

AlaPressa

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA PRESS ASSOCIATION

APRIL 2022

Important Dates

APA Summer Convention

Perdido Beach Resort

Orange Beach, AL

June 23-25, 2022

Online Media Campus

[“Warming Up Cold Calls”](#)

Live Webinar

May 5 @ 1 p.m. (CDT)

In this webinar, 30 year veteran ad seller Ryan Dohrn will share his recent research that suggests warming up your clients before you cold call them. His research has shown a 40% increase in connections and successful meetings with these new techniques. This is a webinar he will not want to miss.

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

2022 Regular Legislative Session - a good one for APA

APA 2022 Summer Convention June 23-25

Alabama publisher featured in NNA's Publishers' Auxiliary

Congress passes Postal Reform Act of 2022, but 'our work is not done'

The importance of proofreading

Seize opportunity to steer, moderate election noise



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2022 Regular Legislative Session - a good one for APA

When the 2022 Regular Session of the Alabama Legislature ended earlier this month, two bills of importance to APA members that had received final passage became law after the governor's signature.

The first bill addressed the procedure for governmental bodies to hold virtual meetings. At the beginning of the pandemic, Gov. Kay Ivey issued an emergency proclamation to allow state and local government to conduct business using virtual meetings. It required proper notice and the ability for the public to hear all members during the meetings.

Once the proclamation expired, many bodies wanted the ability to continue to meet in this fashion going forward.

"In many cases, this made covering meetings much easier for our members," APA Executive Director Felicia Mason said. "On the other hand, moving into a post-pandemic world, there is no reason to have 100 percent virtual meetings, particularly since many Alabamians do not have access to high-speed internet."

APA, along with the Alabama Association of County Commissions and the League of Municipalities, worked with Sen. Arthur Orr and Rep. Prince Chestnut to amend the Open Meetings Act to allow more flexibility for virtual meetings.



Under the new law, governmental bodies with members comprised of two or more counties must have a majority of a quorum OR three members, whichever is less, physically present. Members not present may participate fully in the meeting. Proper notice is required and the public must be able to hear the meeting.

For all local governments, a quorum must be present in a physical location. They have the choice to allow members to fully participate by electronic means only due to illness. Each local body must establish an electronic meeting policy within 45 days before the first meeting using this option.

The other bill was related to access of

the transcripts for 911 calls. For the past 12 years, the public has had access to 911 transcripts, but last year a Morgan County judge denied the release of the transcripts based on his interpretation of the statute.

Sen. Orr and Rep. David Standridge worked with APA to draft language to clarify that these records are public records and subject to disclosure.

The bill also added language that requires emergency communication districts to retain a recording for at least two years, and for four years if there is a criminal or civil investigation related to the call.

APA's legal counsel Dennis Bailey and Evans Bailey consulted on the development of these bills.

"It was by far the busiest session I've had since I started lobbying. We appreciate our members who made calls when we asked. We are not effective without the support of our members."

-Brad English

"It was by far the busiest session I've had since I started lobbying," APA Governmental Affairs Director Brad English said. "We appreciate our members who made calls when we asked. We are not effective without the support of our members."

Mason said it is very rare when bills pass in the first year they are introduced. "It takes a lot of hard work and determination to get legislators familiar with your bills, and answer their questions before they are asked, to vote on them."

On the defensive side, APA was able to defeat a bill that would have eliminated the requirement to publish the voters list before each primary election. This was the fourth year a similar bill was introduced by Rep. Andrew Sorrell.

Most political insiders expect a special session late this summer. The next regular session will begin March 14, 2023.

APA 2022 Summer Convention June 23-25

The white sand and sunshine are calling APA members and friends to the 2022 Summer Convention at the Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach, June 23-25.

The unofficial start of the convention is Thursday evening with a two-hour sunset dolphin cruise aboard Wild Hearts, a 53-foot, open ocean catamaran. The boat departs from the dock across the street from the hotel.

Programs will include Mike Blinder, publisher of Editor and Publisher magazine,

who will share his insights and ideas on building revenue and relevant content.

The program lineup will also include NNA's Robert Williams, a longtime community newspaper publisher from Blackshear, Ga. He will share ideas on how to create more revenue and dealing with inevitable newspaper issues.

APA attorneys Dennis Bailey and Evans Bailey will have a Friday afternoon session to go over the recently updated laws on virtual meetings and access to 911 transcripts. This is also a good time to

ask them about other issues you might be facing.

We are working on a legislative panel to hear from elected officials about their thoughts regarding issues that are important to APA members and on the beginning of a new quadrennium in 2023.

On Saturday, after an afternoon of beach, golf, or retail therapy, the convention concludes with the recognition of the winners from the 2022 Media Awards Contest.

Registration packets will go out soon.

Alabama publisher featured in NNA's Publishers' Auxiliary - Cindy Fisher holds tight to her dream of owning newspapers

By Teri Saylor

As the owner of Kingfisher Media in Selma, Ala., Cindy Fisher is living her lifelong dream of becoming a newspaper editor.

She is a single mom of two teenagers without the safety net of a second income to fall back on, and she is learning that running a community newspaper by herself is not for sissies.

"To ensure its success, I moved my family from a busy suburb of Birmingham, where I ran a business journal, to rural Dallas County," she said. Transitioning from a two-hour, white-knuckled commute both ways in heavy traffic to a calm rural life on the Alabama River was a healing salve. She and her family now live alongside a menagerie of five cats, a possum named Bruce and an armadillo she refuses to name.

"I thought I was moving to Selma to 'save' it by bringing light and hope to this beleaguered place through strong community journalism," she said. "It turned out I took over the Selma Sun so that Selma could save me."

The Selma Sun was founded in 2015. Fisher bought it in 2018. It has a circulation of 2,000 and comes out on Thursdays, distributed through the mail, news racks and stores. Its mission statement is "Selma Sun: Shining the light on Selma and Dallas County."

A FAMILY AFFAIR

Fisher says, "I serve as editor, and my dad, who was a reporter when I was a kid, is my city hall and big issues reporter. My mom, a retired nurse, is our business manager. We also use a host of local freelancers to cover events and meetings, take video and photos, edit video, deliver

the paper and more."

ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY

The Selma Sun was founded as an alternative to the county's longtime newspaper to provide more positive and uplifting coverage about the people, businesses and redevelopment plans in the community. The Selma Sun serves as a thought leader and connector for the historically divided area through solution-based reporting.



GROWING UP IN NEWSPAPERS

"My dad was a reporter when I was a kid, and I grew up making my own newspapers on a manual typewriter when I was in third or fourth grade and then in Pagemaker on our first desktop computer in middle school," Fisher said. "Topics included a tornado that came through town, summaries of my favorite TV shows and a Dear Pixie advice column written from the perspective of my cat. I was editor of my high school newspaper and went with my dad to newsrooms throughout Alabama to help with production of a newspaper put out by the Alabama Press Association

when I was 14-16 years old. It was then — while working in community newspaper newsrooms — that I decided I wanted to own my own newspaper someday."

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

"My parent company, Kingfisher Media, which owns the Selma Sun, has already expanded in 2022 to operate two other newspapers in central Alabama, and we are looking to expand into more markets this year. Our goal is to keep alive one newspaper in each county of Alabama's Black Belt so these impoverished, rural communities can stay just as informed and connected as more well-off communities in the country."

ADVICE FOR OTHER WOMEN

"Don't let societal expectations of being a woman stop you from taking risks that can ultimately be the best thing you can do for yourself and your family."

CHILDHOOD DREAM

"When I was a child, I wanted to be a journalist. More specifically, an editor. I used to make newspapers as a kid and assign my sisters to draw pictures to go with the stories I wrote. I still have copies of the Fisher Gazette that we laugh about today."

HOBBIES AND LEISURE

"When I wasn't making newspapers as a kid, I played flute, starting at 11 years old. I was top in the state in music competitions during my high school years and double majored in flute performance and journalism in college. I still play flute at churches, weddings, funerals and for fun."

BEDSIDE MANNER

"Thanks to COVID, I often work in my bed at home! That cuts down on the chaos of a desk, actually."

Industry

Newspaper readers are voters; voters 'hungry' for 'professional integrity'

In monitoring current events and political updates, community newspapers continue to grow in trustworthiness (7.38/10), and newspaper readers are voters (96 percent), Susquehanna Polling and Research Inc. found in a March 2022 survey.

The survey of 1,000 adults from rural and urban communities across the U.S. conducted for the National Newspaper Association and NNA Foundation of Pensacola, Florida, also studied opinions of public notices and advertising.

VOTING

There does in fact exist a strong correlation between those who read community newspapers and those who cast ballots in elections. A combined 96 percent of readers of local newspapers specifically say they plan to vote this November - either "very" or "somewhat" likely.

Overall, 89 percent of the respondents said they are "very likely" to vote in upcoming elections this year for U.S. Congress, U.S. Senate and other federal and state elections, 6 percent said "somewhat likely" and 4 percent said "not at all likely."

The study found local newspapers as the most "trusted" source (of all mediums tested) when it comes to learning about candidates for public office. On a 10-point scale (with 10 being the "highest"), local newspapers are rated a 7.38, higher than TV stations (6.45), radio (5.58), political mailings (4.63) or social media platforms (2.65).

This compares to 2019, when on the issue of trustworthiness, community newspapers represented a more trusted news source (5.77 on a 10-point scale) than other news sources, rating higher than national network TV news (5.13), cable TV news shows (4.60) and all others. Social media sources like Twitter or Facebook were rated lowest, at 2.92.

"It seems to us," Jim Lee, president, Susquehanna Polling and Research, Inc., said, "that voters are increasingly hungry for a higher level of professional integrity when it comes to journalism (both local and national) in today's age of constant cable TV news and partisan leaning news media outlets.

"Although the metrics and items in

our list have changed from prior years, prior years also show trust in community newspapers had consistently received higher mean scores than competitor sources," Lee said. "Moreover, readers of community newspapers rate trust in their local papers at an even higher 7.83 on a 10-point scale."

TV stations (70 percent) and local newspapers (68 percent) are most often relied on as news sources to make decisions about elections (either very or somewhat often), compared to much lower scores for direct mailings from candidates or political parties (44 percent), radio stations (40 percent) or social media platforms (19 percent).

NEWS HABITS

A combined 77 percent of respondents say they read a newspaper that covers their local community (a slight increase from a 65 percent average, 2017-2019), consumed via printed edition and online edition, as well as these additional online options that were not in previous surveys: Facebook, YouTube, TikTok or other social media platform.

Newspapers, as a medium used either as a "primary" or "secondary" source of information, has held steady over the years. In the current poll, a combined 24 percent say they rely on newspapers as either their primary or secondary source of information for news.

In terms of the originator of news content when respondents read stories on the internet or social media, the poll shows nearly 4 in 10 (or 39 percent) think newspapers are the originators of the content, while 28 percent think it comes from TV. An additional 27 percent are not sure, which shows there is no real consensus on this.

Local newspapers also continue to receive high metrics on things like "[it] informs me" (93 percent agree), "[it] provides valuable local shopping and advertising info (81 percent agree), and "my household relies on [it] for local news (83 percent).

STATE OF THE FIRST AMENDMENT AND PUBLIC NOTICES

A combined 96 percent say it's very or somewhat important to have reliability and truth in local journalism, including 83 percent who think it's "very" important.

In terms of the overall importance of public notices on a 10-point scale, respondents rate access to public notices a 6.66, down from a 7.40 in 2019 (no data exists for 2018-17). Readers of local newspapers specifically rate access to public notices a slightly higher 6.72.

ADVERTISING

Community newspapers continue to be the most-trusted information medium and the go-to source for shopping decisions. Of the respondents, 43 percent cited the local newspaper as their top resource for making shopping decisions, followed by direct mailings (25 percent), TV stations (21 percent), in store promotions (19 percent), social media sources (19 percent) and radio ads (5 percent).

When reviewing internet content, 34 percent notice online ads "always" or "some of the time" (down from 48 percent in 2019) and a combined 62 percent reported they notice Google ads or other advertising banners "occasionally" or "not at all."

Members of the
National Newspaper
Association may
download the full
survey and analysis at
<https://www.nna.org/nna-nnaf-readership->

This poll was conducted by Susquehanna Polling and Research on behalf of the National Newspaper Association and NNA Foundation. The NNA, which is the largest national newspaper association with 1,600+ members across America, protects community newspapers through active and effective government relation programs that address the issues affecting community newspapers.

*Interviews were conducted March 7-14th Mondays through Fridays and at select weekend times as prescribed by state law. The sample frame was constructed and
polling continued on page 5*

Industry

polling
continued from page 4

designed using a list of zip codes (supplied by Client) representing those areas in the continental USA where community newspapers are either available and/or commercially sold. Using these zip codes, a listed sample of telephone records is purchased using a random selection of households represented by these zip codes from Pollster's preferred list vendor². The amount of telephone records acquired for each zip code is proportionate to the population of each zip code's unique area, with all zip codes ultimately combined into a composite universe so population parameters could be estimated, and a list of pre-assigned quotas could be generated. The number of

interviews conducted within each geographic region or unit of measurement (i.e., zip code) is then monitored to ensure zip codes are sampled accordingly, thus not over or under sampled in relationship to their overall weight in the composite universe. Statistical weighting may be applied to ensure the demographic balance of the sample for 1,000n is a "representative sample" of the composite universe based on age, ethnicity and other unique demographic characteristics for the population universe of all zip codes combined. Zip codes are also grouped into eleven regional groupings with all states represented within a region of the USA to serve as a cross-check on balance.

The margin of error for a sample size of 1,001 interviews is +/-3.1 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.

shoulds was two times greater for the lowest income decile when the highest decile. Studies have higher returns to low-income households in housing technology adoption, and are associated with

In Newspapers,
We Trust

"When looking for general news and information, how much would you trust each type of source for general news and information?"

In the latest Edelman Trust Barometer,
61% answered traditional media.

You can't get a more traditional than newspapers.

Trust is Our Relevance.

BTW
Who finished last?
Social media

Source: www.edelman.com, where you can download the 2020 report.

Source: www.edelman.com, where you can download the 2020 report. In the latest Edelman Trust Barometer, 61% of respondents said they trust traditional media more than social media. The report also found that trust in traditional media is higher in countries with higher GDP per capita. The report also found that trust in traditional media is higher in countries with higher GDP per capita. The report also found that trust in traditional media is higher in countries with higher GDP per capita.

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Design by Metro Creative Graphics, Inc.

Congress passes Postal Reform Act of 2022, but 'our work is not done'

By Tonda Rush, NNA

The National Newspaper Association capped a decade-and-a-half legislative campaign in March when Congress passed the Postal Service Reform Act of 2022.

The legislation, long promoted by NNA and other organizations whose members depend upon the mail, lifts more than \$50 billion in debt to the federal government from the United States Postal Service balance sheet, restructures its payments for future retiree health benefits and seals in a mandate for Saturday mail delivery. USPS is expected to see a balance sheet that is more than \$100 billion lighter in accrued obligations over the next 10 years, according to NNA experts.

The bill also enacts the Rural Newspaper Sustainability Act requested by Rep. James Comer, a western Kentucky Republican, to allow within-county newspapers to send out sample copies for nearly half of their total in-county distribution. The current ceiling on sample copies is 10 percent of the total. NNA assisted Comer in drafting and promoting the provision, with the assistance of the

Kentucky Press Association. NNA advised members that they can soon use the enhanced allowance to affordably send out copies to attract new subscribers, according to NNA Government Relations and Postal Committee Chair Matthew Paxton, publisher of the News-Gazette, Lexington, Va.



President Biden signed the bill earlier this month. The sampling provision became available immediately upon his signature.

NNA Chair Brett Wesner, president of Wesner Publications, Cordell, Okla., lauded NNA's Congressional Action Team and issued a word of caution.

"The staying power of NNA's CAT has been remarkable. Time and again for the past 15 years, we have neared the finish line only to be disappointed by Congressional dissent. Yet, year after year, the team suited up and worked on this bill because we knew the Postal

Service had to be saved from massive debt imposed by the President George W. Bush administration. NNA suspected in 2006 that it was a mistake to require USPS to prefund retirees' health costs, something the government did not require of any other agency. When that obligation was imposed, we entered a new era of complicated federal budget math that helped neither the Postal Service nor the federal government. Our reservations were unfortunately vindicated, as USPS was unable to plow \$5 billion of annual cash contributions into the health fund for 13 of the 15 years since the obligation was created. So, Uncle Sam just loaded up the payments as debt owned by USPS to the government."

"Although the funding scheme never worked as intended," Wesner continued, "the mounting obligation motivated the Postal Regulatory Commission to start passing along massive postage rate hikes, which we have faced since 2020. Now, without the debt on the balance sheet, we are looking to the PRC to scale back these increases."

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Industry

postal continued from page 5

Wesner said he nonetheless advised the newspaper industry to look realistically at the impact of the legislation.

"While PSRA is a major achievement, it may have come too little, too late to accomplish its purposes," Wesner said. "Congress delayed its action while USPS sharply curtailed mail processing, slowed mail delivery standards, deferred buying new delivery trucks and added to newspapers' woes by slowing distribution to our subscribers. Then we faced the pandemic, the lagging economic recovery and supply chain issues that are making it hard for us to get newsprint. Some of the damage is done and we will never get back to the robust universal mail service we once had. Now we are in a recovery operation."

WHAT COMES NEXT

Paxton said the CAT is already working on legislation to help bring down postage rates. Also, he said, newspapers must adapt. NNA and National Newspaper Association Foundation have partnered to create the Max Heath Postal Institute™ to provide more in-depth training to help newspapers navigate the new system.

"We and USPS have both seen massive change, a lot of personnel turnover and the entry of new players who may not really know how to use this changed postal system to its best advantage," Paxton said. "NNA maintains three seats on the USPS Mailers Technical Advisory Committee, where we harvest the best insights and advice. We are offering our services to NNAF for the new Newspaper Mail school so we can train a new generation of printers and mailers. Meanwhile, as NNA, we once again roll up

our sleeves on the public policy front. We have to keep at it. Our work is not done."

NNAF President Matthew Adelman, publisher of the Douglas (Wyo.) Budget, said the MHPI™ program, begun in February, had already attracted new students.

"We decided to offer a certification program, which newspaper people can attain by mastering classes on dozens of topics that we will provide over the next two years," Adelman said. "This educational work is foundational for an organization like ours, which cannot serve readers if we cannot reach them. It is one of many programs we are planning this year to help community newspapers continue their important missions to readers."

Tonda Rush is the director of public policy and serves as general counsel to the National Newspaper Association. Email her at tonda@nna.org



APA Journalism Board visits with journalism students and faculty at Alabama State University.

Obituaries

Jacob Frank Helderman



Jacob Frank Helderman, 82, retired newspaper publisher, formerly of Gadsden and Florence, died peacefully at his home in Atlanta on March 31, 2022, surrounded by his loving family.

Frank was a businessman, patron of the arts, community leader, husband, and father, but his greatest pleasure was being Poppa, grandfather to his three grandchildren.

He was born to Jacob Frank and Ruth Hottel Helderman, Sr. in Spartanburg, South Carolina, on May 22, 1939. He followed his father into the newspaper business, beginning his career at age eight delivering papers on his bicycle in Spartanburg. The family moved to Gadsden, Alabama, in 1952, where Frank entered the seventh grade. His first weekend in Gadsden, he met Jennie Miller at the Saturday movie matinee. Eight years later she would become his wife.

Frank graduated from Gadsden High School with the class of 1957, having played basketball and led the band as drum major. Three years later he graduated from the

University of Alabama with a BS in business and minor in journalism. He belonged to Sigma Chi fraternity and Sigma Delta Chi journalism honorary society.

He returned to Gadsden to work for The Gadsden Times, the family business.

As a newspaperman, Frank read the paper every day which, with his keen mind and sharp memory, made him a fierce competitor in trivia games.

He and/or his family owned several small newspapers in Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and Georgia. In 1985, The New York Times bought The Gadsden Times and named Frank as publisher. In 1994, he moved to Florence, Alabama, to publish The TimesDaily, also a New York Times newspaper.

Frank belonged to and served on the boards of many civic and social organizations, including The Boys and Girls Club of Gadsden, The Mary Hardin Cultural Arts Center, and The Gadsden Country Club. As president of Big Men, a civic group, he oversaw the restoration of Gadsden's Mort Glosser Amphitheatre. In 1989, he received the Governor's Award from The Alabama Council of the Arts and later served six years as a member of the Council.

During his term as president of the Alabama Press Association, he helped establish legal

resources for state newspapers. He was a member of Leadership Alabama, on the board of the Alabama School for the Deaf and Blind, and a Rotary Harris Fellow.

Often Frank worked behind the scenes, as he did during the civil rights period and in securing funding for community projects. He lobbied for years until a third bridge was built over the Coosa River connecting Rainbow City with Southside.

Frank and Jennie helped found The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection in Gadsden. Later Frank chaired the building committee for the church which, according to the Bishop of the Diocese of Alabama, earned him a free pass into heaven.

He is survived by Jennie Miller Helderman, his wife of sixty-two years; son Frank Helderman, III and his wife Zanni Schaffler of Enterprise, Ore.; daughter Catherine Helderman Markwalter and her husband Charlie Markwalter of Atlanta; three grandchildren, Everett, Claire, and Russell Markwalter; sister Carolyn Helderman Caproni of Maysville, Kentucky, her children and their families.

The family suggests that, in lieu of flowers, contributions be made to the Church of the Resurrection or a favorite charity.

Sarah Josephine Long Scarbrough



Sarah Josephine Long Scarbrough (Mrs. Jo) graduated from this earthly life in the early morning of February 3, 2022. Josephine was born on January 11, 1931, in Newburg, Ala., Franklin County to L.E. and Dewey Long.

She was greeted in Heaven by her mother; father; son, Aubrey Scarbrough; sister, Betty Jo Wyskida; and brother, J.W. Long; and many aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends.

She is survived by her husband, Lewis Scarbrough; daughter and son-in-law, Denise and Tom Nelson; granddaughters, Elise Laurie Nelson and Celeste Sophie Nelson; brother and his wife, Dan and Glenda Long; as well as her nieces and nephews.

Josephine grew up on a farm in Newburg, Ala., with her mother and father, sister and two brothers. She also had many aunts, uncles and cousins nearby. They attended church at Macedonia Baptist Church in Newburg. She graduated from Russellville High School and got a job as a telephone operator in Russellville.

Later, she and her sister moved to Huntsville where she was also an operator. She became a member of the First Baptist Church community.

In 1962 she married Charles Lewis Scarbrough from Rockford. In 1963 Denise was born, and in 1964 Aubrey was born. During this period, she stayed very busy with her children, but also volunteered with Cradle Roll at church and was the First Aid Lady for a period when the children were in elementary school, as well as other activities in the community.

In 1982 Lewis retired from NASA, and they relocated to Lewis' home place just outside of

Rockford. She did many jobs during this time. She ran the Hungry Farmer Restaurant, the

NAPA store, and the Circle S gas station and market. She also had booths at various flea markets.

On many Sundays you could find her at the Old Rock Jail on behalf of the Coosa County Historical Society. Her last job was working as the office manager at The Coosa County News, which she and her husband also own. She worked there until the spring of 2020. During her time in Rockford she became a member of Providence Baptist Church.

Josephine died on February 3, 2022, early in the morning. She was appreciated and loved by many. Though she is greatly missed, we are filled with bittersweet joy to know she has graduated and received her richly deserved crown of glory.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in her honor to your local animal shelter.

Tommy Stevenson



Tommy Stevenson, a longtime editor and columnist for The Tuscaloosa News, died April 11, 2022. He was 73.

Stevenson, born Thomas Franklin Stevenson, Jr., joined

the newspaper in 1976 and retired as its associate editor in 2012, but remained on as a recurring columnist until his death.

From his son, Tom Stevenson: "In his honor, go ahead and donate \$1 to The Tuscaloosa News so you can read a wonderful tribute by Mark Hughes Cobb, and peruse some of my dad's best columns and stories over the years. He was a prolific

writer, a good man, and a great dad."

From former Alabama Press Association Executive Director Bill Keller: "Such a talented reporter and writer, fearless and honest. Also, Tommy was a walking encyclopedia of Alabama politics from the mid 1970s to today. Tommy will be missed."

A memorial service is planned for July.

Columns

Seize opportunity to steer, moderate election noise



by Jim
Pumarlo

Election coverage was a priority when I toiled behind the editor's desk. It was all hands-on-deck in the newsroom as we sought information to help voters make their choices.

As a final step, we endorsed in all races from the city council to U.S. president. Many newspapers today, small and large, have regrettably dropped weighing in on the editorial page. I believe it's a missed opportunity, but that's a topic for a different column.

Newspapers do have the opportunity to provide meaningful coverage at a time when substantive debate is often lost in the volumes of campaign rhetoric. Campaigns are increasingly sophisticated in targeting their audiences. The messages, unfortunately, are all too often sound bites that lack meaningful context.

Newspapers should step up and fill the void — use your community knowledge to provide an inside look at candidates, to set a framework for constructive debate on issues. It takes work, and now is the time to start planning for the November 2022 elections.

Comprehensive election coverage can be exhausting and strain newsrooms already strapped for resources. Focus efforts on those races that matter most to your readers and those contests where you have the greatest insight. Local contests should take priority.

Here is one checklist, in no particular order, to consider as you prepare for elections. You can certainly expand during a brainstorming session with staffs.

Examine the races. — Review coverage from the previous election to identify issues that generated the most attention and see if the topics are relevant in this cycle. Go beyond the newspaper family, and solicit perspectives from others in the community.

Create master calendar. — Identify key internal and external dates that provide benchmarks for substantive coverage. Internal dates include such things as a schedule for candidate profiles and question-answer on hot-button topics. External dates include such items as campaign finance reports and candidate forums.

Be uniform in announcing candidacies. — Incumbents and challengers alike will scrutinize all aspects of coverage. Consistency is key, especially when announcing their candidacies. It's likely the first opportunity to introduce many of these individuals to readers, and it sets the tone for fair and responsible coverage of races and issues.

Plan play-by-play coverage. — Campaigns are a continuum from initial announcements to rallies and debates to the barrage of press releases. Each element prompts a decision. Does the statement or event warrant broad public attention? If so, does each candidate deserve a voice and have an opportunity to be in your report?

Stick to issues. — Coverage of local races can be especially challenging as candidates are friends, neighbors, and co-workers. The best course is to focus on issues and avoid straying into personalities.

Acknowledge that some contests simply fall off the radar. — Candidates for state and federal offices are certain to seek attention for their campaigns. News organizations have strong arguments to devote resources to local candidates. At the same time, set criteria for reports on regional and/or statewide

races.

Identify criteria for covering debates. — Evaluate the sponsors. Consider the timing of debates with respect to other planned stories.

Be alert to races that demand special attention. — Plans must be flexible. Staffs must be ready to pivot for distinctive developments in races that may not have been on the radar. Enlist a citizens panel. — Take the initiative to provide a variety of perspectives on the issues and candidates. Consider enlisting a panel of citizens representative of community demographics. Solicit their observations at critical twists and turns during the campaign. Postings can be online, providing timely and relevant commentary.

More and more citizens are turned off by today's political dynamics, and for good reason. Campaigns increasingly ramp up rhetoric that serves to energize their bases but also further polarizes voters. Hyper-partisan politics unfortunately is becoming commonplace in local politics, too.

Newspapers have the opportunity to play a critical role by setting standards for fair and responsible coverage of public affairs. Take the lead in elevating the quality of debate in the months-long election season. As one editor aptly stated, "To sustain democracy, you need people who care about facts and want to read facts. That's what we're here for."

Grab the opening. A civilized and meaningful discourse on the issues will benefit the candidates, the voters and your community.

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 jim@pumarlo.com.

The importance of proofreading



Ad-libs
by John Foust

Proofreading is one of the most important skills in the advertising world. While anybody with a sense of humor can appreciate a harmless blooper (one of my favorites is the sign that read, "Ears pierced while you wait"), no advertiser wants to run an ad with a mistake. Many an ad campaign has been damaged by typographical errors, inappropriate illustrations and inaccurate information.

I remember receiving an email promoting a Zoom meeting that seemed interest-

ing. However, the copy put a stop to any thoughts I had of registering. The date of the event was listed as March 9 in the headline, and as March 2 in the body copy. To make matters even more confusing, the email was sent during the first week of April. What are the chances that anyone made the effort to contact the advertiser to find out the real date? Slim and none. (And like the old saying, Slim just left town.)

Proofreading would have prevented that problem.

Early in my ad agency days, I designed a logo for a development company. When the printing was completed, I enthusiastically drove to their out-of-town office, my backseat loaded with boxes of letterheads,

envelopes and business cards. My excitement faded as soon as my client pointed out that one digit in their address was incorrect; what appeared as a 9 should have been a 7. The only way to handle the mistake was to offer to reprint everything at my expense.

Proofreading would have prevented that costly lesson.

Then there was the half-page furniture ad with "Store Name Here" at the bottom. Obviously, a manufacturer had provided the ad to local merchants who were supposed to insert their individual logos. In addition to being a glaring error, that probably cost that particular dealer some co-op money. Proofreading would have prevented that, too.

typos continued on page 9

Columns

typos continued from page 8

Typos can be sneaky. For example, take a look at this four-line headline.

DON'T MISS
OUR BIGGEST
SALE OF
OF THE YEAR

The word "of" appears twice. Because we read at a glance and jump to conclusions in a fraction of a second, it's easy to miss important details.

Proofreading shouldn't end with typography. Consider the photo of the fashion model who posed in a national ad, wearing a baseball glove on the wrong hand. Or what about the photo that was flopped so it would face in the opposite direction? The problem was that the subjects ended up with t-shirts featuring backwards letters.

Advertisers may have approved each one of those ideas. But that doesn't mean they happily accepted responsibility for the mistakes. It would have been better to present them with proofing copies that were as close to perfect as

possible.

The point of all this is simple: (1) Proofread everything before it is published. (2) If possible, ask someone else to proofread it. (3) Then check it one more time for good measure.

Speaking of measuring, this seems like a good time to quote carpentry's famous slogan: "Measure twice, cut once."

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

Help Wanted

Managing Editor – Greenville, AL

Greenville Newspapers, located in beautiful and historic Greenville, Alabama, has an opening for a Managing Editor to oversee all aspects of news reporting for its three weekly newspapers located in Butler, Crenshaw, and Lowndes Counties.

Applicants must have a minimum three years experience in print and digital media publishing, be fluent in AP Style, social media management, and have a working knowledge of Adobe Creative Suite.

Known as "Alabama's Mayberry," Greenville is centrally located in Alabama along Interstate 65, and residents enjoy small town living with easy access to Montgomery and the Alabama Gulf Coast.

The position offers an excellent starting salary, with health, dental, and vision insurance through United Healthcare.

Applicants should contact Dennis Palmer, regional publisher, at dennis.palmer@boone-newspapers.com, or by calling 334-410-1712 for more information.

Department of Journalism and Creative Media – University of Alabama

The Department of Journalism and Creative Media at the University of Alabama is seeking a non-tenure, renewable contract instructor to teach a variety of journalism courses and lead scholastic media organizations **beginning Aug. 16, 2022.**

Duties:

- Teach three journalism courses per semester (a 9-month contract) with opportunities to also teach during the summer. Courses range from introductory level journalism to advanced journalism courses, with a mix of conceptual and skills-based. Some graduate level teaching is possible in our Master's program.

- Lead the Alabama Scholastic Press Association, the National Elementary School Press Association, and the department's Multicultural Journalism Program.

Qualifications:

- A Master's degree in journalism or a related field is required.

- Experience working in journalism and/or

teaching journalism.

- Ability to excel in a classroom as a leader and instructor, including the desire to bring inclusive and equitable teaching practices to the classroom.

- Skill or experience in non-profit management or event planning is strongly preferred.

- An interest and ability to work with high school media is preferred.

- Ability to effectively run social media accounts.

This department houses approximately 900 undergraduate and master's students. This department is one of four academic units in the College of Communication and Information Sciences. The College also includes a nationally ranked interdepartmental doctoral program.

To Apply: Applicants must apply online at <https://facultyjobs.ua.edu>.

Review of applications begins March 28, 2022, and will continue until the position closes. Questions regarding the search should be directed to the search chair, Dr. Chris Roberts at croberts@ua.edu

Lecturer/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.auburnemployment.com/postings/28166>

For more information on these positions and others, visit our Help Wanted page (updated frequently) on the APA website [HERE](#).

