

AlaPressa

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA PRESS ASSOCIATION

AUGUST 2019

Important Dates

*Top Women in
Alabama Media*
nomination deadline:
Monday, August 26

Online Media Campus
Thursday, September 5
[Facebook Groups](#)
Presenter: Penny Riordan

Be a part of the THINK F1RST campaign

Gannett and GateHouse announce merger

Terry Connor returns to Dothan

Evans named publisher in Lanett

Castro completes internship in Brewton

AU Journalism Advisory Council to recognize
honored journalists who impacted state,
nation

Top Women in Alabama Media

Former New York Times editor, Pulitzer
winner named Alabama Humanities Fellow

Saskatchewan executive named president of
newspaper association group

The stock market for ad ideas

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Be a part of the THINK F1RST campaign

The Alabama Press Association and the Alabama Broadcasters Association have joined the "THINK F1RST" campaign, a nationwide effort to promote awareness of the First Amendment. Member newspapers can utilize camera-ready ads to run in your paper.



The campaign, which began on Aug. 18 and will run through the end of the year, will include television, radio and print materials covering the five freedoms granted by Amendment 1 of the Bill of Rights. These five freedoms include: Freedom of Speech, Freedom of the Press, Freedom of Religion, Freedom to Peaceably Assemble, Freedom to Petition.

The campaign seeks to remind all Americans of how these freedoms impact life in this country. They are a guarantee that the government is accountable to the people and are critical to the maintenance of democracy.

A study conducted earlier this year by the Freedom Forum In-

stitute revealed that 71 percent of respondents were able to name at least one First Amendment right, while 21 percent could not name any.

"We learned about the First Amendment in our history classes throughout school, but most Americans cannot name all five freedoms if asked today," APA Executive Director Felicia Mason said. "Because most of us have never lived in a country without these freedoms, we tend to take them for granted. This campaign is a reminder of the importance of these freedoms in our everyday lives."

Alabama Broadcasters Association President Sharon Tinsley added, "The First Amendment was adopted in 1791. More than two hundred years later, it's easy to forget how hard people fought to earn these freedoms for themselves and ensure the future of our democracy. We must continue to be diligent and protect these rights. That means we all need to know and understand them."

The campaign was produced by Media of Nebraska, a non-profit corporation formed by members of the broadcast and print media in Nebraska.

Visit the "THINK F1RST" campaign website at <https://www.think-firstamendment.org/>.

Download ad copy for the campaign here: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/25wx12swa12l7si/Think-First-PrintAds-Generic.pdf?dl=0>

Gannett and GateHouse announce merger

Gannett and GateHouse Media, the two largest newspaper companies in the United States, have announced plans to merge.

Gannett, based in McLean, Va., owns the Montgomery Advertiser, and GateHouse, based in Pittsford, N.Y., owns The Tuscaloosa News and The Gadsden Times.

The deal initially valued at \$1.4 billion will create a conglomerate that will own more than 250 daily newspapers and hundreds of weekly and community papers. The new company will retain the Gannett name and will have publications in 47 states.

Terry Connor returns to Dothan



Terry Connor

paper as its editor.

Connor will replace Lance Griffin, who has accepted a position with Ridgecrest Baptist Church in Dothan, where he will serve as recreation minister.

Connor served as the regional publisher for north Alabama newspapers in Cullman, Athens, Gardendale, and Pell City for Montgomery-based CNHI, LLC, before joining The Dothan Eagle.

"I'm looking forward to returning to the Wiregrass and The Eagle," Connor said. "When the opportunity to re-

turn to Dothan presented itself, it was the right place at the right time.

turn to Dothan presented itself, it was the right place at the right time.

"I've often said the best job I ever had was leading The Eagle, so to say I'm excited is an understatement. The Eagle has long been a part of the fabric that binds together a great community and area, and that will continue to be its mission through the daily newspaper and growing digital platforms."

Regional Publisher Steve Smith said Connor brings extensive media experience to Dothan. "No doubt Dothan has changed a lot since Terry left in 1997, but his leadership and understanding of community newspapers and how they continue to evolve to serve our customers will be a great asset to the newspaper and the Dothan community."

Griffin said he was pleased to hear Connor would be returning to Dothan.

"Terry hired me when I came

to The Dothan Eagle in 1996 as a sportswriter," Griffin said. "I'm familiar with his commitment to making sure news is reported in a credible manner, to being accountable to the community, and to valuing his staff and the work it does."

Connor, who was raised in Montgomery, began his newspaper career at The Enterprise Ledger after graduating from Auburn University. In addition to his current position and stints in Dothan and Enterprise, Connor served as publisher at the Jackson County Floridan in Marianna (Fla.), Americus, Cordele, and Dalton (Ga.), and The Norman Transcript (Okla.). He also served as a senior vice president and regional manager of CNHI newspapers in Mississippi, Texas, and Oklahoma from 2007 to 2014 before moving to north Alabama.

Connor currently serves as first vice president of the Alabama Press Association.

Evans named publisher in Lanett



Daniel Evans

Birmingham. Evans has served as the

Daniel Evans has been named publisher of The Valley Times-News in Lanett. He replaces Baker Ellis who accepted a position with a nonprofit organization in Birmingham. Evans has served as the

managing editor since October 2018.

Evans has worked previously with The Selma Times-Journal and the LaGrange (Ga.) Daily News. Lanett, Selma and LaGrange are part of Boone Newspapers, Inc.

Evans moved to the LaGrange papers in 2017 after spending four years with The Selma Times-Journal as the news and sports editor. He is a graduate of the

University of Alabama Birmingham.

"I'm thankful for this opportunity and look forward to expanding my role at The Times-News," Evans said. "I have enjoyed the time I have spent in the Valley community, and I plan to work hard and build on the work we're already doing and make sure we meet and exceed the expectations of our readers and customers."

Castro completes internship in Brewton

Editor's note: Gina Castro worked this summer at The Brewton Standard with an internship sponsored by the APA Journalism Foundation. She is a student at the University of West Alabama.

I have had a full internship experience at The Brewton Standard. Over the summer I gained experience with InDesign; learned to write different types of leads; created fresh ideas for the magazine; and figured out how to stay afloat in a fast-paced environment.

When I first started working here, I was capable of building only the

records and photo pages. Now, I am comfortable enough to build all but the front page, but I am certain I will be able to get to the point where I am able to do that as well.

I have written many stories in my time here, which has allowed me to try my hand at constructing several types of leads. I wrote the article "Backwoods Bandit smoked out" using a summary lead. I also wrote "Barton's accomplished a lot" with a character lead.

For the magazine, I came up with several ideas to make the magazine

more community based. I wrote the article "Many memories made at the Alabama Blueberry Festival" to feature Brewton's many visitors at this year's Blueberry Festival. I also reduced the number of stock images to feature more images of the city and local people.

The most difficult part of this internship was trying to jump in headfirst and keep up with the pace. This experience taught me a lot about time management. I feel my experience here has helped me to become a better journalist.

People

Scott Wright, managing editor of The Post and the Cherokee County Herald in Centre was recently awarded the Baker-Dean Media Award for 2019. The award is given each year by the Cherokee County Historical Society.

Pujol Printing and Publishing recently announced the following staff changes:

Rhonda Stone has been named advertising director of the Geneva County Reaper and its associated

extended market product, Geneva County Shopper.

Stone has worked at the Reaper since she was in high school, leaving to work at the Wiregrass Hospital. She returned to the Reaper when it was purchased by Pujol Printing and Publishing in 2008.

Nelson E. Gomez, Jr. has been hired as a staff writer at the Reaper. He is a 2002 graduate of Geneva High School and has worked as a photographer in the Geneva area.

Sara Hodge has transferred

from the Reaper to The Opp News, also owned by Pujol Printing and Publishing. Hodge has a degree in Computer Information Systems from Enterprise Community College and is currently working on a BA in journalism and mass communication.

Katherine Hepperle has taken on the responsibility as editor for both the Opp and Geneva papers. Hepperle moved to Geneva from Oregon in 2017, and joined the Reaper later that year to work in circulation and customer service.

Briefs

The **TimesDaily** in Florence was the recipient of a special gift recently. A local couple gave the newspaper their collection of old copies of The Florence Times and The Tri City Daily, the papers that covered Florence, Sheffield and Tuscumbia.

Among the oldest is a Sept. 17, 1917, edition updating the latest World War I news. The same edition contained a local story about a wagon headed toward Tuscumbia thought to be carrying hogs. The sheriff reported the wagon had no hogs, but it did have five quarts of "mountain distilled whiskey."

The **Eclectic Observer** is no longer publishing. News and sports from the Eclectic coverage area is now part of sister papers, The Wetumpka Herald and The Tallassee Tribune. All three papers are in Elmore County.

Content normally published in The Observer will appear on a dedicated page in the Tallassee and Wetumpka papers. Subscribers will have the choice to continue their subscription with either of the other papers.

The **Clayton Record** was referenced in a Wall Street Journal article on April 29, 2019. The article was

about how bridge clubs were once an important part of society and were featured on many social pages in local newspapers across the country.

An article in The Clayton Record from the 1960s reported on a club meeting that took place at a local residence where "bowls and vases of camellias, hyacinths and daffodils beautified the living room where bridge was contested at two tables." The article also described the salad course and coffee served during the gathering.

Saskatchewan executive named president of newspaper association group

Steven R. Nixon, executive director of the Saskatchewan Weekly Newspapers Association, was elected president of Newspaper Association Managers (NAM) during the groups' 96th annual summer conference in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Nixon, who has led the Canadian Prairie Press Association since 2003, has 16 years in newspaper association experience. Although hailing from New Zealand and involved in agriculture, he was also an owner of a commercial printing plant in Australia for 10 years.

Nixon urged conference attendees to continue the drive on NAM's

efforts to improve the relevance of member associations and the mission of the newspaper industry at large.



"I am concerned about our industry not taking advantage of its existing assets in order to fight back against the social media tidal force that would seek to dismantle top quality, honest journalism in favor of unvetted opinion pieces," he said. "This, I fear, will weaken the democracy that so many before us fought so hard to create."

Others elected to leadership positions during the NAM conference were Vice President Beth Bennett, executive director of the Wisconsin Newspaper Association, and Secre-

tary Laurie Hieb, executive director of the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association. Susan Patterson Plank, executive director of the Iowa Newspaper Association, was elected to serve a three-year term on the NAM Board. Continuing directors are Mark Maassen, executive director of the Missouri Press Association and Brian Allfrey, executive director of the Utah Press Association.

New York Press Association Executive Director Michelle K. Rea becomes immediate past president. Layne Bruce, executive director of the Mississippi Press Association, serves as the organization's clerk.

Founded in 1923, NAM is a coalition of state, provincial, regional and national North American trade associations serving the newspaper industry.

AU Journalism Advisory Council to recognize honored journalists who impacted state, nation

The Auburn University Journalism Advisory Council is pleased to present this year's five journalism award winners.

The 2019 Auburn Journalism Award Winners are: Kim Chandler, Associated Press capital reporter; Carol Nunnelley, former Birmingham News managing editor and founder of BirminghamWatch; Connor Sheets, Alabama Media Group investigative reporter; John Underwood, Baldwin County editor/reporter; and John Zenor, Associated Press sports reporter.

"Whether working for long-established national journalism cooperatives, community outlets, or even aggressive online start-ups, these individuals show that Alabama's news consumers are getting quality information in all media forms."

The luncheon and program will take place on Friday, Sept. 13, at 11:30 a.m. at the Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts and Humanities (Pebble Hill). Tickets are \$45 each. The annual awards will be presented during the luncheon, and are hosted by the Auburn University Journalism Advisory Council. The Caroline Marshall Draughon Center

for the Arts and Humanities is located at 101 S. Debardeleben St., in Auburn.

Kim Chandler, Auburn Journalism Class of 1994, has covered the Alabama Statehouse for more than 20 years, currently with the AP. "Kim is a tremendous journalist with a deep understanding of Alabama and its politics," said Jim Van Anglen, AP Deep South editor. "She has a real knack for telling stories that resonate not only in Alabama but across the country."

Chandler is the Distinguished AU Journalism Alumnus Award Winner. She was nominated by her predecessor covering the Statehouse for the AP, Auburn journalism faculty member Phil Rawls. "I am one of many citizens who appreciate having her as a watchdog of Alabama government," he wrote in his nomination.

A graduate of Samford University, Carol Nunnelley is founder of BirminghamWatch, a nonprofit, non-partisan journalism effort. It provides investigative reporting on key issues facing Birmingham and the state of Alabama at a time when many organizations are cutting such efforts back. Before helping to start Birmingham Watch, Nunnelley was an investigative reporter and later managing editor for The Birmingham News, and also served as a program developer for AP Managing Editors.

Nunnelley is the Distinguished Mass Media Achievement Award Winner.

"You can break down Carol Nunnelley's journalism career into four acts," said Alec Harvey, adviser to The Auburn Plainsman student newspaper and Nunnelley's former colleague at the News. "Any of those acts would be worthy of honor."

In his four years with the Alabama Media Group, Connor Sheets has left a major impact on the Alabama landscape through his investigative reporting. He is perhaps best known for his series on county sheriffs who allegedly underfed inmates while pocketing the excess funds,

as allowed by Alabama law that has since been changed. His work is much broader, of course, and has also focused on efforts to restore the voting rights of paroled prisoners and investigations into the actions of then-Gov. Robert Bentley, along with daily breaking news duties.

Sheets is the Roy Bain Distinguished Special Achievement in Journalism Award Winner. "I firmly believe Alabama is a better place because of watchdog journalists like Connor holding our elected officials accountable," said Kendra Carter, Advisory Council vice chair, in her nomination.

For the residents of central Baldwin County, John Underwood has been synonymous with community journalism for the past 30 years. Underwood has served in a variety of roles with several newspapers, most recently the Onlooker in Foley.

"From covering football games every Friday night to weekly council meetings, from event coverage to breaking crime news, John is always ready and, on the spot, to provide news and information to his readers," said Cliff McCollum, a former Gulf Coast Media managing editor, in nominating Underwood.

Underwood is the John Stephenson Distinguished Alabama Community Journalist Award Winner. The community journalism award was named to honor John Stephenson, long-time editor and publisher of The Randolph Leader, earlier this year. Stephenson was a long-time member of the Advisory Council, and a leader in Alabama community journalism.

John Zenor has spent 20-plus years in sports writing with the Associated Press, providing college and high school coverage of Alabama schools. His articles have a wide reach, appearing in AP member newspapers throughout the nation. Zenor is the Distinguished Alabama Community Sports Journalist Award Winner.

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NOW ACCEPTING NOMINATIONS!
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Nominations Extended Through: August 26, 2019

TOP WOMEN IN ALABAMA MEDIA 2019



Keynote speaker Sharyl Attkisson is a five-time Emmy Award winner and recipient of the Edward R. Murrow award for investigative reporting.

She is author of two New York Times best sellers: "The Smear: How Shady Political Operatives and Fake News Control What You See, What You Think and How You Vote," and "Stonewalled." She is host of the Sunday morning national TV news program, Sinclair's "Full Measure," which focuses on investigative and accountability reporting.

AWARDS CEREMONY

Together with locally and nationally recognized female leaders, Business Alabama magazine is showcasing and honoring women in media across Alabama who demonstrate outstanding performance and leadership ability. Featuring content in print, digital and social platforms, plus an exciting Awards Ceremony featuring speaker Sharyl Attkisson, it will be an intelligent and professional salute to the women leaders across Alabama media!

Send your nominations now! Get great exposure for yourself, a friend or colleague, and your company, across the entire Alabama business community. Honorees will be profiled in the December issue of Business Alabama magazine, read by thousands of business leaders around the state since 1986. The stories will also be posted on businessalabama.com and shared via email and social media. (And the profiles will also be provided to honorees for distribution through their own social platforms.)

Enjoy recognition and exposure through email promotions to the *Business Alabama* database of 14,000 and *Business Alabama's* social media network of Alabama business executives.

Monday, December 2, 2019 | 6 p.m. – 9 p.m.
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For additional information, contact Sheila Wardy at swardy@pmtpublishing.com or 205-802-6363 ext. 108.
Top Women in Alabama Media is being presented by Business Alabama magazine, in cooperation with Alabama Advertising Federation, Alabama Broadcasters Association, and Alabama Press Association.

honors

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"John demonstrates the work ethic and nimble professional skills we try to develop in our students," said John Carvalho, who teaches sports journalism courses within the major. "I do believe that he can cover any sport at any level of competition and do it extremely well."

Zenor has been an active member and former president of the

Alabama Sportswriters Association and has been honored with the organization's prestigious Bill Shelton Award.

The AU Journalism Advisory Council established these awards in 2004 to recognize and celebrate the best and most enduring professionals in its field, both in this state and those outside it with Alabama roots. Only the AU Journalism Alumnus award must go to someone with Auburn connections.

"Whether working for long-

established national journalism cooperatives, community outlets, or even aggressive online start-ups," said Carvalho, associate director for journalism in the School of Communication and Journalism, "these individuals show that Alabama's news consumers are getting quality information in all media forms."

For more information on the program, or if interested in attending, contact John Carvalho by calling (334) 844-4454, or e-mailing carvajp@auburn.edu.

Former New York Times editor, Pulitzer winner named Alabama Humanities Fellow

Alabama Humanities Foundation will honor retired New York Times Executive Editor and Pulitzer Prize winner Howell Raines as one of four fellows inducted into its 2019 class at The Colloquium, set for Oct. 7 at Birmingham's The Club.

To be honored are four individuals with Alabama ties who have made significant contributions in the humanities throughout their lives and careers: Marquita Davis, Ph.D., deputy director, Early Learning, Pacific Northwest for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; Fred Gray, attorney and nationally recognized civil rights activist; Jody Singer, director of NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville; and Raines.

"This is our third year of The Colloquium, and each year brings us new inspiration as we hear from such distinguished people who have had such an impact, not just in our state but around the world," said AHF Executive Director Armand DeKeyser. "To think that they all have Alabama ties makes us proud and makes this event so special."

All four fellows will be featured in a live conversation moderated by National Public Radio's Michel Martin. They will be talking about their lives, their careers and the role humanities have played in shaping their perspectives. Martin is host of

NPR's "All Things Considered," and this will be her second time to moderate the annual event.

Nancy Grisham Anderson of Montgomery and Guin Robinson of Birmingham are honorary co-chairs for the annual event.



Howell Raines

A Birmingham native, Raines began his journalism career in Alabama in 1964, working for the Birmingham Post-Herald, WBRC -TV, The Tuscaloosa News and The Birmingham News, respectively.

He joined the Atlanta Constitution in 1971 and was political editor in 1973-74. In 1976, he was hired by Eugene Patterson as the political editor of the St. Petersburg Times, covering Jimmy Carter's presidential candidacy. He joined the Atlanta bureau of the New York Times in 1978.

During Raines' 25 years at the Times, he served as Atlanta bureau chief, national political correspondent, White House correspondent,

London bureau chief, Washington editor, editorial page editor (1993-2001), and executive editor (2001-2003).

In 1993, he won the Pulitzer Prize for feature writing for "Grady's Gift," a New York Times Magazine article describing his friendship with Grady Richardson, a black housekeeper employed by his family during the era of segregation.

He is the author of four books: Whiskey Man, a novel; My Soul Is Rested, a history of the Civil Rights Movement; Fly Fishing Through the Midlife Crisis and The One That Got Away, both memoirs.

Raines earned his bachelor's degree in English from Birmingham-Southern College and a master's in English from the University of Alabama. He holds honorary doctorates from both institutions.

He is married to Krystyna Stachowiak Raines, a writer and former journalist for Polish news outlets, and they split their time between homes in Fairhope and Henryville, PA.

The Colloquium opens at 11 a.m., followed by a luncheon at 11:30 a.m. and the program at noon. More information, tickets, tables and sponsorships are available at <https://www.alabamahumanities.org/alabama-colloquium/>.

The stock market for ad ideas



*Ad-libs
by John Foust*

Daniel told me about an ad he created for a commercial real estate firm. "They prided themselves on the hard work they did for their customers. Their marketing manager said 'shoe leather' was their secret of success. When I heard that, I knew it would work in their ads."

"I found a stock photo of a shoe with a hole in the sole, then asked our creative department to enlarge the hole to make it more dramatic. The copy described the advertiser's willingness to wear out their shoes to serve their customers. That photo was a real winner. It became the theme for everything they advertised."

Stock photography can be an important addition to your creative toolbox. Here are some points to keep in mind:

1. Look for an image to illustrate an idea you already have. That is what Daniel did. "I knew I needed a picture of a shoe," he said. "It was just a matter of finding the right one. A photo worked

better than a drawing, because it was a picture of an actual shoe. Sure, we modified it, but the end product was still a real shoe."

2. Browse through images to find a new idea. Sometimes you'll have a general concept in mind. You just need a visual image to crystallize the idea.

Let's say you're developing a campaign for an investment company that has a long history of helping people navigate the ups and downs of the economy. Their philosophy is, "There's no need to worry. Your investments are safe with us."

You look through some stock images and find several distinct categories to consider – people, objects, activities and places. They all offer opportunities to use comparisons and hyperbole.

To consider a few generic examples...could a mountain climber represent the company's expertise in moving onward, regardless of the unpredictable twists and turns of the economy? Could a lighthouse symbolize the firm's guiding principles in protecting their clients' retirement accounts? Could a padlock represent their commitment to financial safety?

What about the advertising for

a home builder? Could a paint brush symbolize their meticulous attention to detail in the homes they build? Could a clock represent the fact that their houses sell quickly, because they are so popular?

3. Don't hesitate to modify an image. Like Daniel modified the stock photo of the shoe, you can customize an image to fit your specific situation. "The change made the selling point more noticeable," he said. "I knew the shoe would appear in small ads, as well as large ads – and I didn't want anyone to miss the point."

4. Be sure to check the usage agreement. Even if your publishing company has purchased a collection of stock images, do some research before you present an idea to your client. You'll want to make sure you have the proper permission to use the image how you want – and as many times as you want.

Without a doubt, the "stock market" for photographs is a great place to find ideas.

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

Into the Issues



*Into the Issues
by Al Cross*

Rural communities have been disproportionately affected by the opioid epidemic, but rural newspapers have been disproportionately quiet about it. They seem to cover it as a criminal-justice problem, when it is primarily a health problem. Smart law enforcers and first responders will tell you that, but many if not most rural papers seem reluctant to cover it that way – to dig into the reasons for addiction, the struggles to overcome it, the search for treatment and the stories of success.

Part of this, I know from experience, is the natural reluctance of community journalists to report facts that reflect poorly on their communities. In many places, they probably think there's already enough bad news.

Another big factor is the stigma that still surrounds people with drug problems. That is more prevalent in rural areas, and it keeps people from seeking help – and clings to those who do, putting them at risk for relapse. The role of stigma was well researched by Oak Ridge Associated Universities, and The Rural Blog reported on it at <https://bit.ly/2MhNYlq>.

The folks at Oak Ridge said local news media can counteract stigma with reporting. To help ru-

ral journalists cover substance abuse, behavioral health and recovery, they and the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues (which publishes The Rural Blog) are planning a one-day workshop in mid-November. Watch for details on it soon.

Meanwhile, start reporting. Get local data. Ask your corner each month for death certificates, and for advice on which families might be willing to talk about the struggles of addiction that ended in death. Talk to people in the treatment community, and then to people with substance-abuse disorder.

See how the problem developed in your area, by using the

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pill-distribution database that The Washington Post and the Charleston Gazette-Mail uncovered. Aaron Nelson of The Paintsville (Ky.) Herald did, and gave his readers the names of the stores that sold the most pills. The Rural Blog took note at <http://bit.ly/2MjX4Os>.

The opioid epidemic has had a disproportionate effect on poor areas, but prosperous farm counties are part of it, too. The Farm Bureau and the Cooperative Extension Service are active on this front; we had a blog item about their program in Ohio at <https://bit.ly/30RIMc2>.

Farmers have been struggling for years with financial instability, loneliness, lack of insurance or access to mental-health care, and the pressure to not quit what may have been a way of life for generations. Now they have to deal with a trade war and unfavorable weather, and are five times more likely to commit suicide than other Americans. The federal government is funneling more money to help them. Read about it at <https://bit.ly/2GuQjpk>.

Suicide and drugs go hand in hand. In rural areas, jail suicides are increasing, and the trend is linked to drug withdrawal and mental illness," says The Crime Report, a publication of the Center on Media, Crime and Justice in the John

Jay College of Criminal Justice at the City University of New York, a good source for cutting-edge information on those topics. Read more at <https://bit.ly/2GvQvF1>.

Suicide is another touchy subject for community journalists, but it's time to stop being timid about it. Did you know rural residents are more likely than those in large cities to think about, plan or attempt suicide? They are, and The Rural Blog took note at <https://bit.ly/2yhmcgy>.

Here some other topics we've had on the blog lately that you can localize:

A U.S. Senate report revealed nearly 400 poor-performing nursing homes whose problems were not made clear by a government website. Local papers picked up on it, and we did at <https://bit.ly/2SOCqra>.

Many rural hospitals are in trouble, but some have found ways to overcome adversity, survive and thrive. "The secret sauce is always ... strong, collaborative leadership," National Rural Health Association CEO Alan Morgan told U.S. News and World Report. This is just one of many hospital stories on The Rural Blog; read it at <https://bit.ly/2Y8DUIH>.

Rural electric cooperatives are overly reliant on coal, the Nebraska-based Center for Rural Affairs and two other nonprofits charged. We contacted the co-ops' national trade group, which said they are moving to "cleaner energy sources."

What's your co-op doing? Start reporting with our blog item at <https://bit.ly/2ZcJNuV>.

Electronic cigarettes are an epidemic among young people, but many school districts are lax about it. Not in Fairbury, Neb., which requires any student in grades 7-12 to be subject to random nicotine testing if they participate in extracurricular activities. We took note at <https://bit.ly/2GwGHKO>. What is your school district doing about "vaping?" (By the way, it's not really vapor, as the tobacco companies say; it's an aerosol, and it has a lot of nasty stuff.)

Community newspapers increasingly charge for obituaries, an unfortunate result of digital media's erosion of their advertising base. But the news columns of the best papers still include news obits about people who made their mark on the community or region. And sometimes a paper will double down and run a long tribute to a truly unique individual. The Valley News of Lebanon, N.H., and White River Junction, Vt., did that with the moving, funny and insightful eulogy for a well-known dairy farmer and former state legislator, David Ainsworth. We picked it up at <https://bit.ly/2YhoW8k>.

Valley News Editor John Gregg sent us that story. If you do or see stories that should be on The Rural Blog, email them to me at al.cross@uky.edu.



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Help Wanted

Editor/Reporter - SW Alabama

Working editor/reporter sought for locally owned weekly newspaper group: The Clarke County Democrat (Grove Hill), The South Alabamian (Jackson) and The Thomasville Times. Duties would include all aspects of community news coverage-government, police, schools, features and more. Good writing, design/layout and photography skills needed. Most important is a motivated self-starter who wants to work, likes people and loves newspapers. Send resume to jimcox@tds.net.

Graphic Designer - SE Alabama

Graphic designer sought for weekly newspapers for ad layouts and other duties. Familiarity with basic design programs a must, especially inDesign and Photoshop. Send resume to moe@pujolprint.com

Reporter/Asst. Editor - LaFayette, GA

The Walker County Messenger, a weekly newspaper in LaFayette, Ga., is searching for a reporter/assistant editor. We are looking for someone with a jour-

nalism background, strong reporting and editing skills who is ready to step into a leadership role in the newsroom and to represent the newspaper in the community. The Walker County Messenger is owned by Times-Journal, Inc., publisher of the Marietta Daily Journal, Rome News-Tribune and two dozen weeklies in metro Atlanta and north Georgia. Employee Benefits include 401k, insurance, vacation, holiday and sick pay. Send cover letter, resume and writing samples to John Bailey at jbailey@npco.com



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