

AlaPressa

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA PRESS ASSOCIATION

JULY 2022

Important Dates

NOT TO MISS! JSU Journalism
Mental Health & Digital Skills
Workshop

FREE! Merrill Hall, Jacksonville
State University Campus

August 12 @ 8 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.

Space is limited, so please register
[HERE](#) today to reserve your spot.

Online Media Campus

“Getting Started with Digital Sales”
Live Webinar

August 18 @ 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.

APA Summer Convention focuses on revenue

*Full Circle (feature on Aimee Wilson,
The Blount Countian)*

*JSU Journalism Mental Health & Digital Skills
Workshop*

Accident reports: What can you see?

Getting Started with Digital Sales

Supply chain blues

*New Legacy.com intake portal helps consumers
place newspaper obituaries*

Our digital sites need more attention

Two advertising goals: Attention and Retention

*What's happened to nuts and bolts of public safety
reporting?*



Alabama Press Association
 Alabama Newspaper Advertising Service Inc.
 600 Vestavia Parkway, Suite 291
 Vestavia, AL 35216
 (205) 871-7737
 (205) 871-7740 (fax)
 www.alabamapress.org

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APA Summer Convention focuses on revenue

Delegates at the APA Summer Convention last month gave high marks to the programs, most of which were focused on practical ways to add to the bottom line.

NNA's Director of Creative Services Robert Williams and Mike Blinder, publisher of Editor & Publisher magazine, hit the mark with their programs.

Williams shared more than a dozen hot trends he has collected recently from around the country. Some ideas included sponsored ads to recognize retiring teachers in the community, a steeple contest (name which steeple goes with what church) and an "I am Local" campaign for local businesses.

One attendee had this to say about Robert's program, "I especially enjoyed the presentation by Robert Williams. His expertise and positive attitude instilled confidence in my marketing skills."

Blinder's program, Stop Overthinking & Just Do It, on encouraging publishers to focus on what they do best was both inspirational and informative. "Mike Blinder was inspiring and Robert Williams provided some good ideas we'll use," one attendee wrote.

Vince Johnson, publisher of Gulf Coast Media, shared some innovative ways his newspaper is building revenue

and expanding reader engagement: events such as high school sports media days, newsletters, and "best of" contests. One delegate wrote in the evaluation, "I loved the ideas during breakfast. It was casual and easy to ask questions. The information was critical, and I loved the way he just went through a top 5."

Delegates also heard from two members of the Alabama Legislature about what we can expect when they head back to Montgomery in March. They talked about prisons, gambling and the overall health of state finances. Here is a comment from the evaluation, "I particularly enjoyed the interaction between the legislators and convention attendees. It was open and informative, and the dialogue was good."

Saturday evening was the presentation of the 2022 APA Media Awards. First place winners from 32 categories were recognized. Congratulations to all winners!

The Winners tab, a publication of all of the winners in the contest, is available online [HERE](#).

Many thanks to Steven Stiefel, publisher of The Fort Payne Times-Journal, for being the APA photographer for the weekend. Click [HERE](#) to view photos and feel free to send in your own to be added to the online gallery.



APA President Dee Ann Campbell and husband and co-publisher Tommy Campbell enjoy the opening night reception, sponsored by Alabama Power and Alabama NewsCenter.



Brad English, Allison Graham, Patrick Graham and husband and co-publisher Tommy Campbell enjoy the opening night reception, sponsored by Alabama Power and Alabama NewsCenter.



Arlan and Sherri Blevins attend a panel with Alabama legislators.



The convention is closed out with the APA Media Awards banquet and reception.

Industry

Accident reports: What can you see?

During the Friday afternoon session at the APA Summer Convention with APA attorneys Dennis Bailey and Evans Bailey, a question was asked about what part of the Alabama Uniform Traffic Accident Reports is open to the public.

In a 2012 Attorney General Opinion, the question was answered as follows: under the Public Records Act, members of the general public should be allowed to inspect and obtain copies of completed Alabama Uniform Traffic Accident Reports. Personally identifying

information, such as the person's home address, telephone number and social security number, should be redacted.

According to a 2021 Alabama Supreme Court decision, if the accident report is declared by law enforcement to be part of an investigative file, the record can be withheld by the investigating agency.

A copy of the AG Opinion is attached.



JSU Journalism Mental Health & Digital Skills Workshop



The Jacksonville State University Department of Communication invites journalists to the first Journalism Mental Health & Digital Skills Workshop on **Friday, Aug. 12, 2022**, presented with the generous assistance of the Alabama Press Association Journalism Foundation.

Speakers will include researchers studying the impact of traumatic stories on the journalists who tell them and the

effects of online harassment from hostile audiences. Topics will also include mental health self-care and first aid from JSU's Counseling Services Office.

In addition, there will be sessions on the best ways to use social media as journalists and some simple digital video tools for reporters. We also invite you to participate in focus groups with JSU scholars who are researching these issues.

All sessions will take place in the beautiful new Merrill Hall on the JSU campus, with breakfast, lunch and snacks provided, all for **FREE**. Space is limited, so please register [HERE](#) today to reserve your spot.

Schedule:

- 8 a.m., Sign-in and breakfast
- 9 a.m., Elana Newman, Research

Director, DART Center for Journalism & Trauma

- 10 a.m., Autumn Slaughter, Research Assistant, DART Center for Journalism & Trauma

- 11 a.m., Tekeisha Goggins & Kristen O'Dell, JSU Counseling Services

- Noon, Lunch break

- 1 p.m., Teddi Joyce, Associate Professor, JSU Department of Communication

- 2 p.m., Sebastian Mendez, Assistant Director, JSU Digital Media Services & Adjunct Instructor, JSU Department of Communication

- 3 p.m., Snack break

- 3:30 p.m., Focus groups with JSU researchers

Check back for more details and updates to the itinerary.

Getting Started with Digital Sales

Thursday, August 18, 2022 - 1:00-2:00 p.m. Presenter: Ben Bouslog and Ken Campbell of AdCellerant

This webinar, which will have a baseball theme, will go over how smaller publications and legacy print teams are getting started with digital sales to support their local clientele. AdCellerant will review different examples of publishers who are doing this now, the steps to get started, how to provide a consultative approach to your advertisers so they can expand their digital footprint, the revenue implications with these types of sales, and how you can leverage these now.

- What other small publications are doing with digital

- Steps to get started
- Giving a consultative approach with targeted display & local SEO
- How much money can we make with digital sales?

Click [HERE](#) for online registration. **Register by August 15, 2022.** Remember APA members can register at no charge using the code **ALTraining**.

About the Presenters:

Ben Bouslog is the vice president of Business Development for AdCellerant, a tech-enabled marketing services company. AdCellerant partners with publishers to leverage their turn-key solutions to drive digital revenue streams. With experience in SEO,

SEM, video, OTT, social media and a specialty in programmatic, he's been able to help hundreds of media companies grow their digital revenue streams and supported thousands of advertisers by connecting them with their target consumers.

Ken Campbell is a Business Development Manager at AdCellerant. Ken is an experienced self-starter with 25 years experience in retail sales, direct marketing, print advertising, and B2B sales. A promotions and marketing expert, Ken grew a single automotive client into a multi-million-dollar direct mail firm before pivoting to the world of digital advertising.

Full Circle

by Carter Deeweese, APAJF Summer Intern

In 1989, Aimee Wilson began covering rec sports for her hometown paper, The Southern Democrat, when she was just 13 years old. In 2022, she runs that same hometown paper, now The Blount Countian. For Wilson, what began as a childhood daydream has manifested into a career. Yet, the shine has not worn off.

Ballparks were familiar for Wilson, since her brother spent so much time playing in games. However, the unity she felt stretched beyond balls and strikes. As she recounted what it was like when she first began reporting, Wilson noted that the fracturing nature of youth baseball in Blount County mirrors an overall shift toward polarization.

“The county was not as divided as it is now. You had the Blount County All-Stars, which included all the teams from Oneonta to Southeastern Susan Moore,” Wilson said. “Now there’s Blount County All-Stars, Oneonta All-Stars, travel ball – there’s not that same sense of community feel like there was at one point.”

Though it was her childhood dream, she was not always sure of journalism as a career path. She bounced around a few majors as an undergrad at Auburn University, then took a class that reignited her interest and led her to change her major to journalism.

After graduating, Wilson worked at a few newspapers, a public relations firm, and did some freelance work before joining the Blount-Oneonta Chamber of Commerce in 2007. She served in the Chamber of Commerce for six years as assistant director before being named executive director. She served in that role until she bought The Blount Countian in 2018.

As she transitioned out of leading the Chamber and into ownership of The Blount Countian, Wilson was concerned that some hard-hitting stories might affect her positive relationships with local community leaders. However, the strong foundation she built with the community during her time at the Chamber enabled her to maintain those relationships while documenting the actions of community leaders.

The Blount Countian does not cover national or state politics, making it an entirely community-focused newspaper. Wilson said their coverage often highlights happenings in the school system or local sports.

Handling most of the sports coverage, Wilson says it can be exhausting – running from game to game, nights and weekends – especially during the spring. However, the community-oriented nature of her work keeps her going.



Aimee Wilson

“I start thinking about the kids, and this is their one, shining moment. They’re not going to have their name in the paper their whole life,” Wilson said. “That’s why I keep going and keep making sure I have as many names as I can in each story because those kids work so hard. They deserve it. We have people that work so hard their whole lives to have an impact and make a difference. If we’re not here to tell people about that, then nobody’s going to know. I think that’s important.”

Wilson said her staff is instrumental to her and the newspaper’s success. Staff Writer Rachel Simmons explained that Wilson’s success derives from her creativity and passion for her community.

“She’s very creative. She has a lot of drive, and she’s invested in her community,” Simmons said. “She volunteers her time and her money. She barely ever says no. I feel very fortunate to enjoy what I do and to have a creative outlet with a boss that allows me freedom, and [I] get paid to do it.”

When Coach Bruce McAfee of Susan Moore High School was inducted into the Blount County Sports Hall of Fame, Wilson had a chance to spend time with him and some of the players and coaches he impacted during his career. Wilson said this was one of the most special stories she had ever covered because she witnessed the impact an individual can have on their community.

While Wilson said that The Blount Countian is working on an app to further immerse itself into the digital realm, she emphasized that there will always be a print version of the paper. She explained that since a large swath of Blount County still lacks reliable internet access, a reliable print newspaper remains a necessity. Further, a community print newspaper presents a reliable business model. Wilson has learned through experience that when the paper covers local sports and the school system, parents are incentivized to buy papers so they can see what’s going on in their own backyard.

That backyard is Wilson’s, too. She said that the beauty of Blount County might surprise some who have never visited.

“The natural beauty of Blount County comes from every corner of the county,” Wilson said, “There are just so many beautiful landscapes and things to see. We’ve got the mountains, the river – that part of the county is what makes us special.”

“I had always thought it would be so much fun to own my own paper,” Wilson said, “You have dreams, but they’re always just dreams. I never really expected that reality to come around.”

Wilson’s career has come full circle. She owns the newspaper that hired her at 13. She covers the county she first called home. And she continues to give back to the community which gave her a chance to fulfill her dream.

Carter DeeWeese is a student at Yale University, studying American Studies. He is a native of Birmingham and working as an intern with the APA Journalism Foundation.

People

Nicolle Sartain is the new editor of The News Courier in Athens. She replaces Tom Mayer, who became editor of The News Courier’s sister paper, The Cullman Times.

Sartain has a bachelor’s degree in journalism from the University of Georgia, where she served twice as the editor-in-chief of The Red & Black, the school’s student newspaper.

Prior to coming to Athens, Sartain worked as a researcher for CNN in Atlanta. She also worked in the Savannah area at a television station covering severe weather, elections, military and farmers.

Industry

Supply chain blues

By Mary Reardon for Editor & Publisher Leonard Woolsey, president of Southern Newspapers, got unwelcome news recently. A truck had an incident out on the road, destroying thousands of dollars worth of newsprint coming from a vendor to a Southern Newspapers property in Kerrville, north of San Antonio. "It's just a crazy story that will make every news publisher cry because we're trying so hard to get newsprint these days."

There's no crying in newspapers, but many in the industry will empathize with the frustration at losing any newsprint as papers around the country scramble to keep enough rolls in stock to make their print runs. "I will say it's as scarce as I think anybody that's been in this business for any time has ever seen," said Woolsey, whose company has 10 papers in Texas and one in Oklahoma. Publishers are also closely monitoring ink and printing plate supplies.

According to one Georgia publisher, supply chain slowdowns that started around 18 months ago show no signs of abating. "I wouldn't say it's getting better. I don't think it's getting a whole lot worse. But I'm not encouraged that we've turned the corner just yet," said Otis Brumby III, president and publisher at Times-Journal Incorporated, Marietta, told E&P in May.

Brumby said his company's good relationship and communication flow with his newsprint vendors have helped manage the situation. "One of the things we've tried to do to offset that is just keep a higher amount of inventory than we normally would. That way, if there are some surprises, a delayed truck or something like that, it doesn't materially impact our overall business because we also do a good bit of commercial printing. We want to make sure we don't have to make that phone call to our customers that we're out of newsprint."

Kruger Inc., with its head office in Montreal, is Times-Journal's main newsprint supplier. The company also uses some smaller suppliers. Times-Journal has three dailies and several weekly papers in suburban Atlanta.

Publishers know well that trucking issues are the most obvious contributor to the supply chain snarls. "Just all the labor shortages and the fuel charges, and there are not enough trucks on the road right now to handle all the supply nationwide. We're just one of the industries impacted by that," said Brumby. He points out that

many of the factors are out of the vendors' control.

According to Wayne Pelland, senior vice president publishing of operations at Gannett, there aren't many solutions to the low supply of newsprint. Gannett has an in-house unit specializing in sourcing newsprint that supplies Gannett facilities and external customers. "We have strategic partnerships with a lot of different newsprint providers, but there's so much competition for the supply that price has gotten extremely high, and there are a lot of opportunities for suppliers to sell newsprint to different places around the world. We have to watch our inventories closely," Pelland told E&P.



Gannett spends a lot of time and resources moving newsprint around when faced with a supply gap, he said. "That happens quite frequently to us because of the lack of supplies. And that's expected to get worse in Q3 and Q4."

As publishers perform a delicate dance to maintain the paper flow, they're turning to alternative methods and outreach. "There are publishers from different companies that are of different ownership who are constantly checking with each other and sharing newsprint between facilities, which has never had to happen before," said Woolsey.

Southern Newspapers has a deal with Cox Newsprint, whose primary supplier is Canada's Resolute Forest Products Inc. Southern Newspapers occasionally uses other suppliers for specialty work.

So far, Southern Newspapers hasn't had to make any accommodations in its product, but it's been close. "Even though you have the order, and the newsprint is supposedly coming your way, you can't bank that it's going to show up because there's also a lot of diversion going on out there. A truck may be earmarked for you, and it's on the way, and the newsprint company may need to say, 'You know what, something happened to this guy. And we need to divert this truck of newsprint from Bob over to Joe at the last minute. And, you know, we understand that because the next week, we might be Bob, trying to get newsprint diverted from Joe.'"

Woolsey points to several reasons behind the newsprint supply problem: the trucking and shipping industries still struggling in the wake of COVID lockdowns, trucking protests earlier this year in Canada and the war in Ukraine. Russia supplied newsprint to Europe, and those European consumers are now looking to North America.

Newsprint exporter China going into lockdown again is also a factor, as entities that got China's paper also turn to North American sources. "It's like a perfect storm," said Woolsey, and it's stressful for the printing and press supervisors at Southern Newspapers. "I know some of our folks who have been popping in trucks themselves and driving to another site to borrow six rolls of newsprint to drive it back across the state of Texas to their site so they can use it."

chain continued on page 6

Industry

chain
continued from page 5

Woolsey has seen newsprint's cost jump some 25% since a year ago, more price increases in the last year and a half than probably seen in the previous 15 years combined, he figures. He said it's a publisher's responsibility to communicate this reality to their audience. "Publishers have the opportunity to write columns to the community, and they're speaking at Rotary clubs and civic groups. They need to be singing this tune, laying the groundwork for the potential for changes caused by the market."

Suppliers are saying to expect another couple of bumps in the next four to six months, said Woolsey. He's seen guidance indicating that this turbulence will continue at least through the end of this year and possibly into Q1 of 2023.

"As the unprecedented pace of inflationary cost movements continues to impact the entire spectrum of raw material and packaging components for the ink industry, without sign of stabilization in sight, the industry is also being hit by abrupt rises of energy costs of all kinds, including electricity, gas, fuel and diesel, drastically impacting manufacturing costs and freight costs," read a February

press release from ink manufacturer Sun Chemical Corporation.

Meanwhile, aluminum prices spiked in February after Russia invaded Ukraine, bearing on printing plates. "The geopolitical conflicts are having impacts on our local communities," said Brumby. The rise in aluminum can mean surcharges on plates, amounting to thousands of dollars a month, said Woolsey. "Fortunately, we're growing revenue. If we were not a company growing revenue, this would be even more difficult to manage," he said. "We've got advertisers coming out of the woodwork right now."

New Legacy.com intake portal helps consumers place newspaper obituaries

By Tracie Martin, Legacy.com

Legacy.com has launched a new online portal that, for the first time, allows consumers to place a newspaper obituary from anywhere, anytime, in as many newspapers as they wish.

Legacy's new digital portal is expanding the obituary channel for newspapers, with thousands of incremental placements into newspapers in its initial trial period.

Designed to meet the on-demand expectations of today's digital consumer, the new experience provides purchasers with a seamless, easy-to-navigate interface that directly places notices in any of more than 2,600 newspapers across the United States. The technology is powered by the extensive placement network of Legacy subsidiary Memoriams.

In the portal's first 90 days online, Legacy has helped consumers place thousands of obituaries across more than 650 newspapers. A full-scale consumer awareness campaign and ongoing platform enhancements are forthcoming in 2022 to increase obituary placement in newspapers.

"Every day, people around the world visit Legacy.com to remember someone they've lost," says Legacy's founder and CEO Stopher Bartol. "It took decades of partnership with local newspapers to build

that strength. Now, every newspaper obit desk in America will benefit from exposure to Legacy's 40 million monthly readers. We're honored to build this nationwide network that will reconnect readers to newspaper obituaries and expand the number of places they go to find hometown news."

Legacy is investing millions in this platform as a means to stimulate newspapers and community engagement

distance families, who are also taking the opportunity to place obituaries outside of the deceased's hometown.

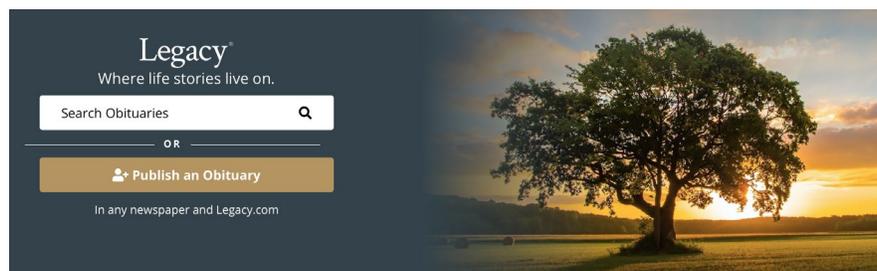
With 24/7 customer support coming soon for any newspaper in the vast Legacy network, this is a turnkey solution for newspapers to grow their obituary footprint and generate incremental content.

Customers in need of personal assistance with obituary placement can get quick help seven days a week from a dedicated team of Legacy and Memoriams support agents. Extending this level of service — free of charge to newspapers — furthers Legacy's goal to increase

newspaper obituary volume by smoothing the process between a purchaser and publication.

"Families and funeral homes need access to newspaper obituary placement, seven days a week. They want an easy process and personal support if necessary. That's a tall order," says Memoriams CEO Mike Heene. "Our team is proud to provide that level of service, while increasing the volume and size of obituaries for our news partners."

Inclusion in the obituary portal service is free for any U.S. newspaper. To learn more or join the network, contact sales@legacy.com.



through digital obituaries.

"Obituaries are the heart of local news," Bartol says. "Supporting our community news partners and their obituary business is paramount to Legacy. We're investing millions to meet that mission and this moment."

Key to Legacy's power to expand newspaper obituary business is the new portal's ability to facilitate multi-paper placement. Purchasers can instantly replicate obituary information from one newspaper to another, within a single transaction. Newspapers are also already benefiting from Legacy's providing point-of-purchase exposure to long-

Columns

Our digital sites need more attention



by Jerry
Raehal

Imagine you're meeting with a client and are asked the following questions:

- What is your paper's circulation?
- What day or days do you publish?
- Is your paper a broadsheet or tabloid format?

If you were unable to answer these basic questions, the client would likely take their advertising dollars elsewhere.

Keep that lost revenue in mind and imagine another scenario. This time, the client has questions about your website. (If you don't have a website, keep reading anyway.) Could you tell the client:

- Your site's average unique visitors per month?
- The average page views on your site per month?
- Whether or not your site is mobile-friendly?
- For extra points: Do you know the number of article views your site averages per month?

If you can't answer these basic questions, you are not alone. But you should. It's your readership.

Knowing digital readership data is not the only way to improve our digital delivery. Go to

your website and ask yourself, "If I were a client, would I advertise on this site?"

I think you'll find we have some good-looking desktop sites in the Pelican State. Good story flow, easily viewable ads.

But if you look at the mobile sites, you will likely find some differences. You might see some cutoff ads and/or ads that appear to be buried at the end of an article or at the bottom of the homepage.

And there's the rub. Study after study shows the majority of people don't read full articles and certainly don't scroll to the bottom of a homepage. According to Chartbeat, 45% of people leave an article in the first 15 seconds, and 60% of them never return.

We have seen a large uptick in digital ads placed through LPA's statewide digital network in 2022, and 60-70% of all ads served on a campaign are on mobile devices, which aligns with the way people are reading digitally in general.

So, if your site is delivering ads at the end of articles, that means a whole lot of ads are being served that no one sees ... which does your clients no good, which makes it harder to sell.

Would you place your clients' print ads in a place you know almost no one goes to or reads? Would they buy it? Will anyone click on it if they can't see it?

Our last 12 months has shown a sharp in-

crease in delivering impressions, and our click through rate is often at or above industry average. But during the last three years our click through rate has gone down, likely because readers are moving more to mobile and in many cases, the ads are not easily viewable. We need to be able to sell eyeballs and click-thrus.

News sites are premium digital ad locations with a premium audience...if we deliver. If we don't, our clients will find another option that does.

Here are four tips on how you can better deliver on digital.

1. Know your metrics. Average unique visitors and page views are a minimum of knowledge. Pull a monthly report.

2. Ensure your site is mobile-friendly.

3. Ensure ads are in viewable spots, especially on mobile. You should have an ad spot or two that allows for in-story ads.

4. Don't get me wrong. This is not a call for pop-up ads. That's bad for the reader, and I believe delivers false click-thrus as people are simply trying to close the pop-up and accidentally click on it. You want to blend a good reader experience with a good client experience. You wouldn't put a sticky note over every article in the print paper. Why do it digitally?

Jerry Raehal is the executive director of the Louisiana Press Association.

Two advertising goals: Attention and Retention



Ad-libs
by John Foust

As mentioned in previous articles, there are two types of advertising: image and response. Image advertising – sometimes known as institutional advertising – is designed to give people a good impression of the advertiser. ("We're the dealership that cares.") The objective of response advertising is to generate immediate response to a specific offer. ("Take advantage of these special discounts.")

These two ad types have something in common. Each one – whether image or response – should strive for attention and retention. In other words, the ad has to grab attention from the outset, then make the message memorable enough to stay in readers' minds. It's not an easy task, but it's necessary for the ad to have any chance of success.

Because we are bombarded with thousands of commercial messages every day – and because we can't possibly notice or

remember everything we see – we are instinctively selective. A number of factors influence attention and retention, including eye-catching illustrations, legible typography, uncluttered ad designs, plenty of white space, and reader-centered headlines. But the biggest factor is relevance. If an ad doesn't communicate instant relevance, it will fail the attention test. And if doesn't leave the reader with a sense of relevance, it is not likely to be retained.

Let's say you run across an ad that attracts your eye, because it features a large, detailed photo of a new widget. The headline is a simple statement of the major benefit of owning this new model. The layout follows the rules of simple, easy-to-follow graphic design. As a result, you stop browsing through other ads long enough to read the copy, which is refreshingly free of exaggeration. You have owned a couple of widgets in the past, and now that you think about it, this might be a good time to consider a new one. This particular store looks like a good place to shop for one.

What just happened? In a matter of seconds, you made the jump from surface-level appeal (being attracted by the looks of the

ad) to a deeper level (seeing the personal relevance of the product). In other words, the widget ad has won your favorable attention.

What about retention? What would compel you to remember the widget and the store where it can be purchased? There are two primary elements: relevance (again) and repetition.

Relevance plus repetition equals retention. We remember the products which fill a specific need – or offer a solution to a problem we have. And we remember the things which we see and hear repeatedly. How did you learn the multiplication tables? (By reviewing them over and over.) How did you learn the lyrics to so many rock 'n' roll songs? (By hearing them – and singing along – countless times.)

What does all of this mean? Attention is important, for certain, but it is only the first of two goals. In order for an ad's core message to work, it must also be retained.

Put these two together – and you have a winner.

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

Columns

What's happened to nuts and bolts of public safety reporting?



by Jim
Pumarlo

Crime and public safety are garnering more headlines across the country. Law enforcement and racial disparities in the criminal justice system are under increasing scrutiny. Newspapers play a key role in examining the dynamics in their own communities.

But what's happened to police logs, the most basic of public safety reporting? Where are the regular records of traffic citations, thefts, property damage, burglaries and much more?

Police logs easily generated the most calls during my tenure as editor. Traffic citations probably topped the list. Nobody likes being linked to a police report – whether it's something as common as speeding or a citation that carries greater stigma, such as a DWI.

We regularly connected with local law enforcement. We routinely reviewed all initial complaint reports. The documentation was part of the menu of public records that readers expected to see in our newspaper.

We also believed the information was valuable to readers in terms of public safety. Is a neighborhood experiencing a rash of vandalism? Are DWIs on the rise? Should residents be on the lookout for another scam artist? Are certain crosswalks particularly dangerous? Has a neighborhood become a haven for narcotics? Is there a pattern to a rash of business burglaries?

No doubt, traffic citations are among the most worrisome and embarrassing to the violators. A youth is afraid he'll lose his job. A teacher is concerned how she can explain a speeding ticket to students. An elderly woman is flustered by her first-ever ticket. A coach dreads facing his players after getting ticketed for a DWI.

Adding to the frustration – and often anger – of the accused is the lag time between when a ticket is issued and when the court disposes of a case. The delay can be weeks,

or even months, depending on circumstances.

We believed both reports were newsworthy. For example, police might break up a neighborhood disturbance and issue several tickets. The community should be apprised immediately. It's equally newsworthy to follow a case to see what penalties are assessed.

With the increased level of crime across the country, it's discouraging to see many newspapers put fewer resources – or, at minimum, less effort – into monitoring police logs. For those reports that are published, one must ask in many instances: What's the value?

Some newspapers simply copy and paste an agency's computer printout. It may provide a glimpse of a department's activity – but little else. No names. No addresses. The reasons for a call are nondescript: driving complaint, narcotics, domestic, traffic stop, noise, suspicious. No indication if arrests were made.

Some newspapers will translate the logs into their own reports, but the vagueness is alarming. A bike theft on Bush Street. A local business reports a padlock broken and items stolen. An employee theft on the 14000 block of Dellwood Drive. Again, what's the value?

Most glaring is the anonymity of the reports – the lack of the five Ws and H of basic journalism. Reports are meaningless and do nothing to alerting a neighborhood, a community to public safety issues.

Law enforcement undoubtedly is spoon feeding information, selectively deciding what they believe is in the best interests of the public. They give little attention to the fact that most of the nuts and bolts of police reports – names, addresses, specifics of call – is classified as public by law. Their rationale? Adhering to their own rules makes their jobs easier; they won't get the angry phone calls asking why they released the information to the newspaper.

Even more discouraging is that many editors apparently share a similar sentiment. They don't press for substantive details. Their rationale? Let's keep the reports vague and not rile readers.

The dangers to this lack of aggressive re-

porting are obvious.

First, computer logs likely are transmitted electronically with little or no contact with anyone at the newspaper. Reporters do not develop any relationship with folks at the cop shop. They miss the opportunity to pick up and follow up on spot news, in-depth reports, feature stories and other substantive content for the newspaper.

Second, law enforcement will soon consider it standard operating procedure: Give the newspaper as scant reports as possible. That unfortunately is what many departments are taught. I well recall an officer in my hometown who became the primary contact on our daily rounds. He had just returned from training at the FBI Academy at Quantico, Va. His marching orders were very clear, as he was proud to tell us: Give the newspaper only the information he believed should be shared. We regularly challenged him, reminded him what the law dictated, and we eventually got the information – but it was an ongoing struggle.

Readers frequently asked that a public record be withheld. It might be a marriage license, divorce proceeding or ambulance run, but tickets were most commonly the concern. Some reasons had more merit than others.

In the end though, each person was seeking special treatment. Each was asking the impossible because our policy was that we could not pick and choose. Going down that path would place us in the position of being judge and jury – to determine that one person's plea was worthier than another's. And we'd never know all the facts.

The simplest and fairest policy is to treat all public records as just that – public – in the belief that openness serves the greater number of people over the greatest period of time. At its foundation, police logs provide a pulse of public safety in a 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.

Help Wanted

Lifestyle Features Reporter- Florence, AL

The Times Daily is seeking a general assignment reporter that has experience in writing feature stories. We need an energetic, inquisitive, and productive professional with excellent planning, reporting, and writing skills who can provide content for our expanded Lifestyle section, articles for our

quarterly magazines and VIP magazine, as well as web updates and tweets for both our news and features sections.

The successful candidate will need a college degree or equivalent experience, be proficient in the use of social media, have a passion for journalism, a reputation for quality and integrity, and the planning skills necessary to provide storyline budgets for multiple

weeks in advance.

For information call 256-740-5721.

Candidates need to send cover letter, resume and writing clips to Gary E. Maitland, executive editor, or email Gary.Maitland@TimesDaily.com.

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Help Wanted

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Publisher & Editor- Cleveland, GA

With more than 20 waterfalls, seven wineries, three state parks and two growing and vibrant communities, White County is a wonderful place to live and work. The only thing missing is a proven leader to serve as the publisher and editor of the community's distinguished and award-winning newspaper, White County News.

Opportunity Requirements:

- Strong sense of community
- Bachelor's Degree
- 5+ years of newspaper experience
- Knowledge of AP Style
- Proficient in Adobe InDesign

White County News is owned by Community Newspapers Inc. of Athens, Georgia. CNI has a premier reputation for being a forward thinking, family-owned independent publishing company. We believe in giving our publishers the autonomy to do what they do best: lead, manage and help their communities grow. At its heart, CNI has one principal belief: Strong newspapers, build strong communities.

If you want the opportunity to grow and make a difference, please email cover letter, resume and professional references to Alan NeSmith at anesmith@cni newspapers.com.

Advertising Sales Manager- Cleveland, TN

The 168-year Cleveland Daily Banner in beautiful Cleveland, TN, is in search of a proven revenue generator to lead its award-winning advertising department. The Banner is a digital-first publication featuring three print editions weekly – Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday.

Successful candidate must have at least five years of leadership and proven revenue growth

in the print and digital sales arena. Expectations and responsibilities include:

- Ensure sales team provides top-shelf customer service while aggressively mining for new clients.
- Continuously coach outside sales team and regularly perform four-legged sales with team.
- Attend and participate in community and business functions during and after business hours.
- Manage an aggressive digital and print promotions calendar, including newspaper specials sections, quarterly Bradley Essential magazine, and front-page sticky notes.
- Experience with event planning helpful.
- Service local and national accounts for print and digital ads.
- Execute advertising contracts for digital, print, and preprints clients.

With a print circulation of 6,500 and boasting more than 70,000 unique users monthly at www.clevelandbanner.com, the Cleveland Daily Banner is the local news authority of Cleveland and Bradley County.

Cleveland is home to Lee University and Church of God world headquarters. With a population of roughly 50,000, Cleveland is located 20 minutes north of Chattanooga along I-75. Outdoor activities are abundant, including world-class whitewater excursions down the nearby Ocoee River.

Offering a competitive compensation package commensurate to experience. Please submit cover letter, resume, and references to Jack McNeely, group publisher, at jack.mcneely@clevelandbanner.com. No phone calls, please.

The Cleveland Daily Banner is an equal opportunity employer. www.clevelandbanner.com

Sports Writer- Cartersville, GA

The 75-year-old Daily Tribune News in beautiful Cartersville, GA, has an immediate opening for a seasoned, full-time sportswriter.

Cartersville and Bartow County are located

just 40 miles north of Atlanta and boast several perennial high school powerhouses, including Cartersville High School, the home Trevor Lawrence, the NFL's No. 1 draft pick in 2021.

And the community is also home to one of the nation's premier youth sports destinations – LakePoint Sports in Emerson, where major tournament and exhibitions draw up-and-coming athletic talent from all over North America.

The DTN is a digital-first news organization featuring printed newspapers on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Boasting a paid print circulation of 3,500 and generating more than 50,000 unique visits at www.daily-tribune.com, we are the local news and sports authority of Cartersville and Bartow County.

Candidates must have at least five years of sports writing experience, a passion for community journalism, and the ability to work independently and as a part of a small team of dedicated journalists that make up an award-winning newspaper.

In addition to the nuts and bolts of sports coverage, our next sportswriter may also contribute to the news and feature content of the printed newspaper and quarterly magazine as time permits.

Offering competitive compensation package, including benefits, 401(k), and relocation stipend.

Send resume, published sports writing samples, and cover letter to Jack McNeely, publisher, at jack.mcneely@daily-tribune.com.

The Daily Tribune News is an equal opportunity employer.

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

APA Weeklies Press Pass Program



The University of Alabama and Auburn University are both finalizing the press pass program details for the 2022 season. As always, we have advocated for our members in sharing how important this program is to our weekly newspapers. We will announce the lottery date/time as soon as possible.

Stay tuned for more information.