Important Dates

APA Summer Convention
Perdido Beach Resort
Orange Beach, AL
June 23-25, 2022

Online Media Campus

“How To Do More Enterprise Reporting While Still Feeding the Daily Beast”
Live Webinar
June 16 @ 1 p.m. (CDT)

“Data Journalism Tools for Your Newsroom and Classroom”
Live Webinar
June 23 @ 1 p.m. (CDT)

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 Summer Convention hotel deadline is extended to Thursday, May 26

Endowed support fund established in memory of Tuscaloosa News’ Cecil Hurt

Voters lists posted to alabamapublicnotices.com

New dean announced at UA College of Communication and Information Sciences

Webinar: How To Do More Enterprise Reporting While Still Feeding The Daily Beast

News Media Alliance merges with magazine organization
2022 Summer Convention hotel deadline extended to Thursday, May 26

APA is returning to the Perdido Beach Resort June 23-25 for the 151st Summer Convention.

The hotel deadline is Thursday, May 26. PLEASE make your hotel reservations HERE or call 251-981-9811 and reference APA Booking #17491 for special pricing.

We will not be able to secure the APA rate after the hotel deadline has passed, and the non-convention room rate is $500+ per night.

While there are rooms available in our room block (including Saturday night), the hotel is otherwise sold out on Saturday night. Reserve a room now, and you can always cancel if your plans change.

Enclosed are your registration materials for the convention.

Join us Thursday evening as we kick-off the weekend with a two-hour sunset dolphin cruise aboard Wild Hearts, a 53-foot, open ocean catamaran. We will depart from the dock across the street from the hotel. Price includes beer, wine, soft drinks and water. Space is limited, so reserve your seat early.

Programs begin Friday afternoon with a focus on revenue with NNA's Robert Williams, a longtime community newspaper publisher from Blackshear, Ga. In Robert's role as director of creative services, he talks with publishers across the country in his Great Idea Exchange programs. He will share ideas on how to create more revenue and dealing with inevitable newspaper issues.

Friday afternoon continues with a session from APA attorneys Dennis Bailey and Evans Bailey. They will 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.

Friday evening, we will gather on the beach deck for a reception, and then dinner is on your own.

Saturday continues with Mike Blinder, owner and publisher of Editor and Publisher magazine. His program, Stop Overthinking & Just Do It, will examine how we can leverage our editorial assets as a core revenue source.

Sen. Greg Albritton and Rep. Nathaniel Ledbetter will join us to discuss what is next for the Alabama Legislature. Sen. Albritton, who is from Atmore, is chairman of the Senate General Fund Committee. Rep. Ledbetter is from Rainsville and is the House Majority Leader. Both have been very supportive of APA's efforts to protect open government and public notice.

Because we all need more laughter in our lives, our Saturday luncheon speaker is Alva Lambert, who will entertain delegates with impersonations of famous Alabama political figures and others. Lambert served five Alabama governors as the executive director of the State Health Planning and Development Agency. We will also have a short membership meeting at the close of the luncheon.

After an afternoon of golf, shopping, beach or just relaxing, we will celebrate the winners of the 2022 APA Media Awards with a reception and banquet. Hotel deadline is Thursday, May 26, 2022. Make your hotel reservations HERE or call 251-981-9811. Visit our convention website at https://alabamapress.org/summer to register with APA, or there is a registration form attached you can complete and mail to the APA office.

Please contact Jaclyn at the APA office (205-871-7737 or 1-800-264-7043) if you have any questions or need additional information.

We look forward to seeing you in Orange Beach!

Voters lists posted to alabamapublicnotices.com

The voters list for all 67 Alabama counties are now uploaded and available on alabamapublicnotices.com.

Posting all public notices, which includes the voters list, to alabamapublicnotices.com and to the newspapers’ websites (if they have one) is required by law. It is also the best defense in keeping the requirement to publish in the newspaper.

“Our lobbying team has defeated efforts to allow government websites to post the voters list and other public notices to their own websites for several years,” said APA Executive Director Felicia Mason. “The best defense we have against these efforts is having the list available online and in print. This provides the most access to the public.”
Endowed support fund established in memory of Tuscaloosa News’ Cecil Hurt

Friends and family of the late Tuscaloosa News sports columnist Cecil Hurt have established The Cecil Hurt Endowed Support Fund for Excellence in Sports Media.

Hurt worked for The Tuscaloosa News from 1982 until his death in November at age 62. The fund will prioritize support for UA students and initiatives related to the sports media field.

A portion of the fund will be designated to provide discretionary support for the UA College of Communication and Information Sciences’ Department of Journalism and Creative Media, or JCM.

Through this support, JCM will offer programming for current students and industry professionals that strengthens the program’s mission and propels education and innovation in the area of sports media and sports communication.

In addition, the fund will bring visibility to Hurt’s legacy through the establishment of an annual Cecil Hurt Award. This award will be given to an outstanding rising senior at UA whose studies are focused in the area of sports communication.

“This endowment will recognize and support the exact type of excellence that characterized Cecil’s life and his work,” said Mark Nelson, dean of the College of Communication and Information Sciences. “He was an inspirational member of our community, and this fund will inspire and support future journalists for many years to come.”

The renowned and revered sports columnist had a reputation unlike that of any other professional in the field, and those closest to him desire that this fund will continue to perpetuate his story.

To make a gift to the Cecil Hurt Endowed Support Fund for Excellence in Sports Media, click HERE.

New dean announced at UA College of Communication and Information Sciences

Dr. Brian S. Butler will be the next dean of The University of Alabama College of Communication and Information Sciences and will begin his tenure July 1. He replaces Dean Mark Nelson, who announced his retirement earlier this year after serving eight years in that position.

Butler comes to UA from the University of Maryland where he served as professor and senior associate dean of the College of Information Studies. As senior associate dean, he led the hiring and development of the college’s senior staff; helped create the college’s first undergraduate program, which is now the fourth largest major on campus; and oversaw the design and construction of facilities expansion that doubled the space available to the college.

In addition, he served as the college’s interim dean from 2015 to 2016.

Butler is the founding co-director of the University of Maryland Social Data Science Center. Created in 2019, the center provides education and research which enables effective, ethical and efficient use of social data throughout society. Butler facilitated faculty collaborations which resulted in $3 million in corporate funding for research in privacy, artificial intelligence and social data science.

Additional roles previously held by Butler at UMD include director of the Master of Information Management Program and director of the Center for the Advanced Study of Communities and Information.

Butler earned a Bachelor of Science in mathematics and computer science, and Master of Science and doctorate in information systems from Carnegie Mellon University.

People

Jonathan Bottomlee has been named advertising director at The Sand Mountain Reporter in Albertville. He previously worked as the circulation manager.

Bottomlee is a Marshall County native, and has worked at jobs in Boaz, Guntersville, Cullman and Scottsboro. He has also worked for many years with youth ministry.

Harrison Pike is the new data reporter at the Birmingham Business Journal. He is a 2022 graduate of Samford University with a degree in journalism and mass communication.

He most recently was a marketing and communications intern with the Samford University marketing department where he edited university materials, researched projects for school communication and wrote stories for publication. He also had an intern role with Comunidad Connect and was a student assistant within Samford’s religion department.

Industry

Webinar: How To Do More Enterprise Reporting While Still Feeding The Daily Beast

Thursday, June 16, 2022, 1:00-2:00 p.m. CDT

Presenter: Chris Coates, executive editor of the Times-Dispatch in Richmond, VA.

Think you don’t have enough time for watchdog journalism? Overwhelmed with keeping the daily machine running? Get practical advice for creating a newsroom culture that values public service and accountability reporting, no matter the staff size. The first step is deciding what not to do or to do differently. Some newsrooms are growing audiences while producing less content. The key is using data to determine which types of content are not contributing to audience engagement. Register by June 13, 2022. Click here for online registration. Remember APA members can register at no charge using the code ALTraining.
News Media Alliance merges with magazine organization

The News Media Alliance and MPA, the Association of Magazine Media announced their agreement to merge the two organizations. The newly combined association will be called the News/Media Alliance and will focus on building a powerful future for quality journalism. The memberships of both organizations have approved the merger, which, subject to regulatory approval, is expected to close this summer.

News publishers and magazines are creators of great original journalism in the media landscape, together representing $45 billion in annual revenue. The Alliance and MPA represent many of the biggest and most renowned brands in both industries.

While the two industries have different pasts, they share a common future. The two organizations have overlapping missions and advocate on many of the same issues.

Current Alliance President & CEO, David Chavern, will act as CEO of the combined entity.

“We are extremely excited about the opportunity to bring our two organizations together and leverage our collective voice to achieve our shared vision of a bright and thriving future for high-quality journalism and content,” said Chavern. “The needs of the two industries are closely aligned, and this union will allow us to deliver higher value for a broader number of publishers and content creators.”

“The combined strength of news and magazine media publishers in this new alliance will expand opportunities for both our memberships, and we are pleased to be helping make this merger happen on their behalf,” said MPA President and Chief Executive Officer Rita Cohen, who will work with the newly merged organization. “I look forward to working with David and his team as we advance the future of publishing and high-quality journalism.”

The News/Media Alliance will be adding resources including hiring to build out legislative, technical and research capabilities for the combined organization.

Chavern continued, “Our members are continually creating new digital products that engage audiences and strengthen communities. They want and deserve markets for those products that fairly value quality journalism. We are absolutely committed to helping them to win in the evolving digital content landscape.”

Obituary

Millard Berry Grimes Jr.

Millard Berry Grimes Jr., of Athens, Ga., died in his home May 3, 2022 at the age of 92 by natural causes related to his age. Mr. Grimes had a long career as a newspaper columnist, author, and entrepreneur.

Arrangements were made through Leaf Cremation of Georgia. A memorial service will be announced at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Camp Kudzu – a Camp for Children with Type 1 Diabetes and their families at https://www.campkudzu.org/donate-2/ or to the Georgia Press Educational Foundation, 140 Locust St., Avondale Estates, GA 30002, ATTN: Millard Grimes Fund.

Mr. Grimes is survived by his wife of 67 years, Charlotte Sheridan Grimes; his son, James Grimes of Athens; his daughter, Kathryn Grimes Garrett (David) of Peachtree Corners; his daughter, Laura Grimes Griner (Chris) of Brunswick; and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his father, Millard Berry Grimes Sr.; his mother, Margaret Millians Grimes; and his aunts, who played large roles in his early life, Ethel Millians and Frances Millians Haines (Enoch).

Mr. Grimes was born March 8, 1930 in Newnan, GA, but his family moved to LaGrange, shortly after he was born, where he spent most of childhood. The family moved to Columbus, GA, after the beginning of World War II and the death of his father, where he and his mother lived with aunts and an uncle. He attended Columbus High School, graduating in 1946.

While in high school, he played varsity baseball and junior varsity basketball. He also had a newspaper route for the local afternoon newspaper, the Columbus Ledger, and went on to work for the Ledger as a copy boy, then a proofreader, then a sports correspondent while still in high school.

After high school, he attended the University of Georgia, where he was a member of the Chi Psi fraternity. He worked on the staff of the student newspaper, The Red & Black, and was appointed editor during his senior year. He most fondly remembered his tenure as the Red & Black’s pseudonymous gossip columnist, Roddy Ratcliff. He was also a member of the Gridiron Secret Society.

He graduated from Georgia in 1951 with a Bachelor’s Degree in Journalism and returned to Columbus to work for the Ledger again as a copy editor. He was a member of the staff that won the 1955 Pulitzer Prize for coverage of the clean-up of corruption in Phenix City, the then-notorious Alabama town that was just across the Chattahoochee River from Columbus.

He also tried his hand at writing science fiction and had one short story, “Mimsy’s Joke,” published in the classic pulp science fiction magazine Planet Stories.

In the meantime, he had met Charlotte Sheridan, a Cataula girl, at a Baptist Training Union Halloween party, and they were married in 1954.

In 1955, Grimes had become restless and, on the very day the Pulitzer Prize was awarded, he resigned from the Ledger to become the editor of the Phenix Citizen, a new weekly newspaper in Phenix City that he founded with financial backing from a local banker. He left the Citizen after a few years, but it continued to be published after he left, and he came to buy it and sell it twice more over his career. The Citizen still exists as the Citizen of East Alabama.

After working a few jobs in West Georgia, he returned to the Ledger and began writing editorials and later a weekly editorial column. In 1963, he was promoted to editor of the Ledger’s companion morning paper, the Columbus Enquirer. He continued to gain notoriety as an opinion columnist. He deeply admired Franklin Roosevelt and steadfastly supported the New Deal principles, but at the same time, he distrusted extremism in any form, and gained a reputation as an astute observer of political trends. In the 1960s, he supported the rise of the Republican Party in Georgia as a more moderate alternative to the segregationists who dominated the state Democratic Party at the time.

He often described himself as a “radical middle-of-the-roader.”

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Millard Berry Grimes Jr. continued

He also continued to explore other opportunities. In 1965, he was instrumental in organizing the Athens Daily News, a morning newspaper in Athens. Grimes never actually worked for the Daily News, but helped hire the original staff, including his friend and colleague Glenn Vaughn as editor and teenaged sportswriter Lewis Gizzard, who would later become a famous humorist.

In 1969, Grimes finally got another chance to run a newspaper his way when he persuaded a group of investors to buy the Opelika Daily News, a small newspaper in Opelika. Grimes took over the paper and moved with his family to Opelika. He soon changed the name to the Opelika-Auburn News, added a Sunday morning edition, and vastly increased the circulation of the paper. In 1977, the newspaper sold to the Thomson Newspaper Group for eight times the original investment.

From that point, Grimes continued to acquire small-town newspapers, improve them and then eventually resell them. Between 1973 and 2013, he published, owned or partly owned more than 40 newspapers in Georgia and Alabama, including, but not limited to, The Clayton News, The Manchester Star-Mercury, and The Meriwether Vindicator.

He also was chief writer and editor of “The Last Linotype: the Story of Georgia and its Newspapers Since World War II,” a book published by Mercer University Press in 1985. He also served as the president of the Georgia Press Association in 1986.

After acquiring the Athens Observer in 1986, Grimes and his wife Charlotte moved to Athens in 1989, building the house he lived in until his death. In 1990, he acquired two statewide magazines, Georgia Journal, which focused on history and culture, and the statewide business magazine, Georgia Trend. Trend had launched in 1985 under the leadership of former Atlanta Constitution Editor Gene Patterson and was much admired in the industry, but was in financial trouble. Grimes, operating out of his office on Milledge Avenue, put the magazine on a sound financial footing. Trend has changed hands several times since then but is still being published. Mr. Grimes continued to contribute occasional columns until 2015.

In 1999, Grimes provided funding for the Millard B. Grimes Laboratory for Excellence in Print Journalism at UGA's Henry W. Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication. During the Grady School’s 100th Anniversary, he was named one of its top 50 graduates. He was involved in many other good works over his long career, serving on the board of the Opelika Public Library, the Board of Deacons of the First Baptist Church of Opelika, the Board of the Directors of The Red & Black when it became independent of the University, and the Franklin D. Roosevelt Warm Springs Memorial advisory board, among others.

While living in Opelika, he served on the advisory board for the Auburn Plainsman, the Auburn University student newspaper.

He was an avid college football fan, regularly attending and writing stories covering games at UGA and Auburn University.

He was a member of the Kiwanis Club, the Opelika Touchdown Club, the Alabama Press Association and the Georgia Press Association. He donated generously to institutions he admired, including Auburn University and the University of Georgia.

In 2011, he sold the last of his regular newspaper holdings, the Star-Mercury Group based in Manchester, GA, and seemed bound for retirement at the age of 81, but a few months later, he embarked on another adventure, founding Buford Weekly Illustrated, a newspaper to serve the Atlanta suburban town of Buford. It was his first attempt to start a newspaper from scratch since the Phenix Citizen in 1955, although it did not long survive in the new economy of the 2010s.

Columns

Advertising’s blast from the past

In order to look ahead to a new advertising idea, sometimes it helps to take a look at the past. When an advertiser has been in business for a number of years, there are plenty of possibilities.

Let’s take a look at a few idea-starters. Although there’s some natural overlap, it helps to examine each one separately:

1. Years of experience: This is a good starting point. You can either talk about the number of years the company has been in operation, or you can emphasize the cumulative number of years the company has been in operation, or you can emphasize the cumulative years key members have been on the team.

2. Business anniversary: Of course, any business can celebrate an anniversary, even if it’s for one year in operation. An anniversary just means more when it’s an impressive number.

3. Archives: You advertisers may have a wealth of inspiration in their files. Anything that documents the start and growth of a business can spark ideas. Photos can illustrate the construction of branch offices, the history of relationships with existing customers, or the evolution of flagship products.

4. Profile of founder(s): A conversation with – or about – the people who started the company can uncover some fascinating facts. Could one of these tidbits become the theme of an ad?

5. Then and now (what’s changed, what hasn’t?): Think of the “New look, same great taste” label we see on so many packaged goods.

When a company has been around for a long time, change is a consideration. Obviously, some older things have been good enough to keep and some things are newer and better. Those things – both old and new – can be selling points.

Have the advertiser’s product lines expanded since the beginning? Are there new locations? New hours?

Does the company still have the customer service focus it had in the beginning? Is that philosophy in a frame – and can it be photographed?

John Foust conducts training programs for newspaper advertising professionals. E-mail for information: john@johnfoust.com
Use your special insight to recommend election choices

by Jim Pumarlo

Coverage of public affairs – recording the actions and inactions of governing bodies from local to federal levels – demands attention from newsrooms year-round. And for good reason. Elected officials regularly debate and craft public policies that affect citizens’ everyday lives.

Newsrooms provide readers a ringside seat, and often a behind-the-scenes view, into the decision-making process.

So why are newspapers increasingly hesitant to recommend individuals for elective office, especially those officials serving on local city councils, county boards and school boards?

Regular readers of my column know my passion for vibrant editorial pages. I firmly believe that vibrant editorials are at the heart of vibrant communities. It’s time to once again encourage newsrooms to take that final step in their election coverage: Endorse those individuals you believe will best represent and advance the interests of your community. I consider endorsements among the highest calling in a newspaper’s role as government watchdog.

The general election is months away. Now is a perfect time to start the internal discussion to design and implement a methodical and logical process for offering endorsements. It’s easier than you may think.

I’m always perplexed by editors and publishers who shy away from recommending ballot choices, especially those newspapers that regularly take strong stances on advising decision-makers on a particular course of action.

For one community, it might be a city council’s deliberations on whether to offer tax incentives for a big-box retail development. For another, it’s a school board debating whether to close a school and reconfiguring grade levels. On a state legislative level, editors routinely weigh in on tax, health care, public safety, social justice, transportation and myriad other public policies.

If the newspaper as a community institution advocates for or against a position taken by an elected body, why not advance equally strong convictions about the people who ultimately will make those decisions?

Newspapers that excel in elections coverage offer a continuum of reports beginning with candidate announcements. Reporters quiz individuals on a variety of issues, then follow with a critical eye their actions once in office. Do candidates stay true to course, or do unexpected circumstances prompt a change of heart in their votes? In a nutshell, the newspaper is a clearinghouse of information and has particular insight on the candidates and the dynamics behind their votes. So why not share that perspective with readers?

Many newspapers find it relatively painless to weigh in on the strengths and shortcomings of, say, national or federal candidates, even candidates seeking elective office at a state or provincial level. It’s quite the opposite when recommending individuals for the local school board or city or municipal government. Yet these races are the most important for community newspapers to address in news profiles and endorsements.

Endorsements in local races clearly are the most challenging, often complicated by personal relationships that candidates may have with the publisher or other key staff members.

Here’s one blueprint to navigate a path that may appear to be filled with minefields.

As a first step, brainstorm the priority concerns in each race. Solicit ideas from your entire newspaper family as well as key community members. These issues will be the basis for candidate interviews, and their responses will provide a framework for endorsements.

Then evaluate candidate answers on specific public policies and how they align with community interests. Focus on the facts and avoid straying into personalities.

If you’re still hesitant to endorse, consider this strategy. Frame the editorial outlining what the newspaper identifies as the key issues in a race – and where you stand on these points for the betterment of your community. Then encourage readers to vote for the candidates who are in sync with those stances. You have not identified specific candidates, but your message allows readers to connect the dots.

As always, allow readers the opportunity to deliberate your recommendations. Readers still may challenge your practice of “telling us who to vote for” – their words. But they will be doubly upset if you don’t give them the chance to debate the reasons behind your endorsements.

Letters are the lifeblood of an editorial page. Nothing is more satisfying than an editor opening up the newspaper to a lively exchange of opinions. Take steps now to ensure that your voice is part of the conversation this election season.

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.

Help Wanted

Press Operator- Florence AL

The TimesDaily is seeking a printing press operator to join our northwestern Alabama facility. Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

• Performing standard set up of printing press
• Operating the press
• Making adjustments to maintain quality control
• Performing preventative maintenance and repairs; Hands-on experience with a Goss Urbanite or DGM 850 is a plus, but not required.

We will train for the position. This position offers benefits including 401k matching, insurance and paid time off.

Qualified candidates will be available to work nights, weekends. Applications are available at the TimesDaily 219 West Tennessee Street, Florence, AL 35630 or questions or resumes may be emailed to hollie.colella@timesdaily.com.

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.

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