truth, and keeps freedom safe.

Our schools must teach democracy by practice rather than as distant theory.

To do otherwise demonstrates hypocrisy, creates cynicism, denies diversity, inhibits ethical development, and

in many other ways ill-prepares our youth for effective citizenship.

The fact that expression may be controversial, discomfiting, unfair, inaccurate, unpopular, or critical does not justify censorship. Neither intellectual capacity nor personal belief is a criterion for denying freedom; citizens have the right to be wrong as well as right. Remedies less offensive than censorship are available to help safeguard against poor judgment, abuse, and other

deficiencies that by nature may accompany freedom of expression.

Safeguards are found in law and ethics.

The law sets parameters for both students and school officials. In school, expression should not be libelous or obscene or create a clear and substantial disruption. In

arenas not qualifying as a public forum, educators need a legitimate, educational reason to censor, according to the U.S. Supreme Court.

In ethics, safeguards extend beyond the restrictions of law. What is legally allowed may be ethically wrong, and students should learn to make that distinction. Since ethics is self-legislated and self-enforced, students cannot truly practice ethics unless they are given real decision-making responsibilities. That opportunity exists in schools that honor student rights.

Safety in schools is best achieved by embracing the First Amendment. Schools that teach and practice the Three Rs of the First Amendment — rights, responsibilities, and respect — create an environment that intrinsically motivates students to get along and to be good citizens.

Please share this column with school administrators in your newspaper's circulation area.

QUOTABLE

"The First Amendment is the cornerstone of our democratic society. Unfortunately, young people don't live it enough. It becomes like the granite monument in the park that we never visit."

SANDY WOODCOCK

Newspaper Association of America Foundation

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Randy Swikle taught journalism at Johnsburg High School for 34 years. He now serves as Illinois Director of the Journalism Education Association. Contact him at randyswikle@comcast.net.

Editors drawn into controversy

By Jim Killam

Newspaper cartoons generate more than their share of attention. If readers are going to label their community paper as liberal, conservative, racist, sexist, insensitive, reckless, wimpy or just plain dumb (and sometimes all of that at once), cartoons can be a flash point.

Word people like me hate to admit this, but images are the most powerful tools newspapers have. Publish a story telling readers their taxes are going up or that their mayor is a crook, and you might get a trickle of response. Publish a dozen badly drawn, highly controversial cartoons, and the whole world pays attention.

In their Feb. 13 edition, the Northern Star's editors chose to print the Danish cartoons that depicted the Islamic prophet Muhammad. The editorial-board decision was carefully calculated, and partially shaped by the observation that a significant number of NIU students did not even know this was a major world issue. The paper would run a front-page editorial explaining why it was publishing these cartoons. The cartoons themselves would appear on page 3, along with student-on-the-street mug shots and quotes about the controversy. And, a column from a leader of NIU's Muslim Student Association would top the editorial page.

MIXED RESPONSE

Once the paper hit the streets that morning, some in our community were deeply offended. Others didn't like that the paper had offended a particular group. Still others hailed the decision as an important defense of freedom and against intimidation. This, I suppose, illustrates the wobbly tightrope a good newspaper walks



The front page of the Northern Star's Feb. 13 edition featured an editorial signed by Editor in Chief Derek Wright.

each day.

Complicating matters for the Northern Star was the concurrent situation at the University of Illinois. Two editors at the Daily Illini decided to publish the cartoons, unbeknownst to the rest of the staff until the last minute. The cartoons ran, angering many Muslims inside and outside – far outside – the university community. The newspaper suspended the two editors and printed an apology for the way the publishing decision was made. It did not directly apologize for publishing the cartoons. That nuance was largely lost on the public, many of whom thought the DI had capitulated to protestors.

In DeKalb, where apathy has signed a long-term lease, readers on all sides of the issue sprang to life – and in healthy ways. Numerous letters to the editor rolled in; thoughtful classroom discussions erupted; and meetings

between editors and student groups helped keep things calm (at least to this point).

Agree or disagree with the Northern Star's decision, I think it highlights a few points about responsible community journalism. As communities, we will disagree on this and other issues. We will offend each other sometimes, both with words and images. That is never a good newspaper's goal. But, sometimes that is the necessary byproduct in a society where we debate issues like this openly and completely, without fear of censorship or reprisal. And one could argue that the cartoon issue could not be debated completely if readers couldn't view the cartoons.

TO DEPICT OR DESCRIBE?

I know, I know: Pornography. Racism. Graphic violence. We don't always need to show it to discuss it. Here's the difference: In a college audience, most people have encountered pornography. They've witnessed racism. They've seen graphic violence in movies or on TV, if not in real life. Stories about those ugly aspects of our culture often don't need explanation or visual cues for people to engage. But many had no clue about this cartoon issue, and they might not have waded too deeply into a stand-alone news story about it. Several letters to the editor said basically that: "I didn't know anything about this issue and now I feel like I understand it better than most."

And that was the bottom line for my student editors. It's one thing to pay lip service to the First Amendment. It's another to live by it. They decided to stand – publicly and at some risk – for free expression and healthy debate of issues that matter.

Journalism isn't a popularity contest. It's also not about recklessly brandishing the First Amendment as a sword. Somewhere in the middle lies a spot for good community newspapers to land.



Jim Killam is adviser for the Northern Star, the Daily student newspaper at Northern Illinois University. Contact him at jkillam@niu.edu.

'State of the News Media 2006'

EXCERPTS FROM THE REPORT BY THE PROJECT FOR EXCELLENCE IN JOURNALISM

Newspaper readers on balance learn about the widest range of topics and get the deepest sourcing and the most angles on the news among consumers of all media studied except one.

That exception, the Internet, in turn, still relies for the heart of its content on print journalism, and if papers were to vanish it is hard to see what might replace them.

"If you argue about public trust today, you will be dismissed as an obstructionist and a romantic," the editor of one of the country's major papers told us privately.

Since the early 1980s Americans have come to view the news media as less professional, less accurate, less caring and less moral.

Most of the local news we found in newspapers was absent from local television.

The public also increasingly sees the press as slanted. Nearly three quarters of Americans (72%) in the summer of 2005 saw the press as favoring one side, up from 66% two years earlier. And 60% saw the press as politically biased, up from 53% in 2003. Republicans and conservatives are even more prone to feel this way than Democrats.

USED WITH PERMISSION. READ THE FULL REPORT AT WWW.STATEOFTHENEWSMEDIA.COM

CALENDAR

Monday, April 3

Investigative Business Journalism Workshop, sponsored by Chicago Headline Club. See www.headlineclub.org.

Friday, April 21

Annual Journalism Banquet, NIU. Illinois Journalist of the Year award announced.

Chicago Headline Club's Annual Peter Lisagor Awards Banquet, Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, Chicago. See www.headlineclub.org.

Saturday, April 22

IHSA journalism competition, sectionals. Judges needed! Contact Jim Killam, jkillam@niu.edu.

Friday, April 28

NINA Spring Conference, Daily Herald, Arlington Heights. Co-sponsored by Illinois Press Association. See page 1.

Aug. 24-27

The Society of Professional Journalists holds its national convention at the Hyatt Regency Chicago. Info: www.spj.org

Friday, Oct. 27

NINA Fall Conference and Awards Luncheon, NIU-DeKalb.

Watch our Web site for more upcoming NINA workshops in 2006.

CONFERENCE

From Page 1

and other Web sites as the first director of new media for the Miami Herald Publishing Co., will cover important trends that all newspapers and journalists should be paying attention to, including portable devices, multimedia content and the rise of participatory media.

Kelly Casalino, director of Interactive Media for the Daily Herald, then will take the floor to present "The Internet - Where the Rubber Hits the Road." She will deliver practical suggestions on how newsrooms and online departments can deliver content that creates viewership and revenue opportunities.

Before coming to the Daily Herald in December 2005, Casalino was director of business consulting at Morris Communications in Georgia, and responsible for the Internet

revenue growth of the company's many newspapers. Her expertise in the Internet industry has made Casalino a highly sought-after speaker. This year she has appeared at the Newspaper Association of America's Rising Panel of Stars and as a guest speaker for the Canadian Newspaper Association.

Both Kelly and Rich will be available for a question-and-answer session as part of the workshop.



Colin O'Donnell is Vice President / Operations and Planning for the Daily Herald, Arlington Heights. Contact him at codonnell@dailyherald.com or 847-427-4551.