

AlaPressa

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA PRESS ASSOCIATION

JANUARY 2019

Important Dates

APA Media Awards
Contest Deadlines

Editorial: **March 8**
Advertising: **March 22**
Magazine: **March 29**

2019 APA Media
Summit
February 8
Renaissance Marriott
Montgomery, AL

2019 APA Summer
Convention
June 27-29
Perdido Beach Resort

Online Media Campus
February 28
[Working the Sales Funnel](#)
Presenter: Korena Keys

Something for all at the 2019 Media Summit

Beware of spoofed emails from APA

Miller named Publisher in Scottsboro

Rice named general manager at Tuscaloosa
News

Judges needed for Illinois contest

Allen purchases Birmingham Fun and Family

Stevenson and Van Sice to be honored at APA
Media Summit

Fighting to keep public notices in newspapers

Sales calls: They're only as cold as you make
them

What advertisers care about



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Something for all at the 2019 APA Media Summit

CONNECT • ENGAGE • INNOVATE



ALABAMA PRESS ASSOCIATION
2019 MEDIA SUMMIT
FEBRUARY 8 • MONTGOMERY, AL

Join us Feb. 8 in Montgomery for the 2019 APA Media Summit. There will be a full day of programming for advertising and editorial staffs at Alabama newspapers.

Jim Elsberry, president of Elsberry Consulting and a 30-year veteran newspaper executive, will present "Anatomy of a Sales Conversation" and "How to Success in Business by Doing the Right Thing." This program will inspire your entire advertising department.

For your editorial staff, Jim Morgan, president of Passage Creek Consultants and former general manager of Colorado Mountain News Media, will present a two-part program on newsroom leadership and

establishing a content strategy for your news operation.

John Archibald, a Pulitzer Prize winning writer for the Alabama Media Group, will share his thoughts on using research and public records to produce stories and commentary pieces that arm readers with the information they need to make well-informed decisions.

Archibald will also participate in an open records panel decision with APA General Counsel Dennis Bailey during the afternoon. Here's your chance to ask the expert and the attorney your open records question.

For more information or to register for the APA Media Summit, visit www.alabamapress.org/2019MediaSummit.

Beware of spoofed emails

APA is aware that someone is "spoofing" Leigh Leigh's email account and sending phishing emails to members with an invoice. They are not coming from her or even through her email. She will never send you an invoice. Trash these and do not open attachments.

We tried, but our email host cannot filter these messages on our end because our mail system never handled them. They go from a 3rd party "spoofer" directly to you using her email address as a cover.

There is a tool called SPF that can help mitigate the issue. An SPF record is basically a list of legitimate sources that an email can originate from. The recipient's mail system has to check SPF when processing incoming mail, when activated. You can contact whoever administers your spam filter to set this up (it's a pretty standard feature). It's important to note that SPF will not catch every single type of phishing email, but it can help mitigate the issue. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Miller named Publisher in Scottsboro



Lifelong Scottsboro resident and former city councilman Brent Miller has been named publisher for The Jackson County Sentinel in Scottsboro.

Miller is returning to the paper where he served as an advertising

salesman and later as ad director. For the past several years, he has operated his own photo studio.

“We’re delighted Brent is rejoining our company. His experience in the newspaper industry and his commitment to the community of Scottsboro are impressive. Brent is a wonderful addition to our team in North Alabama,” said Dolph Tillotson, president of Southern Newspapers, Inc.

Miller met with staff members Monday morning. “I am thrilled to be here,” said Miller. “Returning to Jackson County Sentinel is both a challenge and honor. This paper has been a part of me and the community’s life forever. I’m excited to lead this team forward.”

He replaces Brandon Cox who has returned to his home state of Kentucky to be closer to family.

Rice named general manager at Tuscaloosa News



Bobby Rice was recently named general manager at The Tuscaloosa News. He joined the paper in July as advertising

director.

Rice grew up in Alabama and his father Bill Rice Sr., played football at Alabama. He is a graduate of Troy University, and began his advertising career at the Montgomery Advertiser.

He has worked at newspapers in Florida, Texas, Alabama and Louisiana, including Montgomery and the Dallas Morning News.

Rice and his wife, Molly, have two children, Will, 12, and Eleanor, 9.

Judges needed for Illinois contest

We need judges!! We are partnering with the Illinois Press Association this year for your contest judging. Judging will take place mostly online beginning Jan. 31 until March 1.

Soon, we will be asking the Illinois newspapers to judge your contest entries. We want their best judges, and we want to provide the same to them. These judging exchanges make our contest pos-



sible, and this is a great way to check out what other newspapers across the country are doing and spark ideas for your papers, maga-

zines and websites.

As a reminder, it is a requirement to volunteer as a judge for our 2019 partner’s contest in order to qualify as a contestant in the APA Media Awards. The IPA contest deadline is Jan. 31. They require roughly 100 judges to spread entries fairly. At this point, APA has received just 21 sign-ups for judging. Thank you to those who have! [Click here](#) to sign up as a judge.

**New name.
Same game.**

THE APA BETTER NEWSPAPER CONTEST IS NOW THE APA MEDIA AWARDS.

CONTEST NOW OPEN FOR ENTRIES!



Allen purchases Birmingham Fun and Family

Matthew Allen, a veteran of nearly 15 years in the newspaper industry, has acquired the monthly publication Birmingham Fun and Family Magazine. The publication, previously owned by Jay Carr of Alabaster, has been published for more than 15 years and serves the entire Birmingham metro area.



Matthew Allen

Allen most recently served as

the sales manager for Starnes Media, which includes seven monthly newspapers mailed to more than 110,000 homes and businesses in the Birmingham metro area. He served in that role from May 2012 until January 2019. Prior to that he held various positions from May 2004 to May 2012 with Shelby County Newspapers, Inc., in Columbiana.

“I’ve had a dream of owning my own business for some time, and the opportunity to take a respected publication like Birmingham Fun and Family and build on Jay’s success is exciting for me.”

Birmingham Fun and Family has a monthly press run of 12,000 copies and is distributed for free at targeted locations throughout Birmingham. For more information, visit birminghamfunandfamily.com.

Stevenson and Van Sice to be honored at APA Media Summit

Veteran newspaper man John Stevenson and novice editor Ethan Van Sice will be honored at the 2019 Media Summit in Montgomery on Feb. 8, 2019.

Stevenson will receive APA’s Lifetime Achievement Award. Van Sice will receive the Emerging Journalist Award.

John Stevenson is the publisher and editor of The Randolph Leader in Roanoke. He is only the third editor of The Leader, his grandfather and father holding the position before him. Stevenson’s grandfather, Olin Stevenson, founded the paper and served as its editor for 45 years. His father, John B. Stevenson, also served as editor and publisher for 45 years before John took the reins in 1982.

Stevenson served as APA president in 1997, and also served many years as the chairman of the Better Newspaper Contest Committee.

He graduated from Auburn University in 1970, and enlisted in the U.S. Army. He was on active duty for six years and advanced to the rank of major.

In 2008, Stevenson was elected president of the National Newspaper Association, after serving as a regional director and treasurer. He and his wife Jennifer split their time between Birmingham and Roanoke.



John Stevenson



Ethan Van Sice

The Emerging Journalist Award will be presented to Ethan Van Sice, editor of the Wilcox Progressive Era in Camden. The APA board established the award to recognize journalists, 30 years or younger, with less than five years of experience in the field.

Van Sice is a native of Madison, Miss., and a 2009 graduate of Madison Central High School. He also attended The University

of Southern Mississippi is Hattiesburg.

His grandparents, Glenda Curl and the late Hollis Curl, have published the Wilcox Progressive Era in Camden since 1969. Van Sice began writing a column for the newspaper, “Pened Behind Bars,” during his incarceration in Mississippi after pleading guilty to vehicular homicide, following a tragic accident in 2010.

His column was well received by readers, and many began corresponding with him. His column won first place in the APA BNC Awards for Best Human Interest Column in 2014.

Upon his release in 2014, Van Sice moved to Camden and began his work at the newspaper. He launched the paper’s first website and continues to manage the site. He renamed his column, “Vices and Virtues,” a column that remains popular with readers.

The awards will be presented during the luncheon at the APA Media Summit.

Obituaries



Frances Smith Tribble, of Manchester, Ga., passed away Dec. 22, 2018. She was 81.

Tribble and her husband, Robert “Bob” E. Tribble own three newspapers in Alabama; The Centreville Press, The Marion Times Standard and The Western Star in Bessemer, as well as five publications on Georgia.

Mrs. Tribble was a native of Albany, Ga., and was a member of the Manchester First Baptist Church.

Fighting to keep public notices in newspapers

The public loses out when government makes it harder to find out what it's doing.

Reading public notice ads in the classifieds is about exciting as watching paint dry, but it's necessary reading for some.

In Carmel, California, a 99-year-old woman was able to stop the bank from foreclosing on her house after someone read the notice in the local paper and shared it with her grandchildren.

After reading a county financial report in the Ottumwa Courier, an Iowa pharmacist learned that a national pharmacy chain overcharged by five times the price of medicines it supplied the local jail. His complaints led to him securing the contract instead.

Dating back to the Colonial era, public notice has served a vital role in informing people about the activities of their government. Typical public notice laws apply to public actions, such as budgets, hearings, government contracts open for bidding, unclaimed property and court actions.

But despite its historical significance and importance, public notice has increasingly come under attack. In recent years, some cash-strapped state legislatures have tried to remove the requirement that public notices be published in newspapers, opting instead to allow government entities to post them for free on their own websites.

"It would be the classic example of putting the fox in charge of the hen house," says Richard Karpel, executive director of the Public Notice Resource Center (PNRC), a nonprofit organization that serves as a clearinghouse for information about public notice legislation.

In 2018 alone, the PNRC tracked about 160 separate bills. About a dozen of them, if passed, would have eliminated public notice from newspapers altogether; many others would have eliminated it in limited circumstances. Fortunately, most of the bills failed,

due to the intense lobbying efforts of state newspaper associations.

Advocating to retain public notice "has become a big part of the job," says Mark Maassen, executive director of the Missouri Press Association.

This past year, the Missouri Press Association successfully fought three anti-public notice bills that worked their way through the state legislature. The most serious of the bills, SB 580, would have eliminated public notices in newspapers altogether.

SOME GOVERNMENT AGENCIES WANT TO TAKE OFFICIAL NOTICES OUT OF LOCAL NEWSPAPERS AND BURY THEM ON GOVERNMENT-RUN WEBSITES. THIS IS LIKE PUTTING THE FOX IN CHARGE OF THE HEN HOUSE.



The association found its biggest allies among legislators in rural areas, where internet access is limited and local newspapers still have a strong presence. "Small rural communities still rely very much on the local newspaper for their news," Maassen says.

A primary argument against public notice is that it costs taxpayer money to place the ads in newspapers. And, in fact, with the decline of commercial advertising, public notice advertising has become an increasingly important source of revenue for local newspapers, especially in smaller markets.

At the Morgan Messenger, a weekly newspaper in Berkeley Springs, W.Va., public notice ad

revenue helps pay the salaries of its staff. "We couldn't give the public the news they want without it," says Executive Editor Sandy Buzzerd.

Last year, Missouri newspapers made nearly \$6 million dollars in public notice advertising when a number of ballot issues were up for a vote in the November midterm elections, including three medical marijuana initiatives. Those bills alone resulted in 11 full pages of legal notices that ran for four consecutive weeks in some newspapers.

It was the biggest public notice buy in memory, says Maassen.

But that kind of money is the exception, rather than the rule. Karpel says that public notice advertising is actually not a big-ticket item for state and local governments. "It's a drop in the bucket compared to what they spend elsewhere," he says. "It's a disingenuous argument."

Karpel says there's often a personal motive behind the opposition to public notice. "It's often prompted by politicians who want to stop the journalism they don't like." He points to anti-public notice efforts in New Jersey and Maine, spearheaded by governors Chris Christie and Paul LePage respectively—two politicians with a notoriously testy relationship with reporters.

Another argument against public notice is that it's no longer needed today, when everyone has a cell phone and should be able to access notices on government websites.

But Karpel says cell phones are a "terrible" vehicle for public notices, which tend to be text heavy and hard to read on a small screen. Plus, people often find notices by accident, while scanning the newspaper for other information. "Reading a newspaper is a serendipitous process," says Karpel. "It encourages people to find notices that would get lost on the web."

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public notice

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While politicized criticism of the news media in the “fake news” era may be fueling some of the anti-public notice sentiment, Karpel says it’s not necessarily a partisan issue. “You’d think public notice is most threatened in red states, but in fact that’s not always the case,” he says. For example, there is strong support for it in Republican-dominated states that have rural constituencies, including many states in the South and Upper Midwest.

An advantage of public notice is that it can protect the government from its worst instincts. That’s because newspapers provide a neutral third-party source of information that government entities don’t necessarily want the public to see, which can ultimately backfire.

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) found that out the hard way. In 2016, the MDEQ was allowed to post exclusively on its own website its draft

approval of a proposal that would allow Nestle Waters to pump more groundwater from public wells. The proposal attracted no public attention or comment, until a Grand Rapids reporter wrote a story about it—41 days into the 45-day public comment period.

Within three days, the MDEQ received thousands of comments, forcing the agency to extend the public comment period and schedule public hearings. Eventually, the proposal received more than 80,000 comments, and the agency’s director publicly admitted they made a mistake in limiting the notice to their website.

“People don’t understand what public notice is supposed to do,” says Steve Key, executive director of the Hoosier State Press Association. “It’s not just making information public. It’s actually putting the notice in the hands of the people.” While newspapers may still be the best venue, they also have an obligation to make public notices as widely available as possible. More than a dozen states now require

that newspapers also publish them on their websites or on state press association sites that aggregate notices. And some associations, like Missouri’s, are doing it without a legislative mandate. “It’s a way to answer critics, who say newspapers are still living in the buggy whip era,” says Maassen.

To date, every state still requires the bulk of public notices be published in newspapers, but that right may be taken away as state legislatures continue to chip away at it.

Just last month, in a preview of the West Virginia legislative session, State Senate Finance chairman Craig Blair announced that he plans to introduce a bill that would begin the process of removing public notice ads from newspapers.

If that were to happen on a wide scale, the public would ultimately suffer. “The loss would be transparency,” says Karpel. “People would know a lot less about what’s happening with their government if public notice were removed from newspapers.”

Help Wanted

Reporter-Tuskegee, AL

The Tuskegee News, published since 1865, is seeking a Reporter. Based in one of the most historic cities in the nation, it is the Macon County Seat and the site of Tuskegee University! It is also home to The Tuskegee Airmen and civil rights activists (birthplace of Rosa Parks); George Washington Carver, famous researcher of polio, peanuts and sweet potatoes. If you are interested in being a reporter in a city with such a rich heritage we have a full-time position available. We will also consider part-time applicants. Full-time position offers competitive compensation with benefits including, vacation, sick leave, and insurance. Please email your resume and a sample of your writing to Guy Rhodes, Publisher of The Tuskegee News at guynrhodes@bellsouth.net

Account Representative-Demopolis, AL

The Demopolis Times has an immediate opening for an advertising account representative to fill a sales position. This position will have a strong focus on prospecting and new business development while also providing outstanding service to existing customers.

Qualifying candidates will be goal-oriented and self-motivated with strong organization and communication skills. Previous sales or marketing experience is a plus, but we will train the right candidate. The advertising representative will be tasked with selling advertising for newspapers, magazines, promotion publications and digital platforms.

Demopolis is situated in the heart of Alabama’s Black Belt Region and is centrally located between Tuscaloosa, Ala. and Meridian, Miss. The Demopolis Times is a consistent winner in the Alabama Press Association Better Newspaper Contest and its staff are involved in civic and community activities.

Compensation will include a base salary with commissions based on sales goals. We also offer health/dental/vision insurance, 401(k), paid life and disability insurance, retirement plan, and paid vacation and holidays. Qualified candidates are encouraged to email resumes to robert.blankenship@demopolistimes.com.

General Assignment Reporter-Selma, AL

The Selma Times-Journal, an award-winning daily newspaper in west central Alabama, has an immediate

opening for an general assignment reporter to report on a variety of beats including county/city government, cops/courts, features and more. The position offers an excellent opportunity for advancement within our parent company, Boone Newspapers, Inc. The successful candidate must be organized, have an optimistic personality, enjoy meeting new people and understand what makes a community newspaper important to its readers. They must also enjoy small town life, getting involved in the community they serve while practicing true community journalism. Interested candidates should send resume, cover letter, references, work samples and salary requirements to Will Whaley, Managing Editor, The Selma Times-Journal at will.whaley@selmatimesjournal.com.

Need to find good employees?
Send APA your information to place in AlaPressa and online.
jaclyn@alabamapress.org

Sales calls: They're only as cold as you make them.



Something happened recently that hasn't happened in the twenty-seven years I've been with APA. Someone tried to sell me advertising. Yep. A rep from Lamar Outdoor called to say he had seen our house ad for Alabamalegals.com (now alabamapublicnotices.com) in The Montgomery Advertiser. He suggested it would make a great billboard.

That started me thinking. What does it say when another media rep approaches the competition for business?

Number one, it reinforces the reality that selling advertising in this economy is not just tough for newspapers, but tough for everyone. I counted nine empty billboards on the way in to Montgomery the other day. And these aren't tucked away spots, but prime locations.

Number two, the rep wasn't afraid of failure when he called. What were the odds I was going to say yes? Not very good. He had done his homework and knew we sold print, but called anyway. Bottom line, our competition is leaving no stone unturned. We have to have that same mentality.

That brings us to cold calling. In this environment, many of our traditional advertisers have cut back on their spending, stopped it all together, or gone out of business. To say new business development is essential is a gross understatement. But how do we get our reps comfortable with making the dreaded cold call?

Start by planning. And part of planning is prospecting. Simply making a call on a business

because it's the next on your list is a waste of time. Yours and the prospect's. Before making the call, find out everything you can about the business. Put yourself in his position. If it were your business, what would be the benefits of advertising in the local paper? Is the business' target audience newspaper readers? Make sure the newspaper is a good fit and makes sense.

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"I don't have any sales experience, but I think I'd be very good at making cold calls!"

Prepare for the call. I mean really prepare. Come up with a few icebreakers or opening statements. Write them down and get familiar with it. Avoid "How are you today?" You don't know the person and they don't know you. It sounds insincere and wastes time. Let's face it. You've taken those calls before and you immediately start thinking of ways to get off the phone with this telemarketer. At least I know I do. Another no-no is asking if this is "a good time to talk." Any telemarketer asks me that and my immediate answer is "no." Instead, offer an introduction and the reason for calling. Make sure there is a benefit included in the reason given. What's in it for me? Take the outdoor rep. He stated his name, who he was with, and why he was calling. He said where he saw my ad and thought his outdoor boards would help in branding our site.

Practice. Which in our world means roleplay. Salespeople hate this almost as much as they do cold calling. This reminds me of the story told about Gene Stallings first practice at Alabama. The special teams coach enthusiastically runs up to Stallings and excitedly tells him how well his kicker is doing. Tells Stallings, "Coach you got to see this guy kick. He can't miss. He's booming them from 60 yards out, splitting the up-rights, right down the middle every time." Stallings strolls over to where they are practicing and stands right behind the kicker. The kicker then misses the next three kicks in a row. He turns to Stallings and says, "I guess I'm a little nervous with you watching and all." Stallings immediately replied, "Well, son, I plan on being at every game." Bottom line, if your reps can master their presentation in front of you, their likelihood of success is greatly increased.

Finally stick with it. Did you know 80% of new sales are closed after the fifth sales call? Many reps don't make it that far. Remember when cold calling to focus on the goal at hand, which may simply be to set an appointment to better get to know the prospect and his or her needs. Building a business relationship is a process. And you'll get plenty of "nos" along the way. But each "no" puts you that much closer to a "yes."

If the rep will put in some time before making the cold call, he just might find it's not the chilling experience he thought it might be.

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

What advertisers care about



*Ad-libs
by John Foust*

Jodi is a sales manager with an interesting philosophy. “We’re all familiar with win-win,” she said. “It’s a common cliché these days. In business relationships – especially any kind of negotiation – each side should benefit. I help you win, and you help me win.

“Win-win is a noble objective, but I don’t think it covers all the bases in the advertising business. I’ve heard people say that we’re dealing with four wins, not two. We talk about this all the time in staff meetings. As long as we focus on winning in four areas, we’re on the right track.”

Let’s take a look at Jodi’s four wins:

1. The advertiser. “It all starts here,” she said. “Advertisers and prospective advertisers want results. The purpose of advertising is to generate sales and market awareness, so we go into every presentation with that in mind.

“After all, that’s how they judge the value of running ads

with us. They constantly ask themselves, ‘Are the ads working?’ If they can’t answer ‘yes’ to that question, we have a big problem. If there’s no win for the advertiser, the other wins don’t matter.”

2. The newspaper. “When we tell prospects we’re working for a win-win, they automatically think of their business and our newspaper,” Jodi explained.

“We work for the newspaper, and everybody understands that we’re expected to keep our employer’s interests at heart. When our advertisers get good results from their campaigns, they’ll naturally run more ads. That boosts our business as well as theirs. By helping them win, we win right along with them.”

3. The consumer. “This is the first of the additional wins,” Jodi said. “Even though it doesn’t apply to every industry, it’s a big part of what we do in advertising. In a lot of ways, you could say we’re a bridge between businesses and their customers. If it weren’t for advertising, a lot of people wouldn’t know what’s available in the marketplace.

“Around the office, we joke about being consumer advocates, but that’s our way of say-

ing we work to take care of our audience. We’re obligated to help advertisers package their messages to help readers make good buying decisions. If an advertiser hands us a bad idea, we don’t hesitate to say it’s a bad idea. Our ad team knows principles of effective advertising, and they do everything they can to steer clients away from weak ideas.”

4. The sales person. The fourth win hits close to home. “We want the people in our ad department to enjoy their work and celebrate their successes,” she said. “When someone lands a new client, renews a contract or sells a campaign, it gives their confidence a big lift. We believe each victory is a stepping stone to more accomplishments.

“The better our team members feel about their work, the more valuable they become – to the paper, to advertisers, to our readers and to themselves.

“In our business, two wins are not enough. We go for the win-win-win.”

*John Foust conducts training programs for newspaper advertising professionals.
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A rule of the Supreme Court of Alabama requires the following:
No representation is made that the quality of legal services to be performed is greater than the quality of legal services performed by other lawyers.

Calling all Alabama magazines!

There is still time to join as an Associate Publication and participate in the APA Media Awards Contest!

Contact APA at (205) 871-7737 or jaclyn@alabamapress.org for more information.