Important Dates

APA Media Awards
All Contests Open!

Deadlines:
Editorial:
Monday, March 2, 2020
Advertising:
Monday, March 9, 2020
Magazine:
Monday, March 16, 2020

2020 Winter Conference
Birmingham Marriott
Thursday-Friday,
February 6-7, 2020
Hotel Deadline: Jan. 27
Reg. Deadline: Jan. 31

2020 Summer Conference
Perdido Beach Resort
Thursday-Saturday,
June 25-27, 2020

Programs for everyone at the APA Media Summit
Stewart and Beck to be honored at APA Media Summit
New features from the APA Legal Hotline for 2020
Cullman Tribune helps local animal shelter
National Newspaper Association joins request for openness at U.S. Supreme Court
NFOIC reveals pilot project results looking at 2019 state transparency bills nationwide
National Newspaper Association applauds progress on Fallen Journalists Memorial
Join us Feb. 6 & 7 in Birmingham for the 2020 APA Media Summit. There will be programs for editorial, advertising and magazine staff members, and also journalism students from across the state.

Program topics will include:

**Thursday**
- Steps to Finding NEW Advertisers and Increasing Sales with Diane Ciotta

**Friday**
- Quick and Easy Videos with Dan Meissner (University of Alabama)
- Active Shooter Preparedness Training
- Design Following Content (magazine) with Kristen Morales (Paper Forest)
- Monetizing Editorial Content with Bro Krift (Montgomery Advertiser)
- Social Media/Podcast with James Phillips (Daily Mountain Eagle)
- Ask the Attorney with Evans Bailey (Rushton Stakely)
- Creative Writing with Rick Bragg
- Let’s Talk Public Records Panel led by Kelly Scott (Alabama Media Group)
- Prepress and Production (magazine) with Kristen Morales (Paper Forest)

For a complete agenda, event registration and hotel information go to: [https://www.alabamapress.org/2020MediaSummit/](https://www.alabamapress.org/2020MediaSummit/)

**Stewart and Beck to be honored at APA Media Summit**

Veteran newspaper man and journalism professor Steve Stewart, and Editor Taylor Beck will be honored at the 2020 Media Summit luncheon on Feb. 7, 2020 in Birmingham.

Stewart will receive APA’s Lifetime Achievement Award. Beck will receive the Emerging Journalist Award.

Steve Stewart recently retired after a 37-year career in newspapers, followed by a 10-year stint teaching journalism at Troy University.

Stewart grew up in a newspaper family. His father purchased The Monroe Journal in 1947, and after earning a journalism degree from the University of Georgia and two years with the Atlanta Constitution, Steve returned to Monroeville where he worked with his father as a reporter, editor and publisher.

When his father died in 1996, the family sold the paper to Bo Bolton, and Steve accepted a job with The Decatur Daily. While there, he earned a Master’s degree in journalism, and in 2009, began teaching at Troy University.

Stewart served as APA president in 1987, and also served as president of the APA Journalism Foundation and the Alabama Newspaper Advertising Service.

He and his wife Patrice have two children: Matt and Emily.

The Emerging Journalist Award will be presented to Taylor Beck, managing editor of The Sand Mountain Reporter in Albertville. He is also the editor of newspaper’s Land + Lake magazine. The APA board established the award to recognize journalists, 30 years or younger, with less than five years of experience in the field.

Beck is a native of Boaz, and a 2016 graduate of the University of Alabama with a degree in journalism. He began his journalism career at WBRC Fox 6 News in Birmingham as a digital content producer. He joined The Sand Mountain Reporter in 2017.

Beck has won numerous awards in the APA Media Awards, including 2018 Best Spot News Story in Division C.

**Steve Stewart**
*Lifetime Achievement Award*

**Taylor Beck**
*Emerging Journalist Award*
New features from the APA Legal Hotline for 2020

Reporter’s Pocket Guide to Open Government

Last month, APA sent member newspapers copies of “Reporter’s Pocket Guide to Open Government.” Do you need more?

The publication was prepared by APA General Counsel Dennis Bailey and covers topics reporters are most likely to face while covering open meetings and dealing with open records issues. It answers questions such as “are emails, text messages or IMs considered records?” and “what are permissible executive sessions?” If you need more copies contact Felicia Mason, felicia@alabamapress.org or 205-871-7737.

NEW! Legal Hotline Web Series

Beginning this month, longtime APA General Counsel Dennis Bailey will produce short videos explaining a question he received on the hotline the previous month.

This month, the 5-minute video will discuss letters to the editor. To access the video link visit the legal hotline page on the apa website and log in using your member password.

APA Media contests are open for entries

As of January 13, the 2020 APA Media Awards for editorial, advertising, and magazine contests are open for entries. Click here for the entry portal and rules for each portion of the contest: https://www.alabamapress.org/contests-awards/apa-media-awards/

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All entries must be entered online by midnight on the deadline date. Entries required to be mailed, must be postmarked no later than the deadline date. Contact Jaclyn Langan at jaclyn@alabamapress.org with questions.

Send us your news!

If you have news (like awards, projects, promotions and new hires) please share with APA! Not only do we genuinely want to know about our members, we would love to share in AlaPressa, on Facebook and the APA website!
National Newspaper Association joins request for openness at U.S. Supreme Court

By Tonda Rush, NNA

The National Newspaper Association has joined the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, National Public Radio and 50 other media organizations to urge the U.S. Supreme Court to put tighter limits on sealed court records.

In a letter to Chief Justice John Roberts this week, the organizations pointed out a dramatic increase in the Court’s approving requests to seal documents before the Court, which rose from an average of 22 each year from 2011 to 2016 to 46 in 2018. Sealed records were rare in the 20th century and in the first part of the 21st century averaged only 10 per year, the media groups said.

“The (organizations) acknowledge that compelling, countervailing interests—supported by on-the-record findings—sometimes necessitate sealing. But a review of recent sealing motions filed with the Court suggests that the increase in sealing is not tied to any concomitant increase in cases in which sealing may be warranted. Rather, motions to seal filed by practitioners often provide no justification for the requested secrecy other than that portions of the case file were sealed below,” the letter said. A particular concern about the sealing of records in capital cases had led to NPR and the Reporters Committee’s intervention in individual cases in the past, urging the opening of records.

“There is a strong, laudable tradition of public access to the Court’s proceedings and records,” the groups said. “You have appropriately referred to the judicial branch as ‘the most transparent branch in government.’ Your predecessor, Chief Justice William Rehnquist, wrote that ‘all of the business of the Supreme Court of the United States comes in the front door and leaves by the same door.’ Adoption of a Supreme Court rule addressing sealing would be consistent with—and demonstrate to the public the Court’s ongoing commitment to—these long-held ideals.”

The letter proposes a new court rule that would require petitioners to identify a compelling interest to be furthered by the sealing, demonstrate that the request is narrow, and state the time period for sealing, among other things. RCFP and NPR has previously requested a new rule, but the Court said that a general federal policy discouraging document sealing by federal courts was expected to deter a rise in such requests. It has not done so, the organizations assert.

National Newspaper Association President Matthew Adelman, publisher of the Douglas (Wyoming) Budget, thanked the Reporters Committee for organizing the petition to the court and said ensuring openness at all levels of government should be the driving force for all media organizations.

“All of our government bodies—even the courts—work at the consent of the people and on the public’s funds,” he said. “We have to be able to trust in the integrity of each of these, whether legislative, executive or judicial. The court’s wisdom in the Richmond Newspapers case, which re-opened trials all over the U.S. after a period where attorneys were attempting to close them, still holds true today: ‘People in an open society do not demand infallibility from their institutions, but it is difficult for them to accept what they are prohibited from observing.’

“We urge the court to accept the media organizations’ recommendation to crack down on an epidemic of secret court filings. The traditions of the First Amendment require greater discipline in this area,” Adelman said.

Tonda Rush is the director of public policy and serves as general counsel to NNA. Email her at tonda@nna.org.

NFOIC reveals pilot project results looking at 2019 state transparency bills nationwide


More than three-fourths of NFOIC’s state coalition members say that tracking their legislative sessions for bills that impact their state’s open government laws is a critical need — and a challenging task. Since most state legislatures do not prominently identify introduced transparency-related bills, many coalitions must rely on labor-intensive methods to single out and track them. NFOIC sought a technology solution to automate and better identify and track these bills.

Of the 142,057 bills introduced in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico in 2019, transparency-related search terms NFOIC tracked returned 19,311 “unique” or individual bills. That translates into about 13.6 percent of all 2019 bills.

Transparency issues arise in all kinds of bills — everything from how public data is collected, organized, managed and disseminated by government, to the balance between personal privacy and the public’s right to know, and how government interacts with the private sector.

Among the pilot project findings:

•Research showed the primary issue areas most prevalent with transparency-related language included Commerce, Law Enforcement, Economics and Public Finance, Education, Government Operations and Health Care.

•While state Democratic legislators sponsored more transparency-related legislation in 2019, state Republican legislators were overall more effective at enacting transparency-related legislation.

•Finding accurate bill language is both an art and a science. In this pilot, we learned broad search terms often bring in too many results and further refinement of search terms is needed. Weeding out extraneous bills is necessary, and the lack of standardization of transparency search terms from state to state creates an additional challenge.

•While legislative tracking is just one component of ensuring an open and accessible government, NFOIC believes

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AlaPressa

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this research shows there is an opportunity for comprehensive FOI legislative tracking nationwide that can in turn be used to educate and empower more people at the state and local levels,” said Daniel Bev- arly, NFOIC’s executive director.

The pilot project is an extension of NFOIC’s 2020 Vision strategy for improving government transparency at the state and local levels at a time when access to public records and institutions is becoming more challenging for the public.

If you know academics, journalists, government agencies or stakeholder groups who may be interested in online public records portal administration, please share this research with them. We’re here to assist in the effort for improved records administration in cities and states across the U.S. and look forward to hearing your feedback: dbev- arly@nfoic.org.

Note: The Alabama Press Association, along with the Alabama Broadcasters and other interested parties, are working with Sen. Cam Ward and Rep. Chris Prin- gle on legislation to update Alabama’s open records law. A bill introduced last session has been revised and will be reintroduced in the upcoming session.

National Newspaper Association applauds progress on Fallen Journalists Memorial

National Newspaper Association Presi- dent Matt Adelman, publisher of the Douglas (Wyoming) Budget, today recognized the work of the House Natural Resources Com- mittee for approving the first stages of work for a Fallen Journalists Memorial.

The Committee completed its review of a bill authorizing the use of federal lands for the memorial. The legislation, HR 3465, will head to the House of Representatives floor for a vote at the call of Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

The memorial would be designed to call attention to journalists who lost their lives dur- ing or because of the pursuit of the news. It will reach back into history to the sacrifices of World War II journalist Ernie Pyle and those who did the same before him and forward to more modern casualties.

The idea for a memorial grew from the anniversary of the deaths of five employees of the Capital Gazette in Annapolis, Mary- land, who were gunned down by a disgrun- tled reader in 2018.

The memorial is intended to be funded privately. But for it to be placed in the District of Columbia and its environs, authorization by Congress is required. A companion bill in the Senate, S 1963, awaits action by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Com- mittee, chaired by Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska.

“This memorial is necessary and timely,” Adelman said. “We live in an era when the value of news gathering itself is somewhat under fire. Domestically, we knit the nation together. Abroad, American armed forces deployments require journalists to work alongside to tell the stories of our military missions. We need to remind ourselves and future generations that recording these first drafts of history sometimes requires journalists to give their all.”

Help Wanted

Instructor Position - University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa

The Department of Journalism and Creative Media at the University of Alabama seeks an instructor in the area of news media. The position begins August 16, 2020. The salary is nationally competitive. The successful candidate will teach courses in information gathering practice.

Preference will be given to candidates who can teach courses in data and numeracy, data journalism, and data visualization. Other preferred teaching areas include multimedia, magazine editing, and photography. In the News Internship Coordinator role, the candidate will work with students preparing for their intern- ships, staying informed about changing jobs and skills in a rapidly evolving news industry.

More information about the Internship program can be found here: https://jcm.ua.edu/internships/

For more information or to apply, please see the following ad: https://www.journalismjobs.com/1657539-news-media-instructor-and-internship-coordinator-the-university-of-alabama

Journalist - Alexander City, AL

The Alexander City (AL) Outlook is a five- day a week daily located at Lake Martin, one of the biggest recreational lakes in the South. We’re looking for a creative, passionate and dynamic journalist to join our award-winning team. We need an experienced, versatile general assignment reporter to continue our im- pressive growth and statewide recognition as one of the best newspapers in Alabama.

This job requires strong interviewing skills, attention to detail, critical thinking skills, a level of independence with a team-oriented mind and the ability to juggle numerous assignments, meet daily deadlines, cultivate sources and generate daily story ideas. The ideal candidate will have a proven record of quality reporting, unique writing skills, knowledge of AP style, social media, photography and video skills. Pagination skills are not required but are a plus.

We offer our employees a team atmo- sphere that is dedicated to excellence and constant growth. We offer competitive pay and great benefits.

If you’re passionate about storytelling and have a desire to come up with new and innova- tive ways of telling those stories using a vast array of different skills, tools and platforms, we want to talk to you.

Interested candidates should send a re- sume, writing samples and a brief cover letter to Managing Editor santana.wood@alexcityoutlook.com.

Content Editor - Pell City, AL

CNHI is seeking a Content Editor to assist in the oversight of the print and online products of the weekly St. Clair News-Aegis. This posi- tion requires the highest level of professional- ism in appearance, tone and service.

Job Duties & Responsibilities: - Adhere to journalistic ethics as established by CNHI, and assure reporting is done with balance and objectivity. - Oversee the overall design of the newspaper. In this role, this individual must also possess and use strong editing skills to ensure the newspaper, niche publications and digital postings are at a high level. - Assist the newspaper in meeting its responsibility as a public watchdog. - Act quickly in times of break- ing news and ongoing coverage of such events. - Communicate with audience members, an- swer questions and provide information. - Assist in the development of website and e-delivery systems. - Understand and contribute to The St Clair News social media sites and web- site, per the newspaper and CNHI guidelines.

- Work with editors and staff to coordinate and assure full coverage of news, human interest and sports in the market, including special sec- tions, community magazines and niche publi- cations. - Oversee content flow, and deadlines. - Be able to perform any task within the Editorial department, including, but not limited to, report- ing, photography, editing, and digital posting. - Work closely with upper management team, including directors of advertising, circulation, production and the business office. - Work in an efficient and productive manner with other management team members.

Required Qualifications: College degree preferred; experience or training in journalism or related fields required. Experience in over- seeing a newsroom or as a section editor of a newspaper. Please send resume and cover let- ter to Amy Henderson, editor, Cullman Times at ahenderson@cullmantimes.com.
Meet them where they are

The Tribune and read about their person-

Hudson said. “People who see them in
get them adopted,” the shelter’s Andrea
our shelter babies every week to help
through the year were adopted.

news: 98 percent of the dogs featured
adoptions, finished 2019 with wonderful
light available animals and promote pet
Cullman County Animal Shelter to high-
project, created in partnership with the
Cullman Tribune helps local animal shelter

Taylor Mitchell has joined the staff of
The Daily Home as a reporter, covering
Pell City, Riverside and Lincoln. He re-
places David Atchison, who was recently
named editor of sister paper, The St. Clair
Times in Pell City.

Mitchell, a native of Lincoln, is a 2019
graduate of Jacksonville State University
with a degree in communications.

Elaine Jackson recently retired from
The Birmingham News/al.com after more
than 30 years with the newspaper. In re-
cent years, Elaine has handled national
and regional clients in the advertising de-
partment, working closely with the APA
staff.

Jeana Reed Durst has been hired as
Content Director for JBMC Media, LLC.

Jeana brings a lot of excellent magazine
experience as a writer and editor. The Feb-
ruary issue of Birmingham Fun and Family
Magazine will feature her writing and edito-
rial direction.

Cullman Tribune helps local animal shelter

The Cullman Tribune Pet of the Week
project, created in partnership with the
Cullman County Animal Shelter to high-
light available animals and promote pet
adoptions, finished 2019 with wonderful
news: 98 percent of the dogs featured
through the year were adopted.

“We are so very grateful for The Cull-
man Tribune’s willingness to post one of
our shelter babies every week to help
get them adopted,” the shelter’s Andrea
Hudson said. “People who see them in
The Tribune and read about their person-

Six of 2019’s Pets of the Week (photo courtesy
of Cullman County Animal Shelter)

ality fall in love, and the chances of that
baby getting adopted increase greatly. It
is always a good day at the shelter when
we are able to place the right dog or cat
in the right home with the perfect family.”

Overall, the shelter saw 530 animal
adoptions during 2019, averaging 44
per month. Additionally, 201 stray pets
were recovered and returned to their
owners.

In December 2019 alone, 60 animals
were adopted, versus 34 adoptions in
December 2018.

Meet them where they are

Tim manages an ad sales team.
“When I started my career in the newspa-
per business, I quickly learned that
advertisers can be worlds apart in
their knowledge of marketing,” he said.
“That’s why one of my favorite sales
principles is the old slogan, ‘Meet them
where they are.’

“This means we have to recognize
that our prospects have different lev-
els of experience. Most of them don’t
have our knowledge of the intricacies
of newspapers. If we don’t talk to them
on their level, they will tune us out.
And most of them are too polite to tell
us we’re doing a poor job of explaining
things.”

Tim’s comments remind me of the
time my wife and I helped her father se-
lect a car. He loved his 14-year-old car,
but it was time for a replacement, be-
cause expensive things were beginning
to go wrong with it. At the dealership,
we found a nice used car with only 12
thousand miles – a much newer version
of his old model. Our salesperson was
sincere and down-to-earth, but unfortu-
nately, he was hung up on technology.
He spent most of the test drive talking
about the screen in the middle of the
dashboard. He was a walking encyclo-
pedia of Bluetooth and wi-fi and digital
programming, but my father-in-law had
no interest in those things. He just want-
ed to see how the car drove and learn
the relevant differences between his old
car and the new one. His patience with
the barrage of comments like “look at
this other cool feature” was a clear sign
that he liked the car.

In spite of the salesperson’s single-
minded focus, my wife’s dad decided
it was the right car for him. When the
transaction was over, he mentioned that
the salesperson was nice, but extreme-
ly confusing. The next day, he accepted
my offer of a simple tutorial. I sat in the
car with him, placed my hand over the
dashboard display and said, “The first
thing we’re going to do is forget about
all of this.” He said, “That’s a good
start.” Then we reviewed and practiced
some basics until he was comfortable.
When we finished, he said he was more
confident and even more excited about
the car.

Age and experience make a big dif-
ference. That car salesperson should
have known that a person of my father-
in-law’s age wouldn’t care about fancy
technology. But he was so blinded by
his own interest that he couldn’t see
things from another person’s perspec-
tive.

“It’s all a matter of common sense,”
Tim said. “If a prospect is a numbers
person, we should talk in terms of num-
bers – even if we’re not numbers people
ourselves. If someone is an idea per-
son, we should focus on ad concepts.
Of course, this means we have to be
prepared to talk to about advertising
from all angles.”

Meet your prospects where they are.
Let that be your guideline and you’ll be
on the right road.

John Foust conducts training
programs for newspaper advertising
professionals. E-mail for information:
john@johnfoust.com