

AlaPressa

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA PRESS ASSOCIATION

MAY 2017

Important Dates

Online Media Campus

*"Building a Strong Service
Directory to Increase Revenue"*

Category: Revenue

Wednesday, June 7

Presenter Janet DeGeorge

2017 APA Summer Convention

July 6-8, 2017

Orange Beach, AL

Hotel Deadline:

Wednesday, June 14

Convention registration is open
Hotel deadline is June 14

APA welcomes two new
staff members

Citronelle publisher to run
for state Legislature



Alabama Press Association
 Alabama Newspaper Advertising
 Service Inc.
 3324 Independence Drive
 Suite 200
 Birmingham, AL 35209
 (205) 871-7737
 (205) 871-7740 (fax)
 www.alabamapress.org

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Convention registration is open Hotel deadline is June 14



Perdido Beach Resort

Register now for the APA Summer Convention July 6-8 at the Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach. Register online at <https://alabamapress.org/summer>.

The deadline to reserve a hotel room at the conference rate is Wednesday, June 14. Book your room online at www.perdido beachresort.com or call 1-800-634-8001. Use Booking ID#13538. Please DO NOT wait until the last

minute to book your room. Once rooms in the APA block are sold, no more rooms can be added at the conference rate.

The unofficial start of the convention is Thursday evening with a two-hour sunset dolphin cruise aboard Wild Hearts, a 53-foot, open ocean catamaran.

see 2017 Summer Convention pg 3

APA welcomes two new staff members

Miranda Agee and Meegan Maxwell have joined the staff at the Alabama Press Association as part-time employees. Agee replaced Chris McDaniel and will serve as membership and events coordinator. Maxwell replaces Amy Metzler as network coordinator and inside sales rep.

Agee, a native of Wisconsin, is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin with a degree in print



Miranda Agee

journalism and mass communication. She has worked in magazine journalism since 2009, working with

titles such as Architectural Digest, Luxe Interiors + Design, Cottages & Gardens, Lonny, and Vogue. She continues to work as a freelance journalist for various media outlets.



Meegan Maxwell

Agee and her husband, John, relocated to Birmingham from New York last year. In her role as member services coordinator, Agee is working on the Better Newspaper Contest and on the upcoming APA Summer Convention, as well as other member services duties.

see new staff members pg 3

2017 Summer Convention

from pg 2

The boat departs from the dock across the street from the hotel. Convention programs include:

- “Mind Your Niches” and “Why classifieds are newspapers’ next Big Thing” with Bill Ostendorf, president of Creative Circle Media Solutions

- Quick and easy videos using tools you already have with Dan Meissner

- “Revolution, Rights and Rock ‘n’ Roll: The hidden history of the First Amendment” with Ken Paulson

After a short membership meet-

ing at lunch, delegates can enjoy an afternoon of golf, shopping, beach or just relaxing before the 2017 Better Newspaper Contest reception and banquet Saturday evening.

A registration form is included in this email. Please contact Miranda Agee or Felicia Mason at the APA office (205-871-7737 or 1-800-264-7043) if you have any questions or need additional information.

See you in Orange Beach!

new staff members

from pg 2

“We were fortunate to find someone with Miranda’s skills to join our team at APA,” APA Executive Director Felicia Mason said. “This is our busiest time of year, so her training has been like a daily fire drill, but she has

caught on quickly.”

Maxwell is a native of Eufaula. She earned a bachelor’s degree in Psychology from Auburn University, and a master’s in Program for Family Counseling from Troy University. She began her working career with a paper route for The Eufaula Tribune.

After moving to Birmingham, she has worked as a personal banking officer for Compass Bank and a program director at Young Rembrandts Afterschool Art Program.

Maxwell is handling advertising accounts and the print and digital networks offered through the Alabama

Newspaper Advertising Service.

“Meegan is adapting well and has a tremendous attitude and a desire to learn about our products and how we do things,” APA Ad Manager Brad English said. “We feel good about where we are, sales-wise, so far in 2017. Meegan will play a very important role in maintaining that momentum.”

She and her husband, Tom, have two daughters, Meredith, 13, and Madeline, 10.

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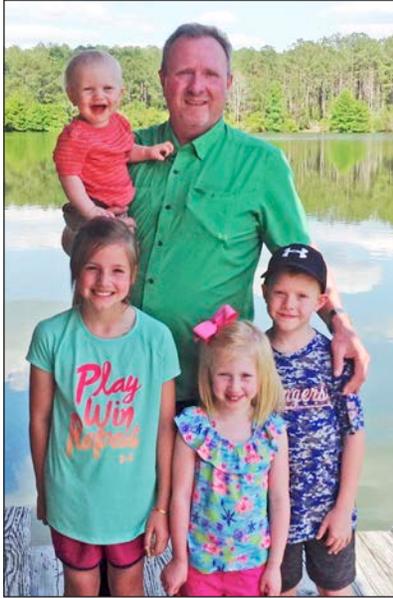


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Citronelle publisher to run for state Legislature

Willie Gray, publisher of the Call News in Citronelle and the Washington County News in Chatom, announced recently that he is running for the Ala-



Willie Gray and his grandchildren: Karley, Emmalynn, Kellan and Easton.

bama House of Representatives.

"My wife, Rhonda, and I have taken this decision very seriously, and if we did not think this is where the Lord wanted us to go, we would not be entering the race for the Alabama House of Representatives," Gray said.

Gray says losing his father at the age of 6 taught him a valuable lesson about hard work. It was a struggle for his family, and he started working at age 12 with a gardening company, in hay fields and hog parlors. He went on to become a sales supervisor for the Dairy Fresh Corporation.

In 1993, Gray, and his wife Rhonda, bought the Call News in Citronelle from Dalton and Pauline Jackson. Willie remained with Dairy Fresh until 1995 before joining the newspaper full time. The Grays have grown the paper from a tabloid publication with less than 300 circulation to an award-winning newspaper with a circulation over 18,000.

The Grays began publishing a TMC (the Shopper's Plus) in 2002, and bought the Washington County News in 2006. Currently they are the publishers of the Call News, Washington County

News of Chatom, Shoppers Plus and the Mobile Record.

"Campaigning for political office is not really something that I ever thought I would do, but none of us ever knows what God has in store for us or when the next chapter of our lives will turn a page," Gray said. "I have never been one who desires to be in the spotlight or in the forefront of a political campaign or anything else for that matter. I have always felt comfortable being one of the workers behind the scenes. This time, it's different. I feel that I am being led to step out and run for this position."

Gray is very active in local and statewide organizations. He served as president of the Alabama Press Association in 2008, and serves on the APA Legislative Committee. Locally, he serves on the Mobile County Republican Board as well as various civic clubs in Mobile and Washington Counties. He is the current chairman of the Citronelle Industrial Development Board and the North Mobile County Education Council.

see **Gray** pg 5

People

Beau Laird has been named director of advertising at The Tuscaloosa News. Laird began working at the newspaper in 2011, and has served as retail sales manager and digital sales manager. He has served as interim advertising director since January.

Laird is a native of Amory, Miss., and a graduate of Mississippi State University.

Heather Bradley has joined the staff of the Geneva County Reaper as a reporter. She will graduate from Troy University in December with a degree in American and Latin American History.

Bradley grew up near Geneva. She has an interest in photography and believes her interest in history will be helpful in her role as a reporter.

Red Bay News Managing Editor **Keith Ledbetter** recently announced his retirement. Ledbetter started at the paper in 2000 as a sales representa-

tive. He later added writing and photography duties, working his way up to managing editor.

Ledbetter will be replaced by **Bridget Berry**.

Lizzie Arbogast has been named the sports editor at The Outlook in Alexander City and The Dadeville Record. A native of Charlottesville, Va., Arbogast brings seven years of sports reporting experience to the position. She most recently spent five years as a sports reporter for the Public Opinion in Chambersburg, Penn.

She is a graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University where she majored in Mass Communication.

Kim Patterson has been named acting publisher of The Sand Mountain Reporter in Albertville. She replaces Jonathan Stinson, who is moving to the Huntsville area.

Patterson began her career at The

Reporter as an advertising assistant before being promoted to business manager in 2012.

Also at The Reporter, **Adam Rhoden** has been promoted to director of sales and marketing. He has served as advertising director for the past three years.

Donald Campbell has joined the staff at The Outlook in Alexander City and The Dadeville Record. Campbell is a graduate of the University of Alabama at Birmingham with a bachelor's and a master's degree in history. He also holds a master's in journalism from the University of Alabama.

Campbell has worked most recently as a writer at the Southern Torch in Rainsville.

Gray

from pg 4

“Campaigning while running four companies is a lot of work, but that is all Rhonda and I know how to do. We get up in the morning, go to work and work until you are done. We get up the next

day and start all over again.”

The Grays are members of the Gulfcrest Baptist Church, where Willie has served as a deacon for the past 20 years and is currently chairman of the deacon board. They have two children, William Gray and Ashlee Redding. William is the sales manager for the couple’s newspaper company, and Ashlee is a chemist for Arkema in Axis. They also have four grandchildren, Karley, Kellan, Emmalynn and Easton.

“Because of all the community projects Rhonda and I have been involved in for the last 35 years, I think God has used those experiences as avenues to prepare me for this new chapter in my life. I have no doubt that He will lead me to where I am supposed to go, and if I am elected, I can only promise that I will be a servant not only to the people of district 102 but also to the people of Alabama, but first and foremost, I will be a servant to God.”

Briefs

The Arab Chamber of Commerce recently awarded **The Arab Tribune** with its Lifetime Achievement Award. The award is given each year to the business, group or citizen who has made a significant impact in the community over an extended period of time.

In March of this year, The Tribune began its 60th year of publication. The

newspaper, founded by Ralph Reed, has had four publishers, all from the same family. The current owner and publisher, Ed Reed, is the nephew of the founding Reed.

Reckcon by al.com is a new social media platform developed by the Alabama Media Group for reporting and

discussion of important issues facing Alabama. It is original reporting, along with curation of local and national journalism about Alabama.

Readers are invited to ask questions they think need answers and introduce topics that need investigating.

Visit Reckcon at: <https://www.facebook.com/ReckconAL/>

Columns

Expectations are like icebergs

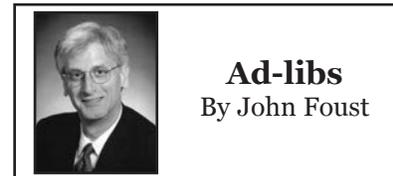
Saundra’s experience as a sales manager has given her a unique perspective on client relationships. “Most sales people in the advertising business are taught to discover problems and prescribe solutions to those problems,” she said. “Too often, a sales person hears about a problem and says, ‘We can fix that. Just advertise with us, and everything will be fine. It’ll be fantastic.’ I think that’s a flawed approach, because it sets unrealistic expectations.

“A long time ago, I heard that expectations are like icebergs,” she explained. “Only ten percent is above the surface. It’s the ninety percent you can’t see that can sink your boat. The obvious things are above the surface: when the ads run, how much they cost, and copy that has been proofed for typos. The hidden expectations – the things below the surface – are their expectations on the results the ads are supposed to generate.

“Expectations can be our best friends or our worst enemies,” she said. “When we meet – or exceed – advertisers’ expectations, they feel good about our product and want to run more ads. But when the ads let them down, they might move their ad dollars somewhere else.”

Saundra went on to say that she

teaches her team how to bring hidden expectations above the surface. “Advertisers are going to have expectations whether or not we bring up the subject. The key is to have some con-



Ad-libs
By John Foust

trol over those expectations. We want our advertisers to understand that an image campaign is not going to make their cash registers ring right away. And we want them to know that a response campaign has to make the right offers in order to create immediate results.”

Here are some key points:

1. Ad results drive ad sales. An old friend in the advertising business once said, “When you’re catching rabbits, don’t move the box.” In other words, when an ad strategy produces good results, it makes sense to continue that strategy. On the other hand, if a merchant’s ads in a particular media outlet produce disappointing results, he or she may think, “Ads in the Gazette don’t work.”

When ads start running, there’s a lot riding on results.

2. Go for measurable outcomes. The surest way to convey the value of running ads with you is to measure results. It’s hard to believe a statement like, “Car dealers get good responses from advertising here.” It’s more convincing to say, “Ace Motors ran a two-month campaign with us last year, and they generated x-percent increase in sales over that same period in the previous year.”

3. Look for comparisons. On one level, you can compare ad response rates within your own paper. (“When Advertiser A changed from image ads to weekly specials, their response rates increased x-percent.”) On a deeper level, you can compare results with other media outlets (“Advertiser B moved their ads from XYZ Media to us and generated x-percent increase in traffic.”)

Selling requires us to manage expectations. That’s a good way to melt a few icebergs.

John Foust has conducted training programs for thousands of newspaper advertising professionals. Many ad departments are using his training videos to save time and get quick results from in-house training. E-mail for information: john@johnfoust.com

Distinguishing ourselves and building confidence and trust in a world of fake news and alternative facts

By Al Cross

Last month's column was a warning that the attack on journalism by certain actors on the public stage is having an effect on community newspapers, and that social media are driving readers to spend more time with national news than with local news. How can community papers adapt to this radically changed news landscape?

To survive, newspapers must stop thinking of themselves as being in the newspaper business, or even in the news business; you're in the information business, competing with all other sources of information for people's time and attention – even if you are the only newspaper in your market.

Increasingly, rural communities have become bedroom communities, and the longer a commute someone has to work, the less likely they are to read their local newspaper, according to research by Eastern Kentucky University and the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues at the University of Kentucky. The ubiquity of information through smartphones means you have to be where your readers are, and that means mobile.

The new landscape requires us to operate on multiple platforms. Your newspaper's web site should be attracting most of its traffic from social media. If it's not, you're probably not getting enough traffic.

And we need to be on social-media platforms not just to drive traffic, but to help people understand the difference in social media and the news media.

We also need to stop saying "the media" when we mean "the news media," in order to distinguish ourselves from actors in the media who are more about opinions and an agenda than about facts and public service.

And we need to stop using "the media" as a singular noun. It's more plural than ever, and it's

important for readers to understand that. The media are. And they are many different things.

If we don't distinguish ourselves from our competitors in the information market, we are lost. The fundamental difference in social media and news media are a discipline of verification, as defined in *The Elements of Journalism*, by Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel.

Those elements have shifted a bit, but not substantially, in the new landscape of journalism. They are a guide not only for journalists as we do our work, but for citizens to understand how we work and why we do what we do.

Here are the elements, which would make a good standing box or filler on your editorial page, with a brief explanation of each:

Journalism's first obligation is to the truth – not to some absolute or philosophical truth, but practical truth "by which we can operate on a day-to-day basis." And that includes being transparent about sources and methods, so readers can make fully informed judgments.

Its first loyalty is to citizens – not to the bottom line of whoever is publishing the journalism. In the current environment, this test may be the most difficult for some publishers.

Its essence is a discipline of verification – not objectivity, which is rarely achievable because we are human beings, but objectivity of method: testing the truth of information so our biases don't get in the way.

Its practitioners must maintain an independence from those they cover – not pure neutrality, but an arm's-length relationship that keeps our essential independence from being compromised.

It must serve as an independent monitor of power – not just keeping an eye on government, but on all facets of society, including business and nonprofit organizations.

It must provide a forum for public criticism and compromise – not just offering an outlet for discussion, but improving the quality of the debate with verified information.

It must strive to keep significant things interesting and relevant – in other words, making readers want to read the news that they need to read. This is more important than ever in the new age.

It must keep the news comprehensive and proportional – an even more challenging task when competing for time and attention, but all the more important to build and maintain confidence and trust.

Its practitioners must be allowed to exercise their personal conscience – speak out against poor journalism, and allow others to do so.

Citizens, too, have rights and responsibilities – to be responsible on social media. That may be too much to hope for, but if we ask them to be, that's a reminder that information needs to be more about facts than opinion.

While we need to do a better job explaining ourselves, ultimately we will not be judged on the arguments we make, but by the work that we do: reporting news that's important and relevant, and more.

Even if you successfully compete in the information business, that's not really enough to be a complete community newspaper.

You also have to be in the deliberation business. Deliberation is how democratic societies make decisions, and one of the best forums for deliberation is the newspaper – an editorial page with lots of letters.

And, ultimately, you also need to be in the leadership business, because there are times when a newspaper must take a stand and lead its community in what it thinks is the right direction it needs to go.

Nothing else in a community can do these things as well as a newspaper, and now is the time to do it better than ever. Make yourself essential.

In your quest for people's time and attention, you are also competing with other media for readers' confidence and trust, which drive time and attention. Be worthy of that trust.

Al Cross edited and managed weekly newspapers before spending 26 years at The (Louisville, Ky.) Courier-Journal and serving as president of the Society of Professional Journalists. Since 2004 he has been director of the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues, based at the University of Kentucky. See www.RuralJournalism.org. This column was adapted from a speech at the Texas Panhandle Press Association in Amarillo on April 21.

When it comes to successful sales, it pays to believe

A few years ago, former Washingtonian Editor Jack Limpert wrote in his blog "Today, if typewriters could talk, the old Royal might be smiling and suggesting that we should continue to remind ourselves that we shouldn't be too quick to throw aside those things that have served us well for so long." The blog itself was focused on decisions by the Russian and German governments to begin using manual typewriters to produce sensitive documents rather than computers or other electronic methods that have been proven to be targets of hackers, or worse.

I couldn't help but think how these words could also apply to other things we deal with on a daily basis. Most importantly, good old-fashioned sales calls.

We've talked about how this generation has been raised on an entirely different method of communicating. Namely texting, Facebook and twitter. When I was the student sales manager at The Crimson White, I was constantly encouraged by my boss to get the sales reps off the phone and out on the streets. These days, it's tough to get reps to pick up the phone – choosing email and texting as a preferred method of communication.

I remember what one manager would tell his sales reps: "Anyone can send an email or a text. If texting and email is so successful, what do I need you for? I need someone knocking on doors."

Copier companies once used a 40/10/3 rule in training sales reps. The idea was that it took forty cold phone calls to set up ten face-to-face meetings. Of those ten meetings, three would lead to actual demonstrations (or formal presentations) before the decision maker. The goal would be to close one of the three presentations.

Other sales professionals have other formulas for success. Tom

Reilly, author of "Value-Added Selling", writes, "I discovered a metric years ago that has served me well. I read an article by a top real estate



Ad Vice
by
Brad English

salesperson that said that he routinely talked to three people every day about a new opportunity. This could be an existing customer and a new opportunity or a prospect and a new opportunity. For years, I kept my pipeline full by practicing the three-per-day rule. This meant I had to make more than three calls per day to discover three opportunities. I would not stop calling until I pumped three new opportunities into my pipeline."

I think the number one reason for call reluctance for any sales rep has to be a fear of failure. This can be brought on by lack of knowledge of the product, simply a fear of rejection or failure itself, or not believing in what you are selling.

Rory McIlroy is ranked as the third best golfer in the world. (He once held the top spot for 95 straight weeks.) He's won four majors, including the 2014 British Open. His Dad certainly believed in him. When Rory was 15, his Dad wagered his son would win the Open Championship before he turned 27. Rory turned 26 the year he won the Open. Dad won \$171,000.

Growing up, Michael Jordan was the one NBA player I actually followed. I loved the way he played the game. It seemed every time the Bulls took the court with the game on the line, you could expect MJ to come through with a last-second shot for the win. What Jordan fans forget is that he missed more than 9,000 shots in his career and lost

almost 300 games. And he missed plenty of game winning shots along the way. When talking about failure Jordan said, "I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed."

Now ad sales - or any other type of sales - isn't for everyone. Remember, Michael also tried his hand at minor league baseball and was an abysmal failure. But he tried. He also recognized baseball wasn't his game and went back to the game he loved. (He just didn't get the same jersey number.)

Never be afraid to try, or afraid to fail. I remember the weekend I spent attending my daughter's Junior Miss pageant. While she didn't win (still trying to figure that one out) she tried, and if she was afraid to fail she certainly didn't show it. Jordan also was quick to temper my enthusiasm in the days leading up to the competition by reminding me that there really were other talented girls in the program. (Code for: don't expect too much, Daddy.)

She sat at the piano that Saturday night in front of hundreds of strangers and sang a beautiful rendition of "Oceans" by Hillsong United. I couldn't have been prouder. She later said she was glad she participated because she now knows she can perform in front of strangers.

Just remember, professional sales reps weren't created that way. Any one of them would be the first to admit there were plenty of bumps, bruises, and "nos" littering the path to success. But making the effort and believing in what, and who, you represent are the keys to succeeding.

Brad English is advertising manager for APA. He can be reached at 205.871.7737 or email him at brad@alabamapress.org

Help Wanted

Reporter

The award-winning News Courier in Athens, Alabama, has an immediate opening for a reporter to join its newsroom. The News Courier prints Tuesday through Saturday and we also maintain an active web and social media presence. We also produce a number of niche products, including six glossy magazines.

Daily responsibilities:

The reporter will write two-to-three bylined stories each day for print and enwscourier.com. The producer will also provide photos or graphic illustrations with stories as warranted.

The reporter will provide content for all niche publications and special sections as assigned. Reporter may also be asked to assist with copy editing duties as the need arises, so attention to detail and familiarity with AP style are required.

The reporter's beat will be general assignment, which may include covering crime, courts, politics, business and local governments. The reporter must be able to work a flexible schedule and cover evening meetings as assigned. The reporter must also work the occasional weekend as determined by the editor.

The reporter will be expected to assist in frequent updates to our website and social media outlets. Other duties as assigned.

The ideal candidate will be an energetic go-getter willing to be the first one on the scene of breaking news. Reporter should also be comfortable with enterprise/investigative journalism.

The reporter would ideally have other tools in his/her toolbox, including page design experience or a willingness to learn. Experience with InDesign and Quark Xpress is preferred. The News Courier will train as

necessary.

Ideal candidates will possess a degree in communications from an accredited institution, but The News Courier will consider five years of experience at a daily news publication in lieu of a degree.

Candidate must have a clean driving record and dependable transportation.

The ability to work holidays, nights and weekends as determined by the editor.

The News Courier offers insurance coverage (health, dental and vision), 401(k) and paid time off as accrued.

Please email resumes, three writing samples and three photography samples to adam@athensnews-courier.com. Hard copies can be mailed to Adam Smith

c/o The News Courier, P.O. Box 670, Athens AL 35612 or dropped off at our office at 410 W. Green St., Athens, AL 35611.

No phone calls, please.
EOE

Reporter

The Meridian Star, a six-day a week daily newspaper in Meridian, Miss., publishing news digitally 24-7, is seeking a full-time reporter who can react quickly to developing stories and shift gears for deep dives into news of consequence.

The reporter will possess solid story-telling skills, using text, photos, video and imagination to inform our readers through our digital, print and social media products.

The reporter will be passionate about journalism, have a bachelor's degree and have solid training in news writing and reporting or quality newsroom experience.

The Meridian Star offers a positive work atmosphere in an East Central Mississippi region known for its arts and recreation opportunities. The position offers a full range of benefits.

If you meet the requirements, please send a cover letter, resume, references and work samples to Editor Dave Bohrer, dbohrer@themeridianstar.com.

Editor talking to reporters

It's important
we get it right
so other media
will get it right

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