

AlaPressa

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA PRESS ASSOCIATION

APRIL 2021

Important Dates

APA Summer Convention

June 24-26, 2021

Perdido Beach Resort
Orange Beach, Alabama

[America's Newspapers](#) [Archived Webinars](#)

Remember these webinars are free to APA members. Some recent topics covered include:

- Subscription Trends and 7 Ways to Leverage Them in 2021
- You Can Grow Revenue and Audience with Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

APA celebrating 150 years

APA Journalism Foundation awards 10 internships, scholarships and grants

APA welcomes new magazine member

Public Notice house ads available from America's Newspapers

The Newseum's iconic First Amendment tablet is headed to Philadelphia

NC judge sides with media in public records case

Latino New's Vanessa Vargas joins UAB Community Advisory Board for O'Neal Cancer Center, extending cancer education and outreach in her community

Celebrating
150 YEARS
OF JOURNALISM



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APA celebrating 150 years

Don't miss the celebration to recognize APA's 150 years at the Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach, June 24-26. We are honored that Gov. Kay Ivey and Jo Bonnor will be joining in our celebration.

In a recent survey of APA members, 85 percent of those responding said they would attend in person. That is great news!

We will begin on Thursday evening with an outside event on the beach. There will not be a cruise this year as we don't want to have too many people in close quarters.

Programs will include Kelly Wirges from ProMax Training presenting core information that media representatives need to know about selling in today's complex and competitive environment.

The program lineup will also include a series of topic roundtables for delegates to share good ideas and best practices

from what we've learned over these last months. It will have been 16 months since we have been able to see each other in person, and the ideas are sure to flow.

During the luncheon, we will honor the recipients of the 2021 APA Lifetime

Achievement and Emerging Journalist awards. The Lifetime Achievement recipients include Les Walters, retired editor of the Journal Record in Hamilton, and the late Art Parker, former editor of The Montgomery Independent. The Emerging Journalist award will be presented to Brannon Cahela, staff writer at The Selma Times-Journal.

After an afternoon of beach, golf, or retail therapy, the convention concludes with the recognition of the winners of the 2021 Media Awards.

You can make your hotel reservations [HERE](#).

Registration packets will be sent out the week of May 10.

Celebrating
150 YEARS
OF JOURNALISM



APA Journalism Foundation awards 10 internships, scholarships and grants

The APA Journalism Foundation Board met recently via Zoom and awarded grants to the journalism departments at Troy University and the University of Alabama. No other colleges or universities applied.

Newspapers selected to receive a \$1,500 summer internship are:

The Clanton Advertiser
TimesDaily/Florence
The Advertiser-Glean (Guntersville)

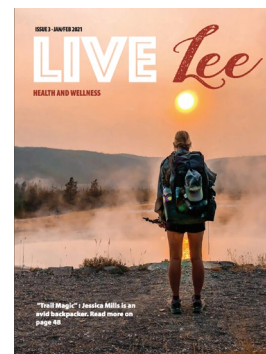
The Messenger (Gadsden)
The Daily Mountain Eagle (Jasper)
The Decatur Daily
The Cullman Times
The Choctaw Sun-Advocate (Gilbertown)
The Northport Gazette
The Lowndes Signal (Fort Deposit)

Also, two students from Troy University will receive the \$2,500 Metz Scholarship. They are Amya Mitchell and Ora Nelson.

APA welcomes new magazine member

Live Lee is a new lifestyle magazine published in Lee County by Key Media, owner of the Opelika Observer.

Each bi-monthly issue has a specific theme including health and wellness, food and entertainment, travel and veterans.



Public Notice house ads available from America's Newspapers

America's Newspapers has released a series of print, digital and social media ads that are available to all newspapers at no cost. You simply need to register to access the materials. You can find the campaign at <https://newspapers.org/marketing-public-notice-ads/>. The ads can be co-branded to your local newspaper.

Public notices are critical to all newspapers and to the communities we serve. Let's send a united message to remind readers and lawmakers of the need to protect the public's right to know.

Many thanks to America's Newspapers for sharing this with us. If you have any questions, contact Greg Watson at gwatson@newspapers.org.



Industry

Help get support for local news

(from News Media Alliance)

The Journalism Competition and Preservation Act (JCPA), also known as the Safe Harbor Bill, was recently reintroduced in the House and Senate. This bill will help sustain high-quality journalism by temporarily allowing news publishers to collectively negotiate with the tech platforms for fair compensation.

Many senators and representatives from both parties have expressed strong support for the bill, solidifying its role as the cornerstone of all comprehensive solutions to the journalism crisis.

The Alliance is organizing virtual meetings between news publisher executives and their members of Congress in May to garner the additional support

needed to get this legislation across the finish line.

Here's what you can do:

1) Run NMA ads

The Alliance has produced print and digital ads for news publishers to run in their editions encouraging readers to support local journalism by co-sponsoring the JCPA.

Download and run the print and digital ads from now until May 9. The ads direct readers to our [Voter Voice](#) page, where they can send an email to their member of Congress.

Options include full- and quarter-page PDF and EPS for print, and banner and cube JPEGs for digital. Click [HERE](#) to download the ads.

2) Contact your member of Congress

Please also consider sending a letter to your member of Congress encouraging them to support the JCPA because it will level the playing field with the dominant tech companies and give news publishers of all sizes – especially small, local publishers – a chance to get the compensation they deserve from the dominant tech platforms.

· [Find your state and tweet to your Member of Congress](#)

· Contact your member directly via Voter Voice

· Send a letter: Use the sample letter (see below) or write your own, using our talking points (on Voter Voice page)

Write to your member of Congress by **Sunday, May 9** for the best result. [Click here to download the sample letter.](#)

The Newseum's iconic First Amendment tablet is headed to Philadelphia

(from Smithsonian Magazine)

An enormous marble structure engraved with the text of the First Amendment was used to decorate the facade of the Newseum in Washington, D.C. Now, just over a year after the journalism museum's closing, the slab is set to find a new home at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia.

"It was really important we found a publicly accessible place for the tablets to go on display," Jonathan Thompson, vice president and chief outreach officer of the Newseum's parent organization, the Freedom Forum, tells Washingtonian's Daniella Byck.

Weighing 50 tons and standing 74 feet tall, the marble tablet is made up of multiple pieces, which are now being dismantled and placed in storage. The Philadelphia museum expects to install the slab later this year and hold a dedication ceremony in the fall as part of a programming series on the First Amendment.

As Michael Tanenbaum reports for PhillyVoice, the center will display the tablet in its second-floor atrium, overlooking Independence Mall.



"We are thrilled to bring this heroic marble tablet of the First Amendment to the National Constitution Center, to inspire visitors from across America and around the world for generations to come," says

museum President and CEO Jeffrey Rosen in a statement. "It's so meaningful to bring the text of the First Amendment to Philadelphia, in a majestic space overlooking Independence Hall, where the original Constitution was drafted, as a permanent monument to the five freedoms of speech, press, religion, assembly, and petition."

The Newseum, a museum devoted to the history of journalism, closed at the end of 2019 due to financial problems, as Peggy McGlone and Manuel Roig-Franzia reported for the Washington Post at the time. It had been in operation since 2008, hosting exhibitions on topics including news coverage of Hurricane Katrina, presidential photographers and editorial cartoonists, as well as housing a permanent 9/11 Gallery. (Several traveling exhibitions featuring artifacts from the Newseum's collections are currently on view across the country.)

tablet continued on page 4

tablet continued from page 3

In January 2019, the Freedom Forum announced plans to sell the Pennsylvania Avenue building to Johns Hopkins University, which is renovating the space for use by some of its graduate programs. Per Daniel J. Sernovitz of Washington Business Journal, the Baltimore-based university completed its \$302.5 million acquisition of the former museum building in June 2020. The Freedom Forum, whose mission is to “foster First Amendment freedoms for all,”

retained ownership of the iconic marble tablet, which it has now offered to the Constitution Center as a gift.

When workers began dismantling the tablet in February, photographs of the process captured by photojournalist Megan Smith went viral. Some social media users seized on them as a metaphor for a supposed decline in freedom of the press or journalistic integrity, as Mimi Montgomery wrote for *Washingtonian*.

As the Associated Press points out, the tablet's new location in Philadelphia is an iconic spot for American history. The slab

will overlook Independence Hall, where the Declaration of Independence and United States Constitution were adopted; the Liberty Bell and First Bank of the United States are located nearby.

“We are incredibly pleased that the tablet will have a prominent new home at the National Constitution Center where it can be part of their efforts to increase awareness and understanding of the Constitution,” says Jan Neuharth, chair and CEO of the Freedom Forum and a member of the National Constitution Center's board of trustees, in the statement.

NC judge sides with media in public records cases

(from *The News Reporter*)

The News Reporter in Whiteville, North Carolina, recently won its litigation against the Columbus (NC) County sheriff, who withheld incident reports for a month for a negative editorial that the paper wrote about him.

Following a judge's order, Columbus County government paid \$32,287.69 to a Raleigh-based law firm that represented The News Reporter and three other media outlets in a successful public records lawsuit against the Columbus County Sheriff's Office. Joining The News Reporter in the suit, filed in October 2020, were Tabor-Loris Tribune, WWAY and WECT.

Judge John W. Smith wrote in his Feb. 8 ruling that the sheriff's office's withholding of “open incident reports” starting in September 2020 represented a “substantial failure to comply” with state public records

law.

Smith ordered the sheriff's office to send all incident reports to local media who requested them or who had a continuous request for them over the years, as it had prior to the office's September 2020 policy change.

“North Carolina does not have an exception to the Public Records Law for draft documents,” Smith's order states. “The Sheriff's Office shall release reports that have been finally approved and those that have not yet been approved.”

In his March 2 order awarding attorney fees, Smith said the rates charged by the media outlets' attorney, Amanda Martin of Stevens Martin Vaughn & Tadych, were “reasonable” and that “determining attorney fees by hourly billing at a reasonable hourly rate is a fair and appropriate method for calculating attorney fees in this type of

litigation.”

Smith said he considered the facts before the ruling, including the fact that, prior to the trial, Greene and the CCSO rejected mediation as an alternative form of dispute resolution.

Further, Smith wrote that since CCSO “did not rely upon legal advice from an attorney” prior to its policy change, it “is not entitled to any other exemption or mitigation authorized by law.”

“These fees should be charged upon the operating expenses of the Sheriff's Department of Columbus County,” the order states.

The media outlets received a \$5,000 grant from America's Newspapers to help the newspaper pursue the legal action.

The judge's ruling allowed the newspaper to return the grant money to be used to fight other battles

People



Paige Windsor

The Montgomery Advertiser announced recently that veteran newsroom leader **Paige Windsor** has been named executive editor for the paper, as well as the Alabama state editor for parent company Gannett, with oversight of The Gadsden Times and The Tuscaloosa News.

Windsor is an Auburn University graduate and has worked previously at The Huntsville Times in Alabama. Other newspaper jobs include The Tennessean in Nashville, the Daily Press in Newport News, Va., and the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

Most recently, she led the digital team for Better Homes and Gardens as the executive editor of BHG.com.

She replaces Bro Krift, who took over as senior news director of the Indianapolis Star, which is also a Gannett property.

Christy Johnson is the new regional editor of The Greenville Advocate, The Luerne Journal and The Lowndes Signal in Fort Deposit.

Johnson is a native of Brantley and a graduate of Troy University. She worked in commercial insurance before becoming a reporter for The Greenville Advocate.

Latino News' Vanessa Vargas joins UAB Community Advisory Board for O'Neal Cancer Center, extending cancer education and outreach in her community

By Joseph D. Bryant

Throughout its 25 years, the Office of Community Outreach & Engagement at the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at UAB has relied on community partners to form strategies that reach previously overlooked groups. Two of the newest members of the Community Advisory Board are serving as guides to help address health disparities among Alabama's Latino, Latina and Latinx populations.



Vanesssa Vargas

Board members Vanessa Vargas and Jean Hernandez are partners in expanding outreach efforts to reach a Spanish-speaking audience through community collaboration and culturally relevant, inclusive messaging.

"Throughout the years, our Cancer Center has worked to ensure that we provided outreach to racial and ethnic communities that have huge cancer disparities, specifically African American and Latino populations," said Claudia Hardy, MPA, program director of the Office of Community Outreach & Engagement. "The addition of Jean and Vanessa to our Community Advisory Board helps us to further reach these communities."

Both members bring years of experience in serving a growing and diverse Latino, Latina and Latinx community. Vargas is manager of Latino News, and Hernandez serves as director of the Alabama Latino Aids Coalition.

Vargas arrived in Alabama from her home country of Colombia at age 5. Her

father was a civil engineer, and her mother was an interior designer.

Still, the family needed guidance on how to start over in their newly adopted community. They first settled in Etowah County, Alabama.

"When you are an immigrant, you look for help," Vargas said. "Normally, when immigrants come here, we go to nonprofits or churches. In our case, we went to St. James Catholic Church."

It was at St. James that the priest recommended her father create a newsletter for the parish. He would also need to sell ads to pay for the printing costs.

An unmet community need was filled. The small Spanish-language publication began to grow from a monthly, to a biweekly and, finally, to a weekly publication.

"That's how the newspaper started," Vargas said.

Vargas remembers sitting in the back of the family's Ford Explorer surrounded by newspapers. It was her job to put the bundles together for delivery.

"Throughout that time, I was learning English," she said. "Eventually, I started being more involved. And now I'm here."

Vargas said the pandemic has underscored the need for communities to unite in support of one another. Her partnership with OCOE is an example.

"It's being intentional about who you're reaching out to," Vargas explained. "It's not as hard as you think. It's a matter of picking up the phone and sending an email. We all want to grow. We all want a voice. It is empowering and beautiful when you say, 'I want to be intentional. How do we move forward?'"

Now the manager of a multimedia company with both a social media and a daily broadcast presence, Vargas has helped position Latino News as a trusted resource for a diverse, multinational, Spanish-speaking community that spans much of the state.

The focus on cancer is personal for Vargas. Both her grandmother and uncle died from cancer. Working with OCOE, Vargas says she is ready to help disseminate valuable information about screening and treatment.

"It's being proactive about your health," she said. "We've learned during the pandemic that life is a very precious thing. The diseases that affect us don't

discriminate."

Vargas' partnership with OCOE is also a homecoming. She graduated from UAB with an undergraduate degree in human resource management and a master's degree in business administration.

"I tell people that I'm a community connector. I have two cultures in me, and I love building that bridge," she explained. "We all need the same resources and have the same needs. For me, it's important that people try to understand that we're not all that different."

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Columns

A salute to those who wave the editorial banner



by Jim Pumarlo

Last summer's Grassroots Editor still sits in my stack of journalism publications. The edition announced the Golden Quill winners in an annual competition sponsored by the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors.

I have a passion for vibrant, local editorials. I believe energized, local editorials are at the foundation of energized communities. The Golden Quill recognizes the top 12 editorials written among non-dailies.

The competition is a reminder that many newspapers – even the smallest – still wave the banner of local editorials. They are a bright note amid a disappointing landscape of more and more newspapers giving less attention to their editorial consciences.

Among last year's honorees:

Overall winner Brian Wilson at the Star News in Medford, Wis., addressed the death of a mentally ill man who was killed after shooting at and injuring a police officer during a standoff. "Legislative leadership cares more about playing political games than in having a grown-up discussion about firearms and lack of mental health care," he wrote. "... No action will be perfect, but action needs to take place in order to prevent the next tragedy."

Marcia Martinek at the Herald Democrat in Leadville, Colo., gave accolades to a deputy who brought to light official misconduct in the sheriff's department that was reinforced by a grand jury investigation. "For several years, we've been writing stories about how various law enforcement officers in Leadville and Lake County have run amok," she wrote. "... So what a relief it is to be able to talk about a law enforcement officer who did the right thing."

Dan Wehmer at the Webster County Citizen in Seymour, Mo., articulated in detail why residents should support a levy increase for the school district. "Over the

past two decades, this newspaper has never endorsed a tax increase of any type," he wrote. "Our tax-bump tally is zero. Until today."

The editorials represent the best in community journalism. Many newsrooms devote immense resources to coverage of local public affairs. Yet they often fall short in the final step: advancing the exchange of opinions through local editorials.

It's pretty easy to weigh in on national issues. Yes, you'll have your detractors. But the response from readers – even those strongly opposed – will likely be less animated than if you take issue with the local human rights or economic development commission or criticize a decision by the school board.

Courageous publishers and editors take those stances, regardless of potential repercussions. That does not mean advancing positions with reckless abandon. Editorials, especially those certain to generate strong reaction, should be thoroughly researched and carefully crafted.

Here is one set of principles to guide editorial writing:

- Don't portray yourself as an ivory tower: Editorials should not be positioned as the "correct" opinion or the final word on a subject. Editorials should present a well-reasoned argument and conclusion.

- Welcome rebuttals: Newspapers should readily publish contrary opinions.

- Be consistent in stances: Editorials should be unwavering in promoting common themes. Newspapers often are labeled – and criticized – for promoting a conservative or liberal agenda. But newspapers that regularly flip-flop on issues will lose their credibility. At the same time, be open to revisiting an issue and changing an editorial perspective if circumstances change.

- Offer kudos, too: Don't hesitate to write complimentary editorials. Your credibility will take a hit – and communication with key individuals will be hindered – if certain bodies are always on the receiving end of an editorial rant.

- Think local: Editorials should be lo-

calized in the same manner as news stories are.

- Write with substance: Effective editorials, by definition, should leave an impression. In contrast, nondescript editorials are easily forgotten.

I fondly remember my late wife, who I often used as a sounding board. She'd admit, on occasion, that the aggressive local editorials could be uncomfortable among our circle of friends. We once were walking downtown about to cross paths with a local official who we had taken to task in our coverage. I could almost hear her saying, "Can we turn around?"

But, as I would remind her, many subjects received their editorial due at one time or another: Democrats and Republicans, downtown and strip mall merchants, business and labor leaders, school administrators and coaches. We'd never leave the house if we wanted to shy away from potential confrontations.

She knew that, too, and was my biggest booster. She admired and respected the fact that we took strong stances on local issues as an institution in the community. She'd suggest ideas, too. As you sit down to write an editorial, keep that at the forefront: Strive for the same admiration and respect from your community, and you'll have the foundation for a strong editorial.

In truth, writing the editorial is almost the easiest part. You should introduce the subject, present the pros and cons, and reach a conclusion. The challenge is getting the ideas, then approaching a topic with facts and self-confidence. It's not as foreboding as you might think if you devote attention to your editorial page on a regular basis and create an editorial mind-set.

The Golden Quill winners should inspire us all to strive for that editorial excellence.

Jim Pumarlo writes, speaks and provides training on community newsroom success strategies. He can be reached at jim@pumarlo.com.

Advertisers' blind spots



Ad-libs
by John Foust

When we learned how to drive, we heard about blind spots. Those are the areas which are not visible in our rear and side view mirrors. As a result, we have to be extra careful when we change lanes.

The term "blind spots" has become popular in today's business environment.

It refers to significant things that are not acknowledged or given fair consideration by management. Outside observers are often perplexed by the fact that certain obvious factors are always ignored.

blind spots continued on page 7

Columns

blind spots continued from page 6

Blind spots are common in the advertising business. Let's take a look at a few examples:

1. Family. This can be a big blind spot in family-owned businesses. It's a clear sign if you hear something like, "My grandfather wrote our ad slogan, and if it was good enough for him, it's good enough for me." Or, "My son just finished a marketing class, and he's got some good ad ideas." Or, "My niece says we need to have a bigger presence on social media."

2. Do-it-yourself mentality. A lot of entrepreneurs and Mom-and-Pop businesses are used to doing just about everything themselves. They don't like to delegate tasks and they resist outside help. They hire and fire, they set office. They also maintain tight control of their marketing. In their minds, no one could know more

about promoting their businesses than they do.

3. Competitor distractions. Someone told me about his experience in working for a furniture manufacturer. His company suddenly started losing orders, because a competing company was dramatically cutting prices. His CEO called an all-staff meeting and announced that their new focus was to beat the competitor at their own game. "From that point on," he said, "it was like Captain Ahab going after Moby Dick. But along the way, we lost our focus on quality, which had been our big selling point. It was like the CEO became blind to what we had going for us all along. It took a while to regain our balance in the market."

Some advertisers make the same mistake. They spend so much time thinking about their competitors that they lose sight of what differentiates them in the marketplace.

4. History. We're all products of our past experiences. It should be no surprise when we encounter otherwise savvy business people who are wedded to old media choices – or old ad campaigns – even if those choices are no longer producing results. There may be long-standing relationships with those media outlets. Or there may be a bias against a particular newspaper or newspapers in general.

Blind spots are real, but not necessarily fatal for an ad campaign. After all, we have blind spots, too – and some of them involve our perspectives on advertising.

How should you handle an advertiser with a blind spot that is blocking the way? A good place to start is to look for common ground and bite your tongue if you are tempted to criticize.

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

Help Wanted

Circulation Manager - Fort Payne, Alabama

The Fort Payne Times-Journal is seeking a candidate interested in a career in the Newspaper industry, managing our Circulation department and assisting the Publisher in other areas of the operation. We are looking for a highly organized Team Player who will fit in well with our company culture. The right person will have these attributes, as well as, an impeccable reputation for honesty and integrity.

Responsibilities of the job:

- Managing the distribution of our twice weekly newspaper, communicating with our printers and freelance carriers to ensure that our product is correctly and consistently delivered in a timely manner.
- Communicates with the U.S. Postal Service and submits required reports and estimates.
- Handling subscription renewals and returns.
- Accepting insertion orders and completing worksheets.
- Assisting the retail and classified advertising departments as need.

We need someone who will

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- Demonstrate product knowledge and value to prospects and customers
- Follow through with clients with exceptional customer service

• Be a successful team player

The Times-Journal offers competitive pay, a company matched IRA plan, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama Health Insurance and a Paid Vacation and Sick Leave Plan. We are part of a chain of papers, increasing the opportunity for networking and advancement. EOE

To apply, please reach out to: Steven Stiefel,

Publisher at steven.stiefel@times-journal.com or 256-304-0050

Advertising Consultant - Fort Payne, Alabama

Located in Northeast Alabama, Fort Payne offers residents outdoor activities to complement work life. Our area offers a lifestyle that can blend hard work and active play every day!

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Responsibilities of the job:

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- Learn and use an understanding of local and regional business trends
- Develop advertising recommendations and proposals.
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- Follow through with clients with exceptional customer service
- Be a successful team player

Requirements:

- Prefer Bachelor's Degree in Advertising, Public Relations or Marketing and/or experience in sales and sales promotion with business to business relationship experience, cold calls and

ongoing relationship building

- Self Starter with a record of exceeding revenue goals
- Proficient in Word and Excel
- Valid Driver's License with good driving record, reliable transportation and proof of insurance

The Times-Journal offers a company matched IRA plan, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama Health Insurance and a Paid Vacation and Sick Leave Plan. We are part of a chain of papers, increasing the opportunity for networking and advancement. EOE

To apply, please reach out to: Linda Stiefel, Advertising Director at linda.stiefel@times-journal.com or 256-996-0990

News Reporter - Decatur, AL

The Decatur Daily, a five-day daily covering three counties in north Alabama, seeks an aggressive news reporter willing to ask tough questions, develop sources and dig for stories of importance to our readers. We are looking for a productive reporter who can handle hard news and tell a compelling story. The successful candidate will cover a wide range of topics, including local government, education and police. Accuracy is essential. Experience is a plus.

The Daily is an award-winning, family-owned newspaper founded in 1912. Decatur, on the banks of the Tennessee River, is home to Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, United Launch Alliance, a high-tech manufacturing sector and a vibrant arts community. It is located 20 minutes from Huntsville.

Send a brief cover letter, five of your most current, relevant writing samples and resume including references to: Eric Fleischauer, metro editor, eric@decaturdaily.com.