



NEWSWORTHY Online

THE MINNESOTA NEWS COUNCIL: *Promoting fair, vigorous, and trusted journalism*

November 2007

NEWS COUNCIL ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

On Nov. 1, the Minnesota News Council announced the appointment of Sarah Bauer as its executive director. Bauer has served as the organization's interim director following the retirement of Gary Gilson as executive director in December 2006.



Sarah Bauer

Bauer has led the News Council through a 10-month transition period, during which she oversaw the expansion of News Council staff to include a Development Director. She has also worked to update and refine the News Council's complaint procedures and led an effort that has resulted in a significant reduction in the organization's operating costs.

[Read more...](#)

[Sarah Bauer](#) can be reached at (612) 341-9357.

MN DAILY COMPARES LOCAL ARTIST TO "THE MADWOMAN OF CHAILLOT"

Local artist Mari Newman complained to the News Council after the Minnesota Daily published a [theater review](#) of "The Madwoman of Chaillot" that referred to her as a local "crazy woman." Newman, who is known for her colorfully decorated home in South Minneapolis, felt the terms used to describe her in the review were unfair. The paper responded to Newman's concerns, and said the article did not reference Newman pejoratively, but in fact praised her as a nonconformist.

At an August 16 hearing, the Minnesota News Council upheld a complaint that the Minnesota Daily was unfair in using Newman to introduce a play review. The vote was 10-4. The News Council also voted 11-3 to uphold a complaint that the review was unfair in how it described the character and activities of Ms. Newman. See the hearing [determination](#) for more details.

WCCO-TV WEB SITE MIXES ANTI-TAX RALLY WITH GLOBAL WARMING PROTEST

Several attendees of an April 14 tax cut rally at the MN State Capitol complained to the News Council after WCCO-TV posted mislabeled video of the rally at their Web site. The footage that included images from both the tax cut rally and an anti-global warming rally held the same day was accompanied by the headline "Global Warming Protest on Capitol Hill." The complainants likened the inaccurate headline to being misquoted.

At a June 21 public hearing, News Council members voted 14-0 to uphold a complaint that the video posted at WCCO's Web site misrepresented tax cut rally attendees when it featured footage of them along with footage from a global warming protest held the same day. Although WCCO did not participate in the hearing, News Director Jeff Kiernan told complainant Sue Derhaag that he was "unaware the video was still active," and said its caption would be changed. This was the first time that News Council members were asked to examine a complaint regarding online news coverage on a Web site.

See the hearing [determination](#) for more details.

MNC PUBLIC COMPLAINTS REFLECT CONCERNS ABOUT INACCURACY, BIAS AND NON-COVERAGE

Since the beginning of 2007, 39 complaints have been filed with the News Council by persons who were not named or clearly alluded to in news coverage, but who complained about ethical issues related to the reporting of news.

Several public complaints outlined concerns that coverage of certain issues, including the expansion of light rail transit, professional sports stadium construction and new immigration laws, is biased. Some readers are concerned that the reporting of important political and social issues is slanted or one-sided. Other public complaints outline concerns that media outlets do not give coverage to important events, third party candidates and other local political issues.

News Council hearings do not address these "public complaints," but they are sent to news organizations, and a response to either the News Council or the complainant is requested. The News Council tracks these issues and reports on trends in the public's concerns with local (and even national) journalism. Public complaints also lead to public forums, where members of the public and journalists can come together to discuss hot issues in journalistic ethics.

See our [Public Complaints Report](#) for more details.

ERIKA ROLAND JOINS MNC STAFF AS DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR



Erika Roland

In July, Erika Roland joined the MNC staff as its Development Director. Roland, who came to the Council with more than a decade of experience in non-profit development and management has already begun to reenergize donor commitments to the mission of the News Council. Roland has enjoyed meeting many of our current donors and looks forward to expanding financial support of the News Council throughout the state.

[Erika Roland](#) can be reached at (612) 339-0030.

CALLING ALL NEWS JUNKIES:

We are currently accepting applications for membership on the News Council.

Joining the News Council hearing panel is a great opportunity to participate in discussions about media ethics and standards, as well as meet local journalists, professionals and newsmakers.

[Fill out an application today!](#)

We now accept donations online!
[Support our work today.](#)

To stop receiving this monthly update of the Minnesota News Council, please [click here](#).
Questions or comments? E-mail us at info@news-council.org or call (612) 341-9357.