

# Spot News

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## ETSPJ Diversity Program

# Speakers mostly pleased with coverage, offer ideas

by Dorothy Bowles

That Mohamed Nofal and Fathi Husain had to interrupt Muslim holy day activities to attend the ETSPJ diversity program exemplifies the need for a program to help local journalists develop multi-cultural sensitivity. Nofal excused ETSPJ's scheduling, however, noting that Eid ul Adha is timed by lunar stages rather than a specific calendar date.

The Jan. 20 program was designed as a "listening session" for journalists to hear members of East Tennessee's minority communities talk about their cultures and about their perceptions of how local media might better cover their individual communities. Communities represented included Jewish, Muslim, Filipino, Hispanic, African-American, Native-American, Gay and Lesbian.

Representatives were generally positive about local media coverage of their communities, but noted room for improvement. Speakers typically began their remarks by stating that they did not speak for their entire communities, but rather, were speaking as knowledgeable individuals within that particular community. They cautioned news outlets against publicizing the comments of one minority community member as representative of an entire community, urging reporters to seek a variety of spokespersons within a community.

Fact sheets with multiple names of local sources and other basic information about each group were distributed at the meeting. At least one speaker advised against using information about minority groups on the Internet without checking it out.

Similarities among speakers' "wish lists" for news coverage included the following:

- **Place wire stories into their larger context.** Orlina Baldonado, for example, said that news stories about violent incidents caused by a small renegade group in the Southern Philippines rarely mention the relative insignificance of these incidents on the area.

"Others living within that area do not fear for their safety. It is safe to visit there," Baldonado said.

Nofal, an engineer who moved to Knoxville from Palestine 20 years ago, observed that wire stories about the Shi'ite majority in Iraq rarely point out that in the rest of the Islamic world, Sunnis outnumber Shi'ites.

- **Tell about good things happening in these local minority communities,** such as festivals, family activities, self-help programs, contributions to the well-being of Knoxville and East Tennessee, rather than emphasizing negative events involving minorities, like crime or drug addiction.

"Life is not always a crisis in Israel," Mary Linda Schwarzbart said. She suggested stories about cooperative ventures between Jews and Arabs in the Middle East and about major technology developments initiated in Israel.

The Rev. Galloway said local media pay little attention to the fact that the gay and lesbian community is the primary segment of the population involved in AIDS

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## Wish list *From page 1*

work in Knoxville. He said the disease has eradicated as many people, especially in Africa, as were killed in the recent Asian tsunami.

Casey Runner, public relations coordinator for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, described multiple infrastructure improvements to the town of Cherokee, N. C., paid for by proceeds from the gaming industry.

“We relied heavily on federal and state grants,” Runner said, “and now gaming has allowed the tribe to stand on its own better than in the past.”

- **Recognize the diverse cultures within each community.** Carlos Nicho, who publishes Mundo Hispano (Hispanic World), a bilingual newspaper for Spanish-speaking Tennessee residents, pointed out that his readers came here from a variety of countries, each with its own culture. Nofal said Muslim culture is a “mixed salad” of different customs from more than 100 predominately Muslim countries in the world. The Rev. Bob Gallo-way noted that Lesbian issues are quite different from those of gay men.

- **Include elementary information about cultural mores where relevant to a story.** Nicho said it would have been relevant in news stories about a Hispanic woman facing criminal charges for briefly leaving a baby in a car to have mentioned that this is common practice in many Latin American countries. Husain said he wished that in stories about school dress-code controversies, the media would explain the religious significance of Muslim dress customs for girls and women.

- **Distinguish between issues related to nationality and those concerning religion.** Not all conflicts between Jews and Arabs relate to religion, Nofal said, and not all Arabs are Muslim. Some issues relate more to nationality than to religious differences.

“The place of God and government are issues that need more attention,” Schwarzbart said, particularly prayer in public forums. She said the prayers said earlier in the day at the inauguration ceremony were terribly insensitive to the diverse religious population of the United States.

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### More story ideas

In addition to those noted in the main story, panelists at the diversity program suggested these story ideas as particularly relevant to minority communities.

- Reluctance of some groups to report crime to the police (both documented and undocumented Guatemalans living in Chattanooga; gay victims of hate crimes).
- Attitudes toward family doctors among some Hispanic segments.
- Significance of major religious holidays and customs associated with them.
- Immigration issues.
- Housing issues (slum lords; refusal to rent to minorities).
- Insurance company policies toward “certificates to drive” in lieu of standard licenses for immigrants.
- New tactics Cherokee tribal leaders are using to wage war on drugs.
- Cultural preservation programs for Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

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## Wish list

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- **Avoid labeling according to ethnic group or sexual orientation where not important to the story.**

In addition to “wish list” similarities, some speakers noted items particularly pertinent to their community. The Rev. Galloway was critical of the media for not reporting Bush administration policy changes that rescinded protection for gays and lesbians in government workplaces. Non-closeted gays were unaware that the administration had turned back the clock, leading to the recent firing of a gay person at the national lab in Oak Ridge, for example.

Galloway noted with irony that in striving for balanced coverage about gay and lesbian issues or about the Metropolitan Community Church, reporters always include comments from conservative Christian clergymen.

Yet, those same reporters never contact a MCC representative for comment about conservative Christian activities or practices.

Avon Rollins Sr., executive director of the Beck Cultural Exchange Center, lamented that more attention isn't given to economic issues affecting African-Americans individually and as a group. He said that during the past decade, black population in Knoxville increased 24 percent, doubling the growth rate of whites.

At the close of the two-hour panel discussion, many in the audience seemed reluctant to leave the WBIR conference room, lingering to ask question and talk with panelists.

ETSPJ program chair Ed Hooper was primarily responsible for organizing the program, along with help from program committee members Bill Shory and Thomas Fraser.

## Knox area minority population and contact information

These population figures and contact information were supplied by panelists at the Jan. 20 Diversity program.

**African-American:** 16.4% of Tennessee residents (933,000 of total 5,689,283); 87% reside in metropolitan areas, chiefly Memphis.

Contact: Beck Cultural Exchange Center, 1927 Dandridge Ave., Knoxville, [beckcenter@aol.com](mailto:beckcenter@aol.com).

**Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians:** 13,282, total enrolled members; 7,584 living on the reservation; 9,939 living in North Carolina and 471 living in Tennessee.

Contact: Casey Runner, public relations coordinator, 810 Acquoni Road, Suite 500, Cherokee, N.C. 28719, (828) 497-8125, [caserunn@nc-chokeee.com](mailto:caserunn@nc-chokeee.com) or contact the chief at (828) 497-7002.

Web: [www.cherokee-nc.com](http://www.cherokee-nc.com)

**Filipino-American:** estimated 130 families within a 50-mile radius of Knoxville, plus 25 families with adopted children from the Philippines.

Contact: Orlino Baldonado, 789-8324 in Knoxville, [Orlino@eccorporation.com](mailto:Orlino@eccorporation.com).

**Hispanic:** 123,000 in Tennessee, according to last census, but panelist said a conservative estimate was double this official number.

Contact: Jorge L. Chaparro, corporate marketing manager of Hispanic World bilingual newspaper, 4223 South Wahli Drive, Knoxville, 548-1148, [mundohispano@comcast.net](mailto:mundohispano@comcast.net).

Web: [www.mundohispanoTV.com](http://www.mundohispanoTV.com).

**Jewish:** estimated 2,000+ households in East Tennessee. Knoxville has had a continuous Jewish presence since the 1850s.

Contact: (for social, political, cultural matters) Bernard S. Rosenblatt, executive director, Knoxville Jewish Alliance, 6800 Deane Hill Drive, Knoxville, 690-6343. Web: [www.jewishknoxville.org](http://www.jewishknoxville.org). or Michael Dzik, executive director, Jewish Federation of Greater Chattanooga, P.O. Box 8947, Chattanooga, TN 37412, (423) 493-0270.

**Muslim:** approximately 4,000 in Knoxville, representing more than 20 countries of the world.

Contact: Annor Masjid (mosque), 100 13th St., 637-8172, or Br. Mohammad Islam Hussain, 405-1045.

## Substance abuse workshop planned for journalists

The East Tennessee Society of Professional Journalists, The Daily Times of Maryville and Cornerstone of Recovery will present an all-day workshop on substance abuse and chemical dependency, Feb. 28 at Cornerstone of Recovery, 1214 Topside Road, Louisville.

The workshop will focus on drug addiction, drug problems in East Tennessee, treatment and recovery. Cornerstone of Recovery, a treatment center in Blount County, will provide lunch and the meeting facilities for the workshop, as well as several speakers.

The workshop will convene at 9 a.m. and end at 4 p.m. A tentative agenda follows:

9 a.m.: Welcome and introductions: Dorothy A. Bowles of the University of Tennessee and Larry Aldridge of The Daily Times.

9:15-9:30 a.m.: Welcome and a brief history of Cornerstone, Dan Caldwell, CEO, Cornerstone of Recovery.

9:30 a.m.: Addiction--the neurobiology and pharmacology, genetics, and other scientific approaches to addiction, Dr. Gary O'Shaughnessy, Cornerstone of Recovery medical director; Dave Reeves, Cornerstone director of nursing; and Dr. Scott Anderson, Cornerstone clinical director.

10:30 a.m.: Law enforcement challenges and the state of the war on drugs; the path of drugs from the field to the street with an emphasis on Oxycontin and meth; a look at the Blount County Drug Court program, Judge

Kelly Thomas; Knox County District Attorney Randy Nichols; Capt. Ron Talbott with Blount County Drug Task Force.

11:30 a.m.: Break for tours of Cornerstone facility.

Noon: Lunch

1 p.m.: Treatment--Models, goals, what's needed, what's necessary, Dr. Scott Anderson and Dan Caldwell.

2 p.m.: A first-person account--Steve Wildsmith, weekend editor for The Daily Times, on his addiction and ongoing recovery.

2:30 p.m.: The business of treatment--the cost of treatment vs. jail; insurance problems, Dan Caldwell and Mark Hartley, Cornerstone of Recovery CFO.

3:30 p.m.: Looking ahead--What's on the horizon as far as treatment goes; what are the challenges facing treatment providers and law enforcement; wrap-up and story ideas.

4 p.m. – Adjourn.

You are asked to RSVP in order to provide Cornerstone with a head-count for lunch. In addition, if the number of participants exceeds the space limitations of Cornerstone's board room, CEO Dan Caldwell has agreed to rent a ballroom at the Airport Hilton for us to use. RSVP to Wildsmith (406-9774), Aldridge (981-1115) or Sally Guthrie (sallyguthrie@mindspring.com).

We strongly encourage any interested members of the East Tennessee media to attend. An abbreviated evening session is being planned for March or April.

There is no charge for the seminar, and Cornerstone has graciously agreed to pay for the lunch and seminar materials as part of its community outreach and education mission.

## From Poynteronline Web Tips

By Jonathan Dube  
[MSNBC.com/CyberJournalist.net](http://MSNBC.com/CyberJournalist.net)

Want to do the right thing, but you're not sure what that is? Sometimes journalists need help making informed decisions on tough ethical calls.

For the past four years, the Ethics AdviceLine for Journalists (866-DILEMMA) has helped hundreds of journalists try to do the right thing by connecting them with experts to discuss their ethical dilemmas.

Now the Ethics AdviceLine has a new Web page where journalists can submit their questions (<http://www.ethicsadviceforjournalists.org>). Requests are confidential and most questions are answered within 24 hours.

The free service is sponsored by the Chicago Headline Club Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists and Loyola University Chicago Center for Ethics and Social Justice. Journalists can also still call toll free to get advice: 1-866-DILEMMA.

Another resource is Poynter On Call. Professional journalists can call Poynter's special toll-free number: 877-639-7817. The best time to reach someone at Poynter is between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., East Coast time.

Also check out the interactive ASNE/Poynter Ethics Tool, which will lead you through a series of questions to help you make an informed ethical decision on deadline.