

AlaPressa

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA PRESS ASSOCIATION

MARCH 2022

Important Dates

APA Summer Convention

Perdido Beach Resort

Orange Beach, AL
June 23-25, 2022

Online Media Campus

APA members can register [HERE](#)
for any active or archived webinar
(deadline is 3 days before webinar)
at no charge using the code,
ALTraining.

Campbell elected president of APA

Clarke County Democrat launches audio articles

*Mason to be awarded Betsy Plank Distinguished
Achievement Award*

*Serving the Growing Mobile Audience- Tips on
Responsive Websites and Native App Design*

*Florida legislators put news publishers – in the state
and beyond – on notice*

DOJ FOIA guidelines call for more transparency

Tribute to a co-worker: A Lifetime of Service

*'60 Minutes' report on crisis in local journalism gives
local media to elaborate, reinforce message*



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Campbell elected president of APA

Dee Ann Campbell, publisher of the Choctaw Sun-Advocate in Gilbertown and The Leader in Linden, has been elected president of the Alabama Press Association. Campbell succeeds K.A. Turner who became chairman of the board.

Campbell is from Collinsville, Miss., and a graduate of Meridian Community College. She and her husband, Tommy, founded The Choctaw Sun in 2003. They later purchased The Choctaw Advocate and combined the papers to form The Choctaw Sun-Advocate.

Campbell has served as chairperson for the APA Media Awards since 2010.

Among her many honors, she was awarded the William H. McDonald Print Journalism Award for excellence in medical reporting from the Medical Association of Alabama. The award was given for a 2009 article on Alzheimer's Disease.

Darrell Sandlin, publisher of the TimesDaily in Florence, was elected first vice president of APA. Steve Baker, publisher of The Outlook in Alexander City was elected second vice president.

New board members elected were: Paige Windsor, Montgomery Advertiser; Wynn Christian, The Dothan Eagle; and Katherine Miller, The Cullman Times.

Clarke County Democrat launches audio articles

The Clarke County Democrat in Grove Hill has started offering audio articles in iOS and Android applications. The paper partnered with Our Hometown, a company that provides expertise in website design, content management and

digital subscriptions software.

Each audio article is available on a playlist organized by category: Calendar, Classifieds, Editorial, Public Notice, Front Page, etc. You can read more about this service [HERE](#).

Mason to be awarded Betsy Plank Distinguished Achievement Award

The University of Alabama College of Communications and Information Sciences has named APA Executive Director, Felicia Mason, the recipient this year for the Betsy Plank Distinguished Achievement Award. This award

recognizes an individual who is a UA graduate with a longtime or lifetime distinguished career in any of the communication disciplines represented within the College of Communication and Information Sciences.

Serving the Growing Mobile Audience- Tips on Responsive Websites and Native App Design

Webinar presented by Matt Larson of Our-Hometown-Thursdays, April 7, 1 p.m.

According to PewResearch.org, 86% of Americans get their news from a digital device.

With US mobile traffic reaching an all-time high of 61% in 2021, the majority of the online audience for local news is coming from mobile.

As a newspaper publisher, it's never been more important to focus on your audience's mobile user experience.

In this webinar, we will discuss key design points to consider for maximizing mobile traffic and revenue. Is your "Subscribe" button readily available on

mobile, or is it hidden in a sliding menu?

Are your ads mobile responsive? If so, are they still readable on a phone screen?

We will also address the big question on many publisher's minds today: "Should I get a native app, or focus on my responsive website?"

What unique benefits does a native app provide to support my digital strategy? Register [HERE](#). Remember: APA members can join any webinar free of charge webinar with a code: ALTraining. Enter this code when you are prompted to enter a discount code. Your code will be good throughout the year.

Industry

Florida legislators put news publishers - in the state and beyond - on notice

By Gretchen A. Peck for Editor & Publisher

The Florida state Senate was brought to order on March 10, 2022, by its president pro tempore, Republican Senator Aaron P. Bean, a charismatic commander of the chamber, with a voice that sounds like a blend of a fast-talking auctioneer and game show announcer. On the docket that morning was scheduled debates on CRT (Critical Race Theory), schoolbook bans and a bill seemingly designed to punish and hobble Florida's newspapers.

It had been a mere 68 days prior when Florida HB 35 had gone into effect, a public-notice law that represented a legislative compromise between Florida's news publishers, the Florida Press Association and state lawmakers regarding how public and legal notices would be disseminated to the public. It seemed a win-win for all stakeholders, but it proved a short-lived victory.

By February, the state considered a new bill, HB 7049, which would effectively overturn HB 35, giving public notice advertisers the option to publish public notices on the county's website instead of in local newspaper print editions or on their websites.

The new bill came as a surprise for all the stakeholders who'd invested time crafting HB 35 and deploying it with notable success in those short 68 days. Still, it came as no surprise to anyone following the escalating contention between lawmakers and Florida's newspapers — in particular, the Miami Herald.

Back in early January, FloridaPolitics.com journalist Jacob Ogles reported that Florida State Senate President Wilton Simpson had sent "an angry letter" to the Miami Herald's executive editor, Monica Richardson, to complain about Mary Ellen Klas, the newspaper's state capital bureau

chief, whom he accused of "collusion" with Democrats over a contentious redistricting debate happening among the legislators. A subsequent recording of the conversation that sparked the allegation was made public by FloridaPolitics.com.

Rep. Randy Fine (R-District 53), chair of the Redistricting Committee, is one of the Republican reps who introduced and championed HB 7049.

Oddly, a public utility company, Florida Power & Light (FPL), decided to compound pressure on the Miami Herald and devoted an entire page on its website to smearing the Miami Herald and by association, Klas, who reports on energy — implying without evidence that the newspaper is tight with the solar energy lobby.

On March 10, 2022, the Senate held its final debate on HB 7049.

Following the Senate's vote — which passed the measure by a vote of 26 Yeas and 13 Nays — E&P spoke with Senator Farmer. Asked about his perspective on "what happened" in the two months leading up to the vote, he said, "I think, in the shortest and most directive terms, Ron DeSantis happened. You know, this is just yet another of his red meat, hateful, harmful, hurtful pieces of legislation that he has been pushing this legislative session."

Sen. Farmer pointed out that there hadn't been enough time to evaluate HB 35's impact, but the data wouldn't have mattered. "This is just the latest attack or assault on the free press," he suggested.

Asked to opine on whether the strategy was stoked by the public feuds with the Miami Herald and Mary Ellen Klas, in particular, he defended the journalist:

"[She] is a one of the best in the business. She, unfortunately, is a dying breed — a true journalist, you know, not somebody who is looking for clicks or peddling sensationalist journalism or engaging in pay-to-play journalism...But listen, is there a beef there? Yeah. I think there probably is still some hard feelings or bad blood there, but I don't think this is just a one-off situation.

Rather, I think this is, as I was saying a minute ago, just the continuation and extension of a long-term Republican effort to limit the news cycle and to control the narrative."

What will the new law mean for the public?

"What it means is we have delivered a very significant blow to the First Amendment protection of freedom of the press in the state of Florida," Farmer told E&P. "And this may not be a censorship blow, but it's certainly a pocketbook blow."



Florida State Senator Gary Farmer (D-District 34) argued against it. During his comments, he spoke about the power of information and the plight of newspapers. He suggested the "underlying intent" of HB 7049 was "to weaken news." Senator Farmer may have crossed a rhetorical bridge too far when he endorsed the idea that the government should "subsidize" newspapers to keep them operational. That's a losing argument, especially among newspaper publishers.

DOJ FOIA guidelines call for more transparency

On March 15, Attorney General Merrick Garland released guidelines on the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). These guidelines come during Sunshine Week after much prompting by open government advocates and congressional representatives.

The guidelines include a presumption of openness, telling agencies if foreseeable harm is in doubt, "openness should prevail," and strongly encouraging agencies to make discretionary disclosures of information.

The Attorney General also said the

DOJ will not defend FOIA cases that are inconsistent with this presumption of openness. The guidelines further outline proactive disclosure requirements, removing barriers to access, and reducing backlogs.

People

Chase Goodbread is the new sports columnist at The Tuscaloosa News. He has been a sports writer since 1993, working previously at The Tuscaloosa News from 2009 to 2013. He most recently worked as a sports writer for NFL.com.

He has a journalism degree from the University of Alabama.

Cara Clark is the new managing editor for the Birmingham Business Journal. She is a graduate of Auburn University

and has spent the last seven years as a freelance writer for various magazines and newspapers.

Clark will oversee the day-to-day operations of the BBJ newsroom for both their print and digital publications.

Help Wanted

Lecturer or Professor of Practice in Journalism - Auburn University

The School of Communication and Journalism at Auburn University seeks candidates for a Lecturer or Professor of Practice position in Journalism beginning Aug. 16, 2022.

Responsibilities: This is a nine-month, non-tenure track, full-time teaching faculty position in the undergraduate journalism program. The position may be renewed annually by mutual agreement based on the availability of funds, the need for services, and satisfactory performance.

The primary responsibilities of the successful candidate are to teach undergraduate journalism courses during the fall and spring semesters. An ability to teach a variety of journalism courses is a requirement. Examples of courses include visual journalism, photojournalism, editing and design, sports reporting as well as introduction to reporting and advanced reporting. Candidates should indicate in their cover letters the courses they are qualified to teach. A full listing of courses and their descriptions are available online: <https://aub.ie/JRNLCourses>

The candidate will teach four courses per semester and is expected to be an engaged member of the School by serving on committees. Opportunities for summer teaching are possible, subject to availability of funds.

Salary will be commensurate with experience and qualification. We are particularly interested in candidates who advance our commitment to building a diverse and inclusive educational environment.

Lecturer Appointment: Requires a master's degree at the time of appointment and five years of full-time journalism experience.

Professor of Practice Appointment: Requires a bachelor's degree at the time of appointment and 15 years of full-time journalism experience.

The candidate selected for this position must be able to meet eligibility requirements to work in the United States at the time the appointment is scheduled to begin and continue working legally for the proposed term of employment; excellent communication skills required.

Review of applications will begin April 7th, 2022 and continue until a candidate is selected.

To apply, please visit: <https://www.aub.edu/poyment.com/postings/28166>

Managing Editor - Fort Payne, AL

The Times-Journal in Fort Payne, Alabama is looking for its next Managing Editor. The position involves running the newsroom, ensuring the smooth flow of content from conception to publishing on all platforms. We are looking for a patient player-coach who is super organized, detail-oriented, and eager to produce award-winning content while enjoying the high quality of life in our beautiful and historic community. We publish twice a week, publish a monthly magazine called DeKalb Living and create special issues throughout the year.

To succeed in this position, you need:

- Strong news judgment and knowledge of current events.
- Experience with page layout using Adobe InDesign.
- An ability to assess daily story pitches and ask quality questions of reporters and sources so our stories offer value to our readers.
- Skill at copyediting the work of staff reporters and freelance writers.
- Skill with digital, mobile, streaming, podcasts, and social media is a definite plus.
- Minimum of 2 years as a beat reporter and/or editor in a newsroom.
- Experience using Microsoft Word, Adobe InDesign and Photoshop.
- Proven interest in and aptitude for team leadership.
- Hands-on experience in guiding and contributing to large-scale editorial projects.
- Ease working in a digital environment and on social media.
- Education
- Bachelor's degree or equivalent experience.

Fort Payne is the county seat of DeKalb County in northeast Alabama. Our rich history as an early Cherokee settlement has been preserved for future generations to enjoy and it is hard to beat our combination of simple, small-town life, quality schools, diverse industry and popular attractions like the Little River Canyon National Preserve, DeSoto State Park, the Mentone mountain resort community, and the fan club/museum of country music superstars Alabama.

This is a full-time position. Pay is negotiable based on skills and experience.

To apply, send a resume and writing samples to Publisher Steven Stiefel at steven.stiefel@times-journal.com. No calls please.

Editor/Reporter - Southwest AL

Working editor/reporter needed for three weekly publications in southwest Alabama — Clarke County Democrat (Grove Hill), South Alabamian (Jackson) and Thomasville Times (yes, the one in Alabama). This could be a great job for either a new college graduate/young reporter or a seasoned veteran looking for a little less hectic pace. These are small operations and small communities but there is a lot of news and potential for stories. Working editor/publisher looking to trim load a little after 40 years. Salary based on experience with benefits. Email resume to Publisher Jim Cox, jimcox@tds.net

For more information on the above listed positions and others [CLICK HERE](#) to view the APA Help Wanted page - updated frequently.

Send APA your
Help Wanted
information

jaclyn@alabamapress.org



Columns

Examine, evaluate reporting shortcuts



by Jim
Pumarlo

I fondly characterize newsrooms as organized chaos. I witnessed that firsthand guiding staffs when resources were plentiful and community newspapers had captive audiences.

Dynamics are even more frayed in today's changing media landscape as editors grapple with diminished resources and increased constraints on news gathering.

Editors and reporters necessarily must explore and implement shortcuts, but you should keep two questions at the forefront: Are you really saving time considering the extra legwork that might be required to produce complete and compelling reports? Most important, are stories still relevant to readers and advertisers?

Brainstorm with your staffs, examining the pros and cons of each tool.

Shortcut: Reporters depend more on web streaming of government meetings.

Reporters benefit by being able to multitask during the "dead time" of meetings, and still give full attention to those items of highest interest. Broadcasts also can be reviewed later.

On the flip side, how often have broadcasts run into technical difficulties such as poor audio? Are reporters accurately recording all votes and quotes, correctly identifying all individuals who address a body? Without being there in person, reporters can easily fall into the trap of writing for "those in front of the room" instead of translating what actions mean for "those in back of the room."

Shortcut: Reporters depend more on phone interviews.

Reporters still have the ability to gauge the temperament of interviewees: i.e., co-

operative, combative, evasive. It's easier to schedule interviews amid demanding schedules.

But reporters can be challenged to control the environment. Interviewees can more easily cut short conversations or refuse to answer uncomfortable questions. Phone interviews also are a missed opportunity to capture elements essential to fleshing out a story – especially a feature – such as describing a scene or a person's body language.

Shortcut: Reporters depend more on Zoom for interviews.

Zoom provides opportunity for face-to-face interviews and follow-up questions.

Reporters may confront technical difficulties here, too. Interviewees also may short-circuit an exchange by limiting the length of a session.

Shortcut: Reporters depend more on email for interviews.

Interviewees typically have more time and flexibility to respond to questions, thus producing a better story. It's likely easier for reporters to write a story versus sifting through and transcribing notes. Q&As can be a clear and concise way to present some stories, especially profiles on individuals.

At the same time, email interviews limit opportunity, or at least make it more difficult, to ask follow-up questions. Responses often are published verbatim with no attempt at editing and thus lack a conversational flow; they may even be written by a communications specialist. The most important information often is buried if answers are simply published in the order the questions were asked.

Shortcut: Newsrooms depend more on correspondents and freelancers.

A good stringer corps can effectively stretch resources. Correspondents do not necessarily have to write a full story but can assist in collecting essential information

such as soliciting instant feedback from citizens attending a meeting. Freelancers may have a particular interest or expertise, thus minimizing the preparation for an assignment.

On the other hand, skill levels can vary greatly. Don't underestimate the extra work that may be required to get a stringer's draft ready for publication. Editors also should consider potential conflicts of interest such as hiring someone to cover city council who unsuccessfully sought office.

All of these tools can likely be used in varying degrees, but substantive reports must remain a priority. Don't let shortcuts undermine the credibility of your product.

For example:

What message are you sending to readers if you report a 4-3 vote by the city council without identifying the votes?

What message are you sending by relying on a press release, published verbatim, from the fire department – accompanied by a photo also submitted by the department – as your sole report on a downtown fire? An injured firefighter remains nameless.

What message are you sending if the city's biggest property taxpayer announced a proposed change in its operations – both in virtual and in-person meetings promoted by a full-page ad – and the newspaper attends neither meeting? The story appears nine weeks later after the company makes a presentation to the city council.

Solid reporting means delivering the 5 Ws and H. Sticking to the tenets of journalism is essential if you are to promote yourselves as the newspaper of record in your communities.

Jim Pumarlo writes, speaks and provides training on community newsroom success strategies. He can be reached at www.pumarlo.com and welcomes comments and questions at jjm@pumarlo.com.

One way to make presentations more memorable



Ad-libs
by John Foust

Samuel, the ad manager at a community paper, told me about a simple technique his sales team uses at the end of meetings with prospects and clients.

"I once read that people remember only about 25 percent of what they hear," he said. "That's a harsh reality, because we focus

our client conversations on things we think are memorable. It's painful to walk away from a meeting knowing that the person on the other side of the desk might forget three quarters of the discussion. Of course, we use ad examples, charts and coverage maps to add visual elements to presentations, but they still forget a large percentage of what we talk about.

"We've learned that one way to deal with this problem is to summarize at the end of a meeting," he said. "It's an easy way to repeat the important points in a conversa-

tion. And a lot of times, we find out the other person has completely missed a key fact. A summary helps us clarify things and make presentations a little easier to remember."

Samuel's process has three steps:

1. Restate briefly. For example, a member of Samuel's team might say, "Thank you for meeting with me today. To make sure we're on the same page, let me recap what we've talked about. First, we looked at the target audience for your new Widget product, then you gave me a list of the most important

memorable continued on page 6

Columns

memorable
continued from page 5

features and benefits, then we talked about some special offers that could appeal to your customers.”

Notice how this brief statement hits the highlights in a logical sequence. There's no need to go into great depth about everything which was discussed.

2. Confirm the information and ask for input. After the summary, it helps to nail it down by asking, “Does this cover everything?”

Even though it's short, this is a crucial question. It is designed to give the other per-

son permission to say they missed something which was covered — or even to say they would like to know something else. If something has been misunderstood, it's better to find out now.

3. Include an action item. For instance, “My next step is to start on that market report you want and get it to you by Monday. Will that work?”

This is the time to get some kind of agreement and advance the sale. If the other person is not yet ready to finalize things and sign on the dotted line, this keeps the dialogue going in a helpful, low-key way.

“An action step can make a conversa-

tion stick in the mind,” Samuel explained. “It gives the salesperson a specific reason to get back in touch. It lets the other person know to expect a call by a certain day. When someone is waiting for information, an action step reduces the chances that an email or a voice mail message will be ignored.”

It's all about creating memorable presentations. When advertisers and prospects remember the key points, they are more likely to buy.

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

‘60 Minutes’ report on crisis in local journalism gives local media opportunity to elaborate, reinforce message



by Al Cross

The local news crisis got its biggest play yet to an American audience the evening of Sunday, Feb. 27, as CBS's “60 Minutes” did a story that reached perhaps 9 million viewers. It didn't make the best case ever for local journalism, but as the show usually does, it told the tale through some compelling personal stories.

Most of those stories, and the belief that “journalism is essential for the survival of American democracy,” as one former reporter put it, are familiar to readers of The Rural Blog. But they are not well known by many Americans, so for local news media, the network report is an opportunity to reinforce the message, and elaborate on it.

The story's only evidence of “increased corruption by local officials,” was a rather old story: the 2010 revelation by the Los Angeles Times (uncredited by CBS) that officials in the small L.A. County city of Bell were paying themselves exorbitant salaries after “the local newspaper there shut down,” as CBS put it. Actually, the area had a paper, but it was covering so many municipalities that Bell got little attention.

There's plenty of other evidence that lack of local journalism is bad for taxpayers, such as studies showing higher interest rates for bond issues, fewer candidates for local office and more straight-ticket voting and political polarization. But those points didn't have compelling video, like the footage “60 Minutes” used, showing enraged citizens at a meeting of the Bell City Council.

Beyond academic studies, in other places with shriveled journalism we have seen

the election of bigoted but unprofiled candidates, parroting of politicians' press releases, and use of disaster funds with little oversight. And lawsuits to get public records are no longer filed mainly by the news media. Meanwhile, partisan websites, often masquerading as news media, fill the vacuum. Even some politicians have voiced concern about reduced coverage of elections.

At the same time, local reporters have also exposed such evils as pharmacies' role in the opioid epidemic and ripoffs by contractors, forced resignation of corrupt officials, and there are examples of newspapers that have improved their bottom lines through accountability reporting. So, there's a much larger story to tell about local news than CBS did, but its report tees up the ball for local news media to remind their audiences of their value to their communities.

For some of us in journalism, the headline on the story could have been what Steven Waldman of Report for America said near the end of the report: “We need a dramatic increase in the commitment of foundations, and philanthropists and donors like you and me to actually supporting local news.”

Waldman elaborates on that in a two-part essay for Columbia Journalism Review, in which he writes, “Our goal should be to create a better local news system than we had in the past, including far better service for communities of color and for rural areas. To make that local news system a reality, I believe that we need to add 50,000 local reporters.” He also calls for better business models, enlightened public policy and creating new methods of financing news operations, such as tax credits for organizations that take over local newspapers.

The more philanthropy the better, from big grants to small donations, reader mem-

berships and so on. That said, grants have a way of running out, so they are more likely to be bridges to transformed business models for newspapers as they shift to an online existence — gradually, so they can still enjoy the revenue generated by print, their main revenue source, as print fans gradually leave the scene. And that's a reality of the newspaper business that papers need to explain to their readers, too.

For those who didn't see “60 Minutes,” read about a few excerpts below:

The first protagonist was Evan Brandt, sole reporter at the Pottstown Mercury, which has won two Pulitzer Prizes and “at one time had dozens of reporters;” anyone in the town of 23,000 could walk into the newsroom and give a tip for a story to hold local officials and institutions accountable. Now Brandt covers 21 eastern Pennsylvania towns and nine school districts from home.

“He says the worst culprit is the hedge fund, Alden Global Capital,” the second largest owner of U.S. newspapers, which “has been called a vulture, bleeding newspapers dry.” Brandt said he went to Alden CEO Heath Freeman's home on Long Island to ask “What value do you place on local news? And I'm not talking about money.” But Freeman walked off before Brandt could pose the question.

As the industry shrinks, correspondent Jon Wertheim asked, “to what extent does democracy shrink with it?”

Former Chicago Tribune reporter Gary Marx said, “This is an attack on our democracy,” which papers serve by “holding our leaders accountable.” He and colleague David Jackson investigated Alden before it bought the paper and found profit margins as high as 30 percent in one market.

60 minutes continued on page 7

Columns

**60 minutes
continued from page 6**

"We felt that Alden didn't realize the civic trust that's embedded in this profit-making machine," Jackson said.

CBS paraphrased Freeman as saying that "Alden is committed to providing robust, independently minded local journalism and that it's time for tech giants to start paying for the 'billions of dollars' they're making off of

news publishers' content."

The story had five RFA reporters in a group interview, including Chris Jones of 100 Days in Appalachia, who covered the Jan. 6 riot because he had developed sources among extremists. The former Marine has a community journalism ethic: "These are our neighbors, you know? We're not writing about someone I'm never gonna talk to again. They're people before they're interview subjects."

Al Cross edited and managed rural newspapers before covering politics for the Louisville Courier Journal and serving as president of the Society of Professional Journalists. He is the extension professor of journalism at the University of Kentucky and director of its Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues, which publishes The Rural Blog at <http://irjci.blogspot.com>.

Tribute to a co-worker: A Lifetime of Service

Editor's note: The column below was written by Tammy Andrews and appeared in The Clay Times-Journal on March 2, 2022.

Let me tell a little something about working for a small newspaper...it's a big job. Bigger than you can ever imagine, actually.

One reason is that you don't have the luxury of a big staff, where everyone just has to cover a specific duty. You pretty much do everything that needs to be done, which includes a wide variety of tasks. From cleaning the bathrooms to designing ads/pages and writing articles, sometimes you're a one-two person show, and that can get a little hairy on deadline days. Some weeks are pretty laid back, depending on what's going on and others, you want to pull your hair out by the roots.

From covering meetings, to on-the-spot news, such as house fires and deadly accidents that may occur in the middle of the night, you always have to sleep with one eye open. But it's all part of the package and you have to take the good with the bad. The good thing is you never get bored or find yourself watching the clock, because there's always something to be done. Some of those days will just zoom right by and leave you wondering where the time went. The thing is that deadlines don't budge and that's the bottom line.

But, with that being said, it takes a special person to be in this line of work, because it can be very stressful. But it can also be very rewarding, and that's the main reason we do it - to be a part of something that gives back to the people of the county. Unlike many mainstream media outlets, we work very hard here at the CTJ to give you news that is non-biased and accurate and we take great pride in that. ALL of our news comes from official sources. We don't worry about news on a national level, unless it affects us here in our own little slice of Mayberry. Rain, snow, sleet, or shine, we are always here. The news doesn't stop for inclement weather or personal tragedies, we have a job to do and we work whatever hours are needed to make sure that is done to our standards.

Do we sometimes make mistakes? Absolutely, we do, because we are, indeed, human. But when we do, we try our hardest to correct

that mistake and learn from that experience. I assure you, there have been many times I have woken up in the middle of the night and thought about something that needed to be in the paper, so I would email myself a reminder. The time flies here at the newspaper, because when you get one paper out, it's time to start on another. Pretty soon, you're changing the year on the front page and wondering where that year went. One day, you wake up and you realize that you've been working here for 10 years and you're like "WOW", how did that even happen?

Sometimes we see our work family more than we do our biological families, so it takes a very understanding spouse/family in your corner for those days with rough hours. Sometimes, we argue with our work family on those tough deadline days, just like we do our own. But once that paper is put to bed, you just tend to forget what you were even arguing about. Sometimes that work family can be as strong as the real thing, and that's when you are really blessed.

"The Bottom Line in life is to always try to be a part of something that is bigger than yourself. Something with a purpose, that is both rewarding and meaningful."

Which brings me to the reason I have ratted on so about the newspaper business....

On Friday, February 25th, 2022, I watched my colleague, Ray Stansell, accept the Ala-

bama Press Association Lifetime Achievement Award, the most prestigious award the APA offers. Folks, this is the Granddaddy of them all! They don't get any bigger than this on a newspaper level. It was a proud moment for us all to watch him be recognized for his hard work and devotion to this newspaper.

For almost 48 years, Ray has been a staple figure at this newspaper. From the Lineville Tribune to the Ashland Progress, and finally, the Clay Times-Journal. So, everything I have talked about to this point applies to almost a half a century of Ray's life, except he was here in the days when this paper was hand built right here at our Lineville office. Those days when they would come in on Monday mornings and sometimes not leave until Tuesday afternoon. To listen to him talk about everything they had to do during these times is mind boggling to me, because even with the amount of work we have to do now, it is all done on computers, so if there's a mistake, we can just fix it and send it on. Modern technology is wonderful like that sometimes.

The Bottom Line in life is to always try to be a part of something that is bigger than yourself. Something with a purpose, that is both rewarding and meaningful. Being a part of a close-knit team that helps preserve our local history gives me just that and I'm sure Ray will tell you the same thing. Sure, there are days that I wish I had just a 9-5 job that didn't go home with me sometimes, but how boring would that be? I think God will always lead you to where he wants you to be, if you allow him to, which speaks volumes for the service Ray has provided to the newspaper industry, just shy of 50 years.

So, to my seasoned colleague, my work husband, my teammate, and my good friend, Ray Stansell, I would like to congratulate you on being named the recipient of the APA Lifetime Achievement Award and I also thank you for everything you do for this paper and this staff every single day. The CTJ is very lucky to have someone with your loyalty and dedication for so many years, which has, no doubt, contributed to the success and longevity of this paper. You make us all proud....



Delegates listen to a panel of state government reporters.



Emerging Journalist recipient Katie Bohannon (L) poses with Ray Stansell (R) APA's Lifetime Achievement recipient.



Denise Dubois (center) talks with students during the Meet the Publisher program.



APA Past Presidents: Front row L to R, Bo Bolton, Scott Brown and Jim Cox. Back row L to R: Joe Thomas, David Moore, Cy Wood, Terry Connor, Tommy McGraw, Steve Stewart and K. A. Turner.



APA Officers L to R: Terry Connor, outgoing Chairman; Steve Baker, second vice president, Dee Ann Campbell, president; K. A. Turner, immediate past president; Darrell Sandlin, first vice president.



Newspaper leadership met and mingled with journalism student delegates from the Alabama State University, Auburn University, The University of Alabama, Auburn University, and Troy University.

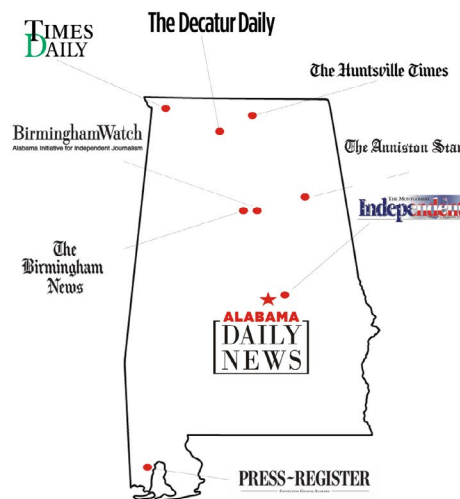
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