



K A P P A T A U A L P H A NEWSLETTER

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Rimmer installed as president

Tony Rimmer assumed the presidency of Kappa Tau Alpha August 11 at the conclusion of the annual meeting of the National Council in San Francisco. He is the 39th president of the Society.

Jane B. Singer, University of Iowa, became vice-president and Keith Sanders, University of Missouri, continues as executive director/treasurer. The officers will serve through the 2008 annual meeting in Chicago.

Rimmer, professor of communications at California State University-Fullerton and Director of the University's Faculty Development Center, is the first president from the west coast. He has been chapter adviser since 1993 and received the Taft Outstanding Adviser Award in 2001. He has served on the AEJMC Finance and Nominating Committees and has been a member of the Academic Senate at Fullerton. He is the author of more than 50 publications, focusing on media and religion, media economics, media and politics, new media technologies and on methodological issues in the conceptualizing and measurement of media use.

Rimmer was a television producer in New Zealand for nearly 10 years. He teaches graduate courses in communications theory and research methods and also has taught undergraduate courses in print and broadcast reporting. He was inducted into KTA in 1978 at the University of Texas-Austin, where he received his Ph.D.

Singer is associate professor at Iowa, where she has served as chapter adviser since 2000. Previously she was the founding adviser of the Colorado State University Chapter in 1997. She also has served as the president of the Alpha of Iowa chapter of Phi Beta Kappa.

Singer was the 2005 Taft Outstanding Adviser recipient. She is former

head of the Communications Technology Division of AEJMC and is a charter member of the Journalism Studies Interest Group of ICA.

Singer is author or co-author of more than 60 publications/papers, mostly related to online journalism. She also has published on ethics.

A former newspaper and online journalist, Singer received her Ph.D. from Missouri. She was initiated into KTA in 1977 by the Benjamin H. Hardy Jr. Chapter at the University of Georgia, where one of her favorite professors was George Abney, 32nd president of the Society.

Sanders is professor *emeritus* at Missouri, where he was O.O. McIntyre

Distinguished Professor. He served as department chair and associate dean for graduate studies and research. In 2000 he was selected as one of the five most significant leaders in KTA's history. He has been executive director since 1991. He received the MC & S Division's Professor of the Year Award in 1987. He served four years on the AEJMC Standing Committee on Research.

He was associate editor of *Mass Comm Review* (now *Mass Communication & Society*) for 11 years and served on the editorial board of *Journalism Monographs* for eight years. He received his Ph.D. from Iowa and was inducted into KTA at Ohio in 1962.

Initiation fee raised to \$30

Chapter advisers in the fall voted to increase the initiation fee/lifetime es to \$30. Members initiated after January 1 About 80% of the chapters used it last year. must pay the new fee.

The dues referendum was recommended by the National Council at its annual meeting in August in San Francisco. The recommendation was made following a presentation by Executive Director Keith Sanders that showed that the Society would continue to operate in the red and would exhaust its reserve fund within a few years if additional revenues were not forthcoming. Sanders noted that KTA had the second lowest initiation fee (\$20) of the 67 members of the Association of College Honor Societies (ACHS) but the highest qualifying standard for membership (upper 10%). Only one honor society had a lower fee, and only five others shared KTA's \$20. Fifty-eight per cent charge \$35 or more.

Under new business, four amendments to the Constitution were approved unanimously. Art. II-5 was

amended to indicate that the executive director shall "provide an annual financial report." Art. III-1 was amended to include "Western Association" in the list of accrediting agencies. Art. III-b and Art. III-d were changed to include "mass Communication" after journalism.

In his annual report, Sanders reported that the year's biggest achievement was creating on-line processing of Reports of Initiates.

During the annual KTA/AEJMC Awards Luncheon, President Thomas Schwartz (Ohio State) presented the Taft Outstanding Adviser of the Year Award to Mark Popovich (Ball State) and the Mott-KTA Research Award to Chad Raphael. Sanders presented chapter adviser service certificates to Jeanni Atkins (Mississippi), 10 years; James Scotton (Marquette), 10 years; and Al Stavitsky (Oregon), 13 years.

This year's annual meeting will be held at 7 a.m. Friday, Aug. 10 in Washington, D.C. The Awards Luncheon will begin at 11:45 a.m. the same day.

North Carolina A & T becomes newest chapter

North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University is the newest chapter of Kappa Tau Alpha. The petition from the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication won easy approval in balloting by members of the National Council.

North Carolina A & T, founded in 1891, is a land-grant university offering degree programs through the doctoral level with emphasis on engineering, science, technology, literature and other areas. Founded for the education of African-Americans, it is today a diverse community of scholars and a constituent of the University of North Carolina. It is located in Greensboro.

The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication is the third largest unit in the university and the largest in the College of Arts and Sciences with 500 undergraduate majors and 65 graduate students. Journalism courses first were offered in the late 1960s in the English Department. Journalism became a stand-alone department in the fall of 2006, offering concentrations in Electronic Media, Print Journalism, Broadcast Production, Public Relations and Media Management. The Master of Science in Journalism & Strategic

Communication will be an interdisciplinary program focused on the content and technology in three areas: Health and Environment; Globalization, Language and Culture; and Business Communication.

An associated foundation, the Institute for Advanced Journalism, is headed by journalist and commentator DeWayne Wickham. The foundation brings journalism students together with leaders on the national and world stage and adds to the interdisciplinary, global studies orientation of the program.

The department was accredited by ACEJMC in 2005.

A full-time faculty of nine has been productive, both in terms of traditional scholarship and in applied research/creative activity, especially in film and video and creative writing. The faculty contributes substantially to the university's technological mission by actively pursuing research about new media and virtual reality.

The department has benefited from a \$154 million campus-wide construction project that included a \$37 million renovation of Crosby Hall, the department's home. Among those upgrades was the installation of the only High Definition television studio at a university in North Carolina. Students

have an opportunity to work at radio station WNAA, the voice of A & T, and on *The Register*, the student newspaper now in its 82nd year.

WNAA broadcasts 24 hours a day year-round. Three professional positions are assigned to work with the station's 27-member staff of students and volunteers.

The Register is published weekly as a broadsheet, with full color printing and wire service support. The operation is entirely operated by a staff of students and volunteers drawn primarily from the journalism program.

Dr. Tamrat Mereba is interim chair of the department. Dr. Teresa Jo Styles will serve as chapter adviser.

The addition of NCAT brings the number of active chapters to 92. A total of 118 chapters have been chartered. Five chapters were inactivated when their journalism/mass comm programs were eliminated. Charters were withdrawn from 21 chapters for failing to initiate new members on a regular basis as required by the Constitution. One charter was revoked for noncompliance with membership rules.

'Communication' majors rank high in cheating

Communications and business majors share the dubious distinction of having the highest cheating levels in surveys conducted by the Center for Academic Integrity.

According to Don McCabe, founder of CAI and its primary researcher, about 75% of college students admit to cheating of some kind. About 25% admit to cheating on tests and nearly 50% have cheated on written work. Based on students' self-reports, it is logical to assume that actual occurrence is higher.

"Communications" includes communication, journ/ masscomm and any "media-related communications" majors.

Although he cannot break out data just on J/MC students, McCabe wrote KTA, "I have noticed [for journalism students] lower levels for self-reported cheating on written work accompanied by

comments on how 'sacred' their written work is to them. But they do cheat on tests like everyone else."

Cheating is most likely to occur, according to McCabe, where it is a campus norm, where the school has no honor code and when students think faculty don't support integrity policies, think there is little chance of getting caught and think penalties are insignificant.

His solutions: monitor tests carefully, change exams often, discuss views on integrity, include in syllabus specific information about cheating, use plagiarism detection software. Educate students about what constitutes academic dishonesty and what penalties may occur.

Academic dishonesty is sufficient "cause" to deny or revoke KTA membership.



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the list of sources in some reports seems to have been drawn directly from the list of witnesses at Senate hearings held during the same period. Thus, these reports reflected growing divisions within the federal government over the hot-button issues of the era – poverty, national defense (in Vietnam and the Caribbean), and consumer protection –not simply the advent of media criticism and independence from government as a whole. Reporters strongly privileged federal officials' framing of the issues by ignoring the claims of social movements or filtering them through the realm of policy options discussed in Congress. Just as important, documentarians consistently suggested that national policy makers were the appropriate actors to solve the problems raised in reports, legitimating Congress and the Presidency as sources of reform.

These conflicts revealed that neither television journalism nor government were monolithic entities. Administrative and judicial rulings expanded First Amendment protections for television journalists in response to disputes over many of these documentaries. Most notably, the FCC began reining in its own enforcement of the Fairness Doctrine, which offered targets of reports a limited opportunity to respond, and the Commission's less well known rules against willful distortion of the news. For their part, the media as a whole did not rally around the reports or television journalists' free speech rights.

Although the documentaries that drew fire favored liberal positions, they do not support the notion that news media became more liberal independently of other institutions. First, television did not represent the media in general, given the strong criticism of these documentaries from affiliates and many print reporters. Second, the liberalism of these disputed documentaries reflected and reinforced the dominance of liberal ideas in government, especially among Senators and Representatives who could offer reporters a kind of "starter's kit" containing issue framings, research, and sources gathered through Congressional hearings. The documentaries also reflected network news' economic interest in nationalizing stories and their

journalists' aspirations to reach a broad audience by depicting sometimes local or international problems as national issues that required government action by the White House and Congress.

The lesson for me as a scholar and teacher is that to introduce students and others to the complexities of the relationships between media and government we need to stop asking *whether* journalists collaborate with or confront officials, because they must and ought to do both, but *how* they do so. Rather than asking whether cooperation or adversarialism is

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ethical we need to ask what kinds of interdependence and independence are optimal for a democratic polity.

Studying media reaction to these struggles, especially by content analyzing coverage in the major metropolitan newspapers and in the national newsmagazines, convinced me that news organizations themselves are not always the best defenders of investigative reporting. Some of the corporate and government counter-attacks on well-supported investigative claims were echoed for ideological reasons by conservative network affiliates, columnists, and editorial writers. Some of the criticism was made for economic reasons, especially affiliates' resistance to documentaries in general for being low-profit programming. Some of the condemnation was motivated by cultural and professional conflicts within journalism between national and local lmedia, between television and print journalists and between television journalists and executives.

Even when journalistic commentators supported watchdog reporting they were likely to be distracted from muckrakers' charges by corporate and government targets of investigative reporting. Follow-up print coverage, whether it repeated or rebutted attacks on the the reports' fairness or accuracy, most often shifted attention to questions of journalism ethics. This

blunted the impact these documentaries' charges might have had in policy circles by pushing the issues raised out of the headlines in favor of disputes over news techniques and TV regulation.

Certainly, television muckrakers began experimenting with a host of questionable techniques in the 1960s, including use of hidden cameras, re-enacting events, editing interviewees' remarks out of sequence, and paying sources. Of course, scholars and journalists should continue to examine the ethics of how all reporters get their stories. Yet too often we allow this discussion, in the news and in our classrooms, to close down inquiry into whether the reports are accurate, and therefore what citizens and policy makers ought to do to address them.

I had seen over and over that the interdependence of reporters and officials, and the internal conflicts within each camp, complicated the vision that investigative reporting is the highest form of journalism. Yet, I had to complete my research in order to grasp how fully the fourth estate depended upon the other three branches of government for its independence.

The paradox was present at the birth of the investigative documentary, which was engendered largely by government regulators. Television muckraking appeared stillborn at the end of the 1950s after the cancellation of *See It Now*. But it was reborn in the network documentary largely in response to regulatory pressure resulting from the quiz show scandals and potential anti-trust investigations in Congress.

Although government forces are often muckrakers' chief targets and critics, officials and jurists are also often reporters' best sources, collaborators, defenders, and regulatory champions. The ultimate lesson for me as a scholar and teacher is that we need to convey a paradoxical truth about investigative reporting to the public: it will not survive as an independent check on power without sustaining a web of relationships with government that ensures that this crucial kind of reporting for democracy is funded and protected from extinction at the hands of media owners, advertisers, corporate targets, and government itself.

Investigating TV documentaries

Chad Raphael received the Frank Luther Mott Research Award for the best research book on journalism and mass communication published in 2005. Below he describes how he researched and wrote *Investigated Reporting: Muckrakers, Regulators, and the Struggle over Television Documentary*

When I applied to graduate school at Northwestern University in the 1990s to study the news media I was torn between seeking acceptance to the Communication Studies department, which favored a social scientific approach to studying contemporary media, and the Radio-TV-Film Department, which focused on historical and textual analysis of media. I even switched my application from one department to the other. I ended up taking courses in both departments, plus Political Science, because I felt that I could only understand the contemporary news media if I had studied its past and done so from multiple disciplinary perspectives.

Trying to keep a foot in three areas of the field was not easy, especially since I have only two feet. But I have not regretted trying. Prevailing theories about the media and politics often covertly inform, and inevitably enrich, historical research. The past offers as valuable a laboratory as the present for testing those theories. Good research can embrace both coding of representative samples of media texts and careful qualitative interpretation of unrepresentative but influential examples. And it turned out that I needed three feet to write my book.

I began by wanting to understand the growth of investigative reporting on American television and what it revealed about theories of the news media's relationship to government. I did not need to excavate the origins of muckraking on the small screen in Edward R. Murrow and Fred Friendly's *See It Now* program of the 1950s – that had been done in the many worthy biographies of Murrow and in Thomas Rostek's close study of Murrow's broadcasts about Senator Joseph McCarthy. Furthermore, the program was so unique at the time that it could not account for why investigative reporting took root and spread later.

Moreover, I found that the real institutionalization of watchdog reporting

on television came in between these two periods with the explosion of network documentaries in the 1960s and early 1970s, when many of the techniques for conducting this kind of journalism were invented and solidified and when television journalists faced and survived the most frequent and intense government investigations of their work in the medium's history. This was the period when watchdog reporting established itself not only on the screen but in Congress, the courts, and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as a legitimate form of journalism that warranted network investment and free speech protections.

I was also pleasantly surprised to find that in the 1960s television made a

"This history still mattered and there was more of it to tell than had been told."

greater contribution than is often recognized to the first sustained period of muckraking in America since the Progressive Era. The dramatic expansion of prime-time network documentary series in the early part of the decade predated the first permanent investigative teams at metropolitan newspapers by several years.

Methodologically, this was a fortuitous period to study because it was long enough ago that a good deal of material on how documentaries were produced, including films and tapes of the reports themselves, had been archived around the country. Yet the era was recent enough that I could still interview journalists who contributed to the reports and new information was coming to light in papers and memoirs. Because I chose to study muckraking documentaries that were most extensively investigated by government forces (in the White House, the FCC, Congress, and the courts) there were troves of government documents, from debates in the *Congressional Record* to administrative and judicial rulings to the papers of Presidential administrations and Congress-

sional representatives. This history still mattered and there was more of it to tell than had been told.

What, then, did I learn? Of the many issues treated in the book, three stand out in retrospect as especially pertinent to us today, both as scholars and teachers.

The rise of investigative reporting on television in the 1960s helped spark well-known claims about growing media adversarialism toward government and business and a drift toward more liberal coverage. These claims are still very much with us today. We tend to forget that the image of the news media as increasingly oppositional to government was condemned not only by conservatives such as

Vice-President Spiro Agnew and the newly-founded watchdog organization Accuracy in Media, but also by moderates such as Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan. That same image was embraced by many journalists emboldened by new opportunities for commentary and critique, including the television documentary.

Examining the most controversial investigative reports of the time allowed me to assess what social scientists call "limit cases" – instances where we would most expect to see evidence of media adversarialism toward government if the theory were true. Government and business actors attacked all of the documentaries with great intensity, raising many of them as prime examples in larger indictments of the news media. Investigative reporting gave journalists greater license and resources than everyday beat reporting to include unofficial sources and express dissent. Over time, they produced some of the most famous and contested reports of the era, such as *Harvest of Shame*, *Hunger in America*, and *The Selling of the Pentagon*. If the theory of growing media antipathy to government cannot explain these cases, it has a lot of explaining to do.

The evidence I found supports those who are skeptical about the rise of an oppositional media at the time. Investigative reporters relied heavily on government sources to inform and frame documentaries;

(continued on page 3)