

MAY 2018

Important Dates

Online Media Campus

Photoshop Tips & Tricks
Presenter: Russell Viers
May 24

*Motivating Plans for Inside and
Outside Sales*
Presenter: Janet DeGeorge
June 7

*The Online Media Campus, a
partnership of the Southern
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associations, offers a web
archive of all webinars. Topics
include: circulation, editorial,
digital age, revenue, technology
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APA Summer Convention
July 19-21, 2018
Perdido Beach Resort

Registration now open for the 2018 APA Summer
Convention

Prestridge named publisher in Greenville

Bob Davis leaving The Anniston Star for public
radio

Alabama Senator Doug Jones among sponsors
of "PRINT" Act

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Have you written your Congressman?

Help promote water safety

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journalism

13-year-old tells 100 strangers about her mental
illness and its stigma, and a newspaper writes
an important story



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Registration now open for the 2018 APA Summer Convention



APA delegates will return to the Perdido Beach Resort for the 2018 Summer Convention, July 19-21.

For those arriving early, there is a sunset Dolphin cruise on Thursday evening leaving from the dock across from the hotel at 6 p.m.

The Republican and Democratic nominees for attorney general, lieutenant governor and governor will be invited to participate in forums Friday afternoon and Saturday.

We will have two dynamic programs led by Ryan Dohrn, creator of the 360 Ad Sales Training system and a globally recognized media revenue consultant.



Ryan Dohrn

Ryan's programs will include: **Teaching Old Sales Dogs New Tricks:** Maintaining a competitive edge in the media sales business is critical. It doesn't matter if you're new or a veteran seller, there is always so much to learn to keep that commission flowing. Ryan will share the top 10 sales habits he

has observed over the years...success habits that you can replicate right away.

60 Media Sales Tips in 60 Minutes: Ryan has gathered the very best media sales tips from around the globe and is ready to share them with you. But, can you keep up? This is 60 minutes of fun where Ryan shares 60 ideas from his adventures working with over 400 media companies and over 5,000 media sales reps. Every idea is working today in media companies large and small. All ideas are proven and showing revenue results. This is a rapid-fire format where a live countdown clock on the screen will keep Ryan on track and keep you wondering how he has this much information packed into 60 minutes. Come prepared to take notes, laugh and maybe even cry.

The convention concludes with the recognition of the winners of the 2018 Better Newspaper Contest.

[Click Here](#) to register online or return the registration forms attached.

[Click here](#) to BOOK YOUR HOTEL ROOM NOW or call the resort at (251) 981-9811 to make extensions on your stay or to upgrade your accommodations.

AG opinion limits open records to Alabama citizens

Attorney General Steve Marshall's office issued an opinion recently concerning who is entitled to access public records in Alabama.

The opinion ([Click here](#) to view) was issued in response to a question from the Coffee County constable. It states that the records of the constable are open records, and that access to public records is limited to Alabama citizens.

In January, Dennis Bailey was allowed to comment on APA's behalf

on this topic. He made a clear argument that the case from Virginia (McBurney) cited is not at all like our statute: "I studied the McBurney case when it came out and saw the reference to Ala. Code § 36-12-40, in dicta, to which you cite in the draft opinion. However, it was clear to me the Virginia statute was worded differently than ours. The Virginia statute specifically stated 'all public records shall be open to inspection and copying by any citizens of the

Commonwealth.' Our statute does not state 'any citizen of Alabama has a right to inspect...any public writing.' It references a citizen, period."

Bailey also made the point that our members interact frequently with newspapers and media outlets from other states seeking to cover stories in Alabama.

The opinion states that records such as title documents and mortgage records would be open to non-citizens.

Help promote water safety

Jimmy and Casey Johnson experienced the most horrific event that parents can endure: the death of their child. Their daughter Carmen, who was swimming around the pier at the family's home on Smith Lake, drowned when the water became energized, electrocuting her in the process.

The Johnsons have chosen to transform Carmen's death into an opportunity to save lives by warning others about the need to test wiring, sockets and, in particular, the water surrounding their docks and piers.

Alabama is a state of abundant lakes and streams and coastline, which have become increasingly populated with cabins and homes with boathouses, docks and piers.

"If I would have known this could happen, or heard about it before — I am not sure if this would have happened to my daughter," Jimmy Johnson, father of Carmen Johnson who died from electric shock drowning on April 15, 2018 at Smith Lake in Winston County, Alabama.

As the summer months approach, we will see thousands of people boating, fishing and swimming.

On behalf of the Energy Institute of Alabama, of which Alabama Power is a member, the Johnsons taped a public service announcement about their loss and what can be done to prevent such a tragedy from happening to another family. [Click here](#) to view the PSA and other information.

The PSA shares both a poignant and critical message of safety and prevention. Alabama Power has also provided a story and facts about the dangers of electric shock for print and online editions. You are welcome to use any of the material to help promote safety around lakes and rivers.

APA Journalism Foundation board meets at the University of Alabama

The Alabama Press Association Journalism Foundation board met recently on the campus of the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa.

Dr. Cory Armstrong, chair of the School of Journalism and Creative Media and Dean Mark Nelson, dean of the College of Communication and Information Sciences, hosted for the APA group in the Digital Media Center. Members visited the Editing and Multimedia Production class during their campus visit. It is the practice of the APA Journalism Foundation board to hold its spring meeting on college campuses throughout the state.



APA Journalism Foundation board members, Teresa Woodruff, Mitch Sneed, Anthony Cook, Ty West and Caroline Quattlebaum observe University of Alabama students at work.

Have you written your Congressman?

Even with the introduction of the PRINT Act, ALABAMA SENATORS and HOUSE MEMBERS NEED TO HEAR FROM EACH OF YOU!

You are aware of the newsprint tariffs that are drastically driving up the cost of newsprint all over the country. In addition to increases of as much as 40 percent, newsprint supply is tightening. More than one APA member has reported that their supply on hand will not last but a few months, and their supplier is warning of a shortage.

delivered to readers. Will you have to cut back publication days? And if a weekly misses printing more than one week, their postal permit is in jeopardy, which means they are no longer qualified to publish public notices.

We need to provide anecdotal evidence that our delegation can use when talking with Commerce Secretary Ross and to the members of the International Trade Commission.

A single newsprint company has convinced our government to tax the paper that is used in newspapers, books and other publications. The rest of the industry opposes this new tax.

Now, increased paper costs are threatening thousands of jobs in the printing and publishing industry. Is this how our trade laws should be used?

Abuse of Our Trade Laws

Will Kill American Jobs.

Tell your representatives in Congress to stop the new paper tariffs and protect American jobs.

202.225.3121
stopnewsprinttariffs.org

stop STOP TARIFFS ON PRINTERS & PUBLISHERS

Download and run these house ads at www.stopnewsprinttariffs.org.

Sen. Doug Jones told Alabama publishers recently on a media call with rural newspapers that he needs to hear from APA members individually. Sens. Shelby and Jones, as well as your representative need to know what the increase in newsprint means to your newspaper and your community. Will you have to lay off employees? How cutting back pages results in less information

With Sen. Shelby's new position as chairman of the Appropriations Committee, he is in a unique position to make things happen in DC. We need to let him know how important this is to Alabama newspapers.

If this is important to you, please write or call them as soon as possible and send a copy to the APA office. You can also send a letter through their websites.

Senators:

Sen. Richard Shelby
304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC. 20510
Phone: (202) 224-5744
<https://www.shelby.senate.gov>

Sen. Doug Jones
326 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC. 20510
Phone: (202) 224-4124
<https://www.jones.senate.gov>

Representatives:

Rep. Bradley Byrne
119 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-4931
<https://byrne.house.gov>

Rep. Martha Roby
442 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-2901
<https://robby.house.gov>

Rep. Mike Rogers
2184 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-3261
<https://mikerogers.house.gov>

Rep. Robert Aderholt
235 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-4876
<https://aderholt.house.gov>

Rep. Mo Brooks
2400 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-4801
<https://brooks.house.gov>

Rep. Gary Palmer
330 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-4921
<https://palmer.house.gov>

Rep. Terri Sewell
2201 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC. 20515
Phone: (202) 225-2665
<https://sewell.house.gov>

Alabama Senator Doug Jones among sponsors of “PRINT” Act



In an effort to protect printers and publishers from unwarranted tariffs, Sens. Susan Collins (R-ME) and Angus King (I-ME) introduced the “Protecting Rational Incentives in Newsprint Trade Act of 2018,” or “PRINT Act.” Senators Roy Blunt (R-MO), Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), Deb Fischer (R-NE), Johnny Isakson (R-GA), Doug Jones (D-AL), Claire McCaskill (D-MO), Jerry Moran (R-KS) and Roger Wicker (R-MS) joined as original co-sponsors.

The PRINT Act would suspend new tariffs currently being imposed on imported uncoated groundwood paper from Canada, which is the primary source of newsprint and other paper used by domestic newspapers, book publishers and commercial printers. Simultaneously, the legislation would require the Department of Commerce to review the economic health of the printing and publishing industries. Newspapers and printers across the United States have told Congress that the new import tariffs – as high as 32 percent – would jeopardize the viability of the industry and threaten to decimate the U.S. paper industry’s customer base.

Many local newspapers and printers that use uncoated groundwood paper have experienced price increases and a disruption in supply since preliminary countervailing and antidumping duties were assessed earlier this year. Even as the Commerce Department investigation is ongoing, the

duties are already being collected on imports, causing immediate economic harm to printers and publishers. A final Commerce Department decision is expected on Aug. 2.

The PRINT Act would suspend newsprint tariffs while the government (U.S. Department of Commerce) studies the effects on U.S. industries.

The new PRINT Act legislation would pause both the preliminary and any final duties while the Department completes its study.

In introducing the legislation, Sen. Collins stated, “The U.S. printing and publishing industry is facing an unprecedented threat from crippling new import tariffs imposed on Canadian uncoated groundwood paper – better known as ‘newsprint’ – which is used by newspapers, book publishers, and commercial printers. As a Senator representing one of our nation’s leading papermaking states, I have consistently fought for actions to ensure a level playing field for the domestic papermaking industry. In this case, however, one domestic mill owned by a venture capital firm appears to be taking advan-

tage of trade remedies to add to its own bottom line, putting thousands of American jobs at risk. I encourage my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill to fully evaluate the economic impact of these tariffs before they harm our local newspapers and printing industries.”

“Throughout Maine, small town newspapers remain a principal source of information for people looking to read the news, learn about the goings-on in their communities, and stay up-to-date on current events,” Sen. King said. “But new tariffs on uncoated groundwood paper could jeopardize this access to information and impact hundreds of thousands of American jobs in the U.S. newspaper business and paper manufacturing industry, which are already operating on razor-thin margins. I have consistently fought for stronger trade enforcement, especially when it involves protecting the domestic paper industry, and must take action to ensure the Department of Commerce hears the serious concerns of the domestic paper manufacturing industry. The PRINT Act would help us better understand the damaging consequences of the DOC’s decision to impose duties and help ensure local newspapers don’t bear an undue burden from these misguided tariffs, so people in Maine and in rural towns across America can continue to receive their local news from hometown papers.

People

Joe Cagle has joined the staff at The Greenville Advocate as managing editor. He was most recently a senior reporter at The Advertiser-Glean in Guntersville.

Cagle, a native of Arab, began his newspaper career at The Arab Tribune.



Prestridge named publisher in Greenville



Adam Prestridge

Adam Prestridge has been named president of Greenville Newspapers.

He replaces Tracy Salter, who is left to become the new executive director of the Greenville Area Chamber of Commerce.

Prestridge is a native of Gardendale and was most recently the general manager of The Advertiser-Glean in Guntersville. He began his newspapers career as a freelance writer for The North Jefferson News in Gardendale. He joined the staff full time in 1998 and was promoted to sports editor six months later. After six years, he moved to The Greenville Advocate as sports editor and later

promoted to publisher of sister-paper The Luverne Journal. He became publisher of The Atmore Advance before moving to Mississippi to become the publisher of The Columbia-Progress.

Prestridge was elected to the APA Journalism Foundation board in February, having served previously on the board during his time in Atmore.

Greenville Newspapers includes The Luverne Journal, The Greenville Advocate, The Butler County News, and The Lowndes Signal, Camellia Magazine and affiliated websites.

Bob Davis leaving The Anniston Star for public radio

Bob Davis, publisher and editor of The Anniston Star, recently announced his resignation. He has accepted the position of executive director at High Plains Public Radio, a network of stations serving communities in Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Texas.

Davis joined The Star in 2003 as editor of the newspaper's editorial pages, and in 2006 became editor of the newspaper. In 2016 he was named publisher. He had previously worked as an editor at the Fort Worth (Texas) Star-Telegram.

A native of Aliceville, Davis is a past president of the Association of Opinion Journalists and is serving his second term on the APA Board of Directors. He also serves on the APA Legislative and Better Newspaper Contest Committees.

Davis' editorial duties will be taken over by Anthony Cook. Cook,



Bob Davis

currently the editor of The Daily Home in Talladega, will become the executive editor of The Daily Home, The Star and Consolidated's weekly publications.

Cook, a graduate of Auburn University, began his career as an editor and reporter at The Star. He worked at The Birmingham News and The Huntsville Times before returning to Consolidated as editor of The Daily

Home.

Cook currently serves as vice president of the APA Journalism Foundation.

Josephine Ayers, who is chairman of Consolidated Publishing's board of directors, will assume the role of publisher.



Anthony Cook

Stop me if you've heard this one before... a politician walks into a newspaper.



by Brad English
APA

Several election cycles ago I wrote a column about a ticket I received outside the Statehouse in Montgomery and how it related to political candidates and their campaigns. The citation I received was due to the fact I had parked "against the flow of traffic." I suggested in order to set themselves apart from the others, candidates should consider running their campaigns the way I had parked that particular day.

Well here we are again. 2018 and some things never change. And while I haven't been guilty – or at least caught – parking illegally the last few sessions, the candidates aren't exactly changing the way they campaign.

It still is a real head-scratcher to me how a local politician can build their campaign (successfully) around advertising in the local paper as he or she seeks the office of councilman or mayor – maybe even a county-wide office like sheriff or county commissioner. But when their ambitions and campaign coffers grow, he or she abandons the community paper in favor of TV and direct mail. Throw in some radio and social media and you have the new version of the

political cookie-cutter approach.

It's a recipe the big consultants know all too well. It's made them a lot of money, and the candidates like to see themselves on TV, hear themselves on the radio, and get a kick out of having their bios in the neighbor's mailbox (for some bizarre reason.) And big money campaigns are no longer confined to the top of the ticket. Also attracting big donations are the down-the-ballot races. And I mean way down.

Back in 1992, former APA president Terry Everett made national news by becoming one of the first congressional candidates to spend more than a million dollars on a U.S. House seat. Now it's not uncommon for state senate seats to attract that type of attention. That's right. State senate. In fact, many state house seats aren't considered adequately funded until they reach the \$150,000 to \$200,000 level.

And with that kind of money, you attract the big consultants who make a great living of crossing the country implementing the political strategy they use in every state – effectively cutting out newspapers from any substantive buy. They love for us to cover the ribbon cuttings and the check donations to the local fire department. And every campaign is good for a press release or two. But when it comes to utilizing the medium responsi-

ble for their early political success, most candidates become silent.

It's a shame, really, on so many levels. They miss the opportunity to connect with a constituency that, quite frankly, is sick of politics in Alabama. With what we went through in 2017, we probably hold the distinction of being the most campaign-fatigued state in the country. The local newspaper creates a common sense approach in reaching the people who will probably account for about 80% of the people who vote in the primary. And, yes, many of these readers also fall in the "undecided" camp, because just like everyone else remotely engaged in the 2018 elections – we'd rather not think about it until we have to.

As these candidates find their way into your towns and cities, ask them where they got their political start. What was their first race and how did they use the local paper. Chances are very good they spent a fair amount of time discussing newspaper ad strategy with the local publisher or ad director. Chances are equally good no such conversation has taken place in their pursuit of higher office.

So I guess in that sense things do change. And maybe that new cookie-cutter approach has helped create that disconnect - that lack of trust and confidence - so many Alabamians feel with their elected officials. And that is truly a shame.

A new look at an old sales technique



Ad-libs
by John Foust

Carla has been selling advertising for many years. She has researched and tried a variety of techniques to answer objections. "Just about

everybody knows the Feel-Felt-Found formula," she said. "When a prospect makes an objection – about price, for example – the response is, 'I understand how you feel. Many others have felt the same way. Then they found that our paper offers good value for their investment.'

"In theory, it's sound," she said. "But most business people have heard it before. As soon as

they hear 'I understand how you feel,' they know it's going to be a canned explanation. The key is to avoid the words 'feel,' 'felt' and 'found' and use other ways to say the same thing.

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new look

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"The phrase that has been the biggest help to me is: 'No one wants to ____.' Just fill in the blank after the word 'to' and you've got a great lead-in statement."

Here's a closer look:

1. I understand how you feel. The purpose of this phrase is to get in step with others, but it's an overused statement that can sound mechanical and insincere "You shouldn't say you understand unless you really understand," Carla said. "This is where 'no one wants to' comes into play. It's a safe statement that puts me on the same page with the other person. When there's a price objection, I say, 'No one wants to pay more for advertising than they have to.' It's as simple as that. In all the times

I've used it, no one has disagreed."

Carla explained that this works with any objection. "No one wants to schedule more ads than they need. No one wants to plan more meetings than they need. No one wants to sign a longer contract than they need. And so on."

2. Many others have felt the same way. According to Carla, this phrase is too vague. "It's good to reassure other people, because we want them to know they're not the only ones with that opinion. But this step in the process works better with a specific example. I like to say something like, 'Others have had the same opinion. About a month ago, the XYZ Widget Company was concerned about our rates.' That creates a bridge to the last step – where I talk about what that advertiser found."

3. Then they found. "Here's where you turn that example into a testimonial," Carla said. "Instead

of referring to all the advertisers who had that same objection, talk about one advertiser's positive experience. That has more impact."

Put it all together to get something like this: "No one wants to pay more for advertising than they have to. Other people have had the same concern. In fact, XYZ initially had questions about our rates. Then they discovered that we offer more coverage than other media choices. As a result, their business is up ten percent over the same time period last year. This comparison chart shows..."

It's hard to object to that strategy, isn't it?

John Foust has conducted training programs for thousands of newspaper advertising professionals. E-mail for information: john@johnfoust.com

13-year-old tells 100 strangers about her mental illness and its stigma, and a newspaper writes an important story



by Al Cross
University of
Kentucky

The stigma that still surrounds mental illness and drug addiction, especially in rural areas, are major obstacles to addressing those issues. Rural news media can play an important role in reducing stigma and helping individuals and communities face up to their problems and deal with them. The Paducah Sun saw that opportunity when a 13-year-old eighth grader with a long list of mental-health issues told nearly 100 attendees at the third annual West Kentucky Health and Wellness Summit about her condition and its stigma.

Julia Burkhart has been diagnosed with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, general anxiety disorder and attention deficit hyperactiv-

ity disorder, but "When she walks down the hall, you wouldn't know her from any other student," David B. Snow reported for the Sun: "There are no identifying marks or signs on her to indicate she has mental illness. The problem is the signs placed on her by other people."

At the meeting in Paducah, Julia said her problems began with bullying in kindergarten, which became so bad in fifth grade, with social-media attacks and rumors that something was "wrong" with her, that she started cutting herself. She changed schools and got better, but recently relapsed into eating disorders and taking pills "to escape," she said. She was diagnosed with schizophrenia and went back into the outpatient program at the beginning of this school year, Snow reports.

"I graduated in February from outpatient, and I've been continu-

ing to better myself," Julia told the crowd. "And here I am now, speaking about my problems. I take pride in my recovery every day, and I am proud to have gone through this. It's made me realize what's really important." And she spoke because she wanted to; her mother was originally invited to share the family's story.

Snow wrote that Julia's experience is common among people with mental illness. Dr. Laurie Ballew, a psychiatrist and medical director of behavioral health at Lourdes Hospital, told him, "People have this negative thought process about mental health, not realizing that our brain is the organ that controls our body."

Snow's story is a remarkable example of how news media can reduce or eliminate the stigma that surround issues of behavioral health. We hope to see more such stories.

Jim Lockwood elevates the art of public notice journalism



by Teri Saylor
PNRC

Examining the public notice display in newspapers, their tombstone layout and dry legalese may not appear to be riveting journalism. But scratch beneath the surface and you may find a treasure trove of great stories.

Just ask Jim Lockwood, a reporter at the Scranton (Pa.) Times-Tribune, who has won numerous awards for stories gleaned from perusing the public notices in his own newspaper, a practice he started early in his career as a reporter in New Jersey. Public notice advertisements are Lockwood's go-to resource for everyday reporting. "In New Jersey, we ran the municipal and school board budgets, and they would take up an entire page," he said in a recent phone interview. "As a young reporter, I came to rely on those budgets for story ideas, background and facts."

That's also when he started clipping those budgets and other notices and filing them away for easy reference.

Brandishing a pair of scissors, his favorite old-school tool of the trade, Lockwood dives into the public notice pages first thing every morning, clipping out anything of interest to him or to colleagues on other beats. While he knows public notices are available on the Times-Tribune's website, he prefers reading them in print because their distinctive layout makes it easy for him to quickly find what he needs and to file them away for future reference.

"My younger colleagues make fun of me because I always have my scissors ready," he said. "But if I try to search for public notices online, it's like looking for a needle in haystack."

Reading public notices for story ideas is a skill Lockwood has acquired through years of practice. He can look at most notices and tell, at a glance, if they hold a key to unlocking a good story.

Lockwood's sharp eyes and skilled follow-up have earned him several prestigious awards over the years, including PNRC's Public Notice Journalism Award in 2015, and every public notice award in the Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association's annual journalism contest since that category was opened in 2014.

This year, he won a first-place award in PNA's contest and an honorable mention in the PNRC competition for his overall coverage of municipal issues discovered in the Times-Tribune's notices. The notices inspired extensive reporting on a variety of topics including the municipal budget, a delinquent-tax sale affecting 1,900 properties, local government plans to divert federal money allocated for a bridge repair to a variety of street paving projects, and one of his favorites — the sale of the local sewer authority to a water company.

"The EPA mandated the sewer system be upgraded but the city was cash-strapped and needed money," Lockwood explained. The Scranton Sewer Authority's operating permit was also up for renewal.

From reading public notices, he was able to piece together the news that Scranton was planning to either lease the system to a third-party operator or find a buyer. The Pennsylvania American Water Company offered \$195 million to purchase the system.

Lockwood's stories on the sale of the sewer system walked his readers through the process all the way to the final meetings at which city officials determined how to spend the sale proceeds.

Lockwood also pointed to a notice announcing the daily

withdrawal of 5 million gallons of water from a river, which raised many questions, he said. "Is that a lot of water, not a lot? How much water is getting pulled out of the river on any given day? Is it harmful to the river, not harmful, where does the water go?"

Public notices provide a never-ending supply of story ideas, Lockwood said. There are estate sales, meeting notices, sheriff's sales, and seizures of drug money. And despite many public officials' claims that paying to publish public notices is too expensive for taxpayer funding, he points to a time when Scranton got a big return on investment in public notices after publishing a list of delinquent taxes for the first time in several years.

"If people don't pay their taxes, the result is a tax lien on their property," he said. "The liens are supposed to be published, but the city didn't publish liens for years, and when they did, the notice filled up 10 newspaper pages."

Normally, when Scranton publishes tax lien notices annually, they run about three pages and while that does cost money, cities can re-coup the expense when residents pay their taxes. "Citizens see their names listed and pay up," Lockwood said.

As people pay their taxes, their names come off the list and the ad counts shrink, he added. The municipality ultimately benefits from running the ads because taxes get paid. It's a great return on their investment.

Some public notices are detailed. Others are skimpy. Lockwood often focuses on the brief ones like those that announce a "special meeting for general purposes." He looks for hooks, usually buried deep in the notices where they "sometimes create just a small crack in the door," he said.

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art of public notice

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Sometimes public notices are like a missing piece of a puzzle leading to a larger story or a new angle in an ongoing story. Lockwood recently saw a notice announcing environmental hazards had been discovered at the site of what he later learned was a former natural gas plant operated by local utility, UGI.

"At first it was not apparent to me what site this was, so I showed (the notice) to a colleague who

recalled writing about the UGI site years ago," Lockwood said. "Once he mentioned the exact location, I recalled that I just recently wrote about a proposed new trail to connect to the site that the county wants to make into a park."

He plans to update his previous story to inform his readers that the site for the proposed park needs some environmental remediation.

For anyone who debates the value of public notices in newspapers or the cost to publish them, Lockwood would remind them that public notices published in newspapers are no more difficult or expensive than keeping the

lights on in Town Hall.

Sometimes government officials like to joke with Lockwood about helping him win awards by publishing public notices. He just laughs along with them, grabs his scissors and newspaper and moves on to the next story.

Teri Saylor is a freelance writer in Raleigh, NC and reports on community newspapers for the Public Notice Resource Center (PNRC) and the National Newspaper Association. PNRC is a nonprofit organization that provides information and education about the value of newspaper notice and the public's right to know. More information is available at pnrc.net.

Sidebar: Learning from the master: *How Jim Lockwood weaves award-winning journalism out of public notices*

Public notice journalism is an art, according to Jim Lockwood, award-winning city government reporter for the Scranton (Pa.)Times-Tribune. But he promises that with practice, any reporter can become an expert in ferreting out important news articles from public notice advertising and keep readers in the know.

Be an early bird: Lockwood advises daily newspaper reporters to read their paper's public notices first thing in the morning. Sometimes they announce meetings, hearings and other events and initiatives taking place that same day. "Don't wait until 5 p.m. or you might miss something important," he said. Weekly newspaper reporters shouldn't dally either.

Penetrate the legalese: Often lawyers write public notices using legal terms, and they are hard for readers to comprehend. "The more you read them, the better you'll get at understanding them," Lockwood says. "You'll learn the patterns and you will be able to get to the point quicker." Sometimes the "nut graph" that tells you what the notice is really about will be the third line from the bottom. "They always bury the lede."

Exercise your curiosity: Sometimes getting good public notice stories comes from old-fashioned shoe leather reporting. Lockwood recalls

seeing a notice advertising a hearing on condemned and abandoned property, which consisted of two boats and a trailer. It listed the date and time for the sale at the county courthouse and nothing else. His curiosity piqued, he dug a little deeper and discovered the notice was a poorly worded announcement that someone had a tax lien and had been required to liquidate their boat and trailer. "This is an example of bare bones info in some notices, giving no hint of why or who ran this," he says. While this public notice did not result in a story, Lockwood found it worth digging into.

Where to look for public notices. Your own newspaper is a good source for public notice advertising, but if your paper is not the newspaper of record

in your town or if other newspapers in your city or county run notices, then turn to them. Often public notices are required to be posted at the courthouse or town hall and you can read them there as well. Another resource is the national public notice directory accessible at <http://www.pnrc.net/find-a-notice/> "When you read public notices, ask yourself 'what is going on here? What is the real story?'" Lockwood says. "Keep pulling away layers, like an onion, and keep those layers stored away for reference."

Some notices seem insignificant, but one thing might lead to another until you have an important story that can be spun off into columns, editorials and even award-winning journalism packages.

Lockwood's three Rs of public notice journalism.

- 1. Read them.** They are right under your nose, in your own newspaper, and there is really no excuse not to read them.
- 2. Report on them.** You will see something in public notices that will spark your curiosity. When that happens, dig a little deeper and report on what you find.
- 3. Reference them.** Don't be afraid to attribute information in your article to the public notice you are reporting on. Just treat it like any other source and write, "according to a public notice published in this newspaper." This type of attribution adds transparency to your reporting and helps readers understand the importance of publishing notices in newspapers.

Help Wanted

Reporter/editor — Jackson, AL

The South Alabamian, a weekly newspaper in Jackson, Ala. seeks a versatile reporter (or editor if you have more experience). Weekly newspaper covers a small city of 5,000 plus some county news. Cover all kinds of news, write interesting feature stories and cover some community/high school sports. Good writing, computer and photography skills needed. Prior newspaper experience preferred but not necessary for the right person. Most important is a good people person who knows what news is and can find it without having to have it pointed out, a self-starter, accurate in fact gathering with good writing skills. Less than an hour to Mobile and about two to Alabama beaches and Mississippi coastal casinos. Send resume to Publisher Jim Cox, jimcox@tds.net.

General Manager – Guntersville, AL

The Advertiser Glean, a 6,200 twice weekly newspaper and 8,700 mailed weekly TMC seeks an experienced leader in the beautiful lake city of Guntersville, AL situated along the Tennessee River in northeast Alabama. Candidate should be innovative and results-oriented. He or she will manage the operation. This individual must possess leadership, marketing and communication skills as well as be dedicated to growing all aspects of a profitable newspaper. The ability to think strategically and work with managers to develop and execute plans is

essential. We are looking for a proven leader with excellent organizational, financial and management skills. Community involvement is also necessary and encouraged. Ideal candidates will have experience as an advertising sales leader or general manager of a newspaper. Advertiser Glean is owned by TN Valley Media and offers a competitive salary commensurate with experience and a comprehensive benefits package including health insurance and 401K. Please send resume and salary requirements to darrell.sandlin@timesdaily.com

Publisher - Clarksdale, MS

Publisher candidates sought for weekly newspaper in Clarksdale, Miss., grossing \$600K. Ideal candidate knows the business from both sides of the fence, is able to drive revenue and profit, along with producing quality products – this is not a “desk job.” Skills in business, advertising, editorial, leadership, research, problem solving, strategic planning, negotiation, customer service, management and teamwork are all wonderful traits. If you have the drive, but may be lacking a few tools in your skill set, we do train. Publisher is also expected to be an active and integral member of the community. Compensation \$50K – \$60K, 401(k), & other benefits. Send letter of interest, resume, and references to strack@emmerichnews-papers.com

Experienced Newswriter/Reporter - Haleyville, AL

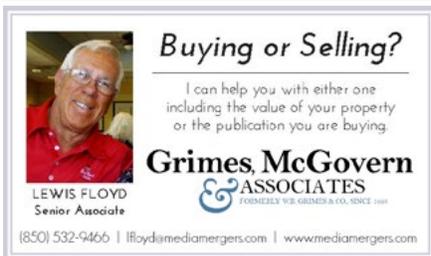
The 170-year-old newspaper in Alabama seeks an experienced newswriter/reporter for its top newsroom position. The managing editor/reporter is responsible for news and editorial content for the weekly, 3,000-circulation newspaper and sister print and digital platforms.

Candidates need a collaborative writing background, critical thinking skills, editorial writing ability, and photography. We prize accurate, local news and sports coverage in print and online. It is conveniently located at the intersection of State Highways 17 and 86 and is a short 33.9-mile drive to Tuscaloosa.

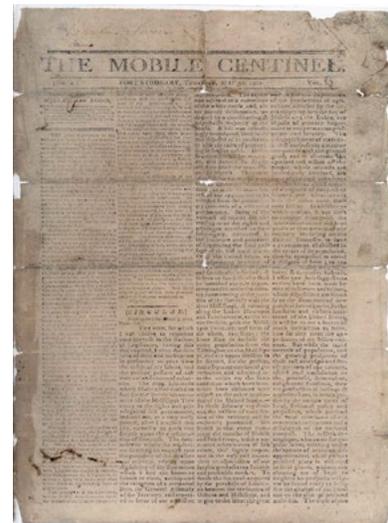
Interested candidates should send their resume, work samples of noteworthy journalism accomplishments, weekly salary requirements and a cover letter to P.O. Box 430, Haleyville, AL 35565 or email: hmoore123@centurytel.net. Equal Opportunity Employer.

Part Time News Writer/Graphic Designer – Jefferson County, AL

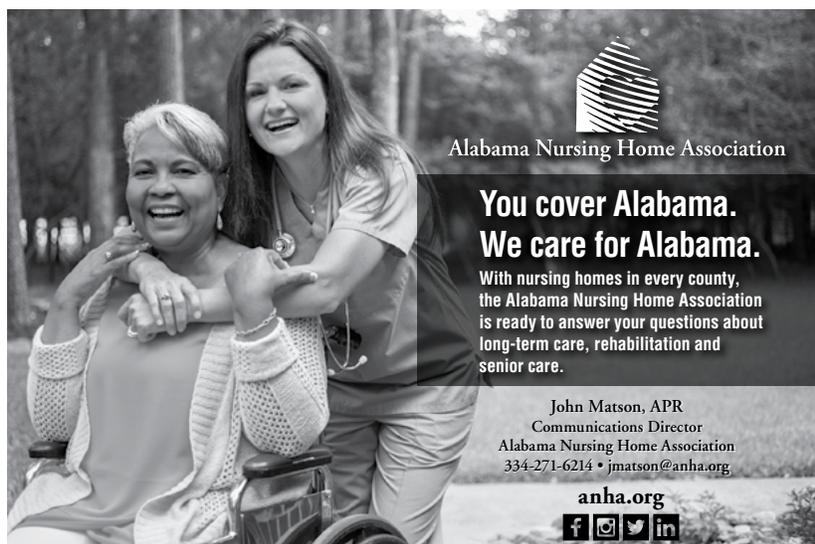
Immediate opening for part time news writer and/or graphic designer for a Jefferson County weekly newspaper. Right candidates must be able to work unsupervised, have good computer skills, good communication skills and a valid Alabama driver’s license. Competitive salary, some travel allowance. To apply, send resume to: ler_hart@yahoo.com

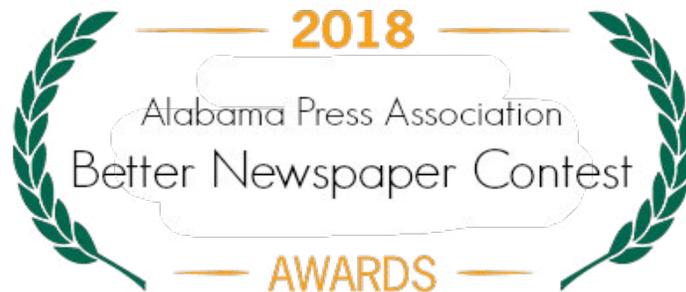



It all started here



On May 11, 1811, the Mobile Centinel, the first newspaper in Alabama, was published at Ft. Stoddert. This copy is the oldest in the Alabama Department of Archives and History’s collection of over 15,000 volumes.





Watch for select category winners to be announced via press release, Friday, May 25th!

Special thanks to the Virginia Press Association, our 2018 judging partner.

Congratulations to the winners & thank you all for your participation in our contest and as judges for VPA!