CLINTON BUSINESSMAN DEFIES CONVENTIONS, STARTS 4 PAPERS

» By ANTHONY WARREN

CLINTON

The Clinton Courier isn’t known for breaking news.

But when a tornado ripped through the city in April 2014, the paper’s Facebook page was one of the first places residents turned to find out about closings, where to find shelters and where to go if people needed help.

Local businessman Clay Mansell started the Courier in 2010, answering an off-the-cuff challenge from then Mayor Rosemary Aultman.

Today, the paper has become a cornerstone of the community, and is one of three publications Mansell has opened to serve smaller towns in the metro area. His fourth paper, the Canton News, is slated to open later this fall. “We’ll try to get an issue out by the end of October, before the election,” he said.

Mansell, a Clinton resident, owned what he called 10 small “treat centers” prior to going into the paper business. After another local paper, The Clinton News, closed, he served alongside the mayor and other business leaders on a special committee tasked with bringing in a new newspaper.

“Nothing materialized. One guy, who was not local, wanted guaranteed money from the town,” he said. “I was sitting there, and said

Our papers don’t necessarily follow the normal business model, because we didn’t know what a normal paper did.

– Clay Mansell, publisher The Clinton Courier

Photo by Anthony Warren

Clay Mansell was a local businessman who answered the call of his community and in 2010 founded The Clinton Courier in a suburb of Jackson.

CIRC, MARKETING CONFERENCE BACK ON MISSISSIPPI RIVER BANKS NEXT MONTH

ArkLaMiss brings together stellar lineup of speakers on audience development

An all-star roster of speakers on topics ranging from promotions to postal to reader growth and retention is set for the annual ArkLaMiss Circulation, Marketing and Audience Development Conference in Vicksburg Nov. 5-6.

President’s column

P.S., we’ll miss you
A SPOTLESS NEWS KING AND SAUCY TOMATOES MAKE FOR GREAT TRIP

Every time I walk into the offices of The Clarion-Ledger in downtown Jackson, I'm reminded of a picture of my friend David Hampton, a longtime editorialist for the newspaper, sitting underneath the large display of the First Amendment on the lobby wall – “Congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press...”

I was there again recently visiting with editor Sam Hall and interim publisher Genia Lovett. It was the first of several stops on my latest tour of Mississippi newspapers with Mississippi Press Association Executive Director Layne Bruce and Dr. Will Norton, dean of the Meek School of Journalism at Ole Miss.

We left Jackson and headed to Flowood for a brief visit with Steven Watson at The Rankin Record where I was pleased to discover an old friend of mine, Jeff Horton, featured with his family on the front page of the paper.

Steven was busy preparing for a move of the newspaper office to a new location down Lakeland Drive and getting organized at the paper for the start of the school year.

We next traveled south to Brookhaven where we stuffed ourselves at Poppa’s Fish House before dropping in on Luke Horton, the relatively new publisher of the Daily Leader. It was my first visit to the Leader since my friend Bill Jacobs, who served as publisher for decades, sold it to Boone Newspapers. The offices were as nice as ever (possibly the nicest I’ve seen short of Stephanie Patton’s Leland Progress) and that extended to the press room where the bright red News King press was immaculate.

From there it was back to Jackson where we visited the Mississippi Business Journal on North Congress Street just behind the governor’s mansion. Publisher Alan Turner turned the tables on us. We thought we were coming to ask him questions, and he sat us down and conducted print and video interviews with us for the next week’s MBJ. It was a fun visit with lots of insight from Alan on happenings in Downtown Jackson and the many events hosted by the newspaper.

We coaxed David Hampton to meet us for dinner that night at Saltine, a trendy seafood restaurant in the old Duling School building in Fondren. The food was almost as good as the company. I would definitely return.

Friday morning we headed east with our first stop at The Scott County Times. I had been to Forest many times and always enjoy the colorfully painted chickens on many street corners promoting the biggest industry in town. I’ve never forgotten a visit with Sid Salter when he was publisher there and him explaining that the unmistakable smell in the air all over town is the aroma of money.

We visited with Brent Maze at his cozy Newton County Appeal office in downtown Newton. I appreciated that throughout our conversation, the bell on the front door continuously rang from readers coming in to pick up a copy of the latest edition.

We concluded our tour in Meridian at The Star where business was “booming.” The staff was excited about the newspaper’s future in Mississippi’s sixth largest city.

We couldn’t resist lunch at Weidmann’s before leaving town for a taste of their famous fried green tomatoes with 1870’s sauce. It didn’t let us down, nor did each of the newspapers we visited that continue to tell Mississippi’s story better than anyone.

MPA-MPS President Joel McNeece is publisher of The Calhoun County Journal. His email address is joelmcneece@gmail.com. Follow him on Twitter @joelmcneece.
Blake Kaplan has been named editor and vice president of the coastal daily paper. He succeeds longtime executive editor Stan Tiner who retired in August. Kaplan had been city editor since 2008 after serving as assistant city editor and originally joined the staff as reporter in 1994. He previously worked for The Orange County Register in Santa Ana, Calif., and The Ledger in Lakeland, Fla.

Nathan Edwards has been appointed president and publisher of The Clarion-Ledger. He was serving as general manager of the Hattiesburg American. Previously, Edwards was vice president of sales for the Augusta (Ga.) Chronicle and classifieds director at the Chattanooga (Tenn.) Times Free Press.

Jesse Wright, former editor of the Clarksdale Press-Register, has been named editor of the Picayune Item. He succeeds Jeremy Pittari who was promoted to publisher in July.

Jan Griffey has been named editor of The Vicksburg Post. At the time of her appointment she was associate publisher and editor of The Natchez Democrat. A native of Natchez, she worked at The Ironton (Ohio) Tribune as a reporter and later became its managing editor. Griffey worked for two decades in Niles, Mich., as editor and later publisher of Leader Publications.

Bill Elderton has been named the new general manager of The Sentinel-Record in Hot Springs, Ark. A native of Springdale, Ark., Elderton worked for a number of Mississippi newspapers in his career, including The Vicksburg Post, Yazoo Herald, Starkville Daily News and at MPA as a marketing consultant.

SunHerald

The Clarion-Ledger

Picayune Item

Associated Press

Vicksburg Post

Sentinel-Record

ArkLaMiss Conference. Ameristar Casino, Vicksburg. Details: arklamissconference.com

Thanksgiving holiday. MPA closed Thursday, Nov. 26 and Friday, Nov. 27.

Editorial contest criteria available. Online at mspresscontent.org.

MPA Education Foundation Celebrity Roast. Jackson Hilton Hotel.

Mid-Winter Conference. Friday, Jan. 29-Saturday, Jan. 30. Jackson Hilton Hotel

More events online at mspress.org

ArkLaMiss brings strong line-up of presenters to Vicksburg Nov. 5-6

An all-star roster of speakers on topics ranging from promotions to postal to reader growth and retention is set for the annual ArkLaMiss Circulation, Marketing and Audience Development Conference in Vicksburg Nov. 5-6.

The event, sponsored annually by the Mississippi, Arkansas and Louisiana press associations, will be held at the Ameristar Hotel and Casino.

Paul Felicissimo, corporate director of audience development and operations for GateHouse Media, will be the keynote speaker, covering the latest trends in audience growth and retention, both in print and digital. Prior to joining GateHouse as vice president of circulation, Felicissimo served as circulation manager for GateHouse Media, and White Plains, NY, as well as in various circulation positions for Gannett.

Rich Brest, owner of Subscriber Promotions and a frequent exhibitor at the conference, will lead a Friday morning session on campaigns aimed at growing readers and revenue. Brest spent 16 years as a circulation professional at newspapers of various sizes for companies such as Gannett and Thomson.

Newspaper management consultant Helen Sosniecki will again be available to review member newspaper postal statements with an eye out for improving efficiencies and cost savings. Appointments with Sosniecki will be available in 15-minute windows, and attendees can sign up for one at the conference registration desk. If you want to have your postal statement reviewed, be sure to bring a recent copy of your paperwork with you to the event.

As is customary, Dennis Dunn, operations manager for The Anniston (AL) Star will lead Friday morning’s Hot Ideas Exchange over breakfast. Attendees are encouraged to share success stories on promotions, cost savings and operations.

A pre-conference Newspaper Management Round Table will again be held prior to the official start of the program this year. The round table will address a number of newspaper management topics and be held the morning of Nov. 5. There is no added cost to attend the round table, but attendees are asked to pre-register.

Registration is underway at arklamissconference.com

ArkLaMiss Conference. Ameristar Casino, Vicksburg.

11/5 Newspaper Managers Round Table, Ameristar Casino, Vicksburg.

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Anniversary research journey through time

A recent visit to Mitchell Memorial Library at Mississippi State on a hot Thursday afternoon in September yielded a trove of material that will be put to good use during MPA’s 150th anniversary observances next year.

Some members may recall that MPA donated its archives of documents and photos to the library at State a little over 15 years ago. Over time, we’ve added to the collection by delivering a few boxes every now and then of material that really didn’t need to be in the office anymore, but, for whatever reason, I could not bear to part with.

In looking for photos here at the office to display and publish during the sesquicentennial year in 2016, it became obvious a trip to research what our archives held would be necessary. Our past decade’s worth of photos are digital files. There’s another about 5-6 years worth of print photos on file here that were taken after the archives were established at State in 1999.

So anything that was more vintage than that year would have to be pulled from the files at MSU. My research assistant on this trip was Calhoun County Journal editor and MPA Sesquicentennial Committee Chair Lisa McNeece. Fittingly, Lisa was President of MPA the year our papers were donated to State.

What we found there were some fascinating photos of MPA faces and events from the mid-to-late 20th Century. And it will be fun to share these memories at events in 2016, beginning with the Mid-Winter Conference in January.

EARLIER IN THE summer, I headed to Gulfport for an event I was actually kind of dreading.

Stan Tiner, editor of the SunHerald since the early 2000s, announced his retirement this past spring. It was timed to coincide with the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina’s landfall, an appropriate point for Stan to celebrate the hard work of the newspaper during that period and to set sail on his next adventure – which, we’re told, is to write a book.

I say I was dreading it because Stan’s retirement is another milestone in what has been shaping up as a period of rapid change in the cast of characters who make up the Association.

Lloyd Gray’s retirement from the Daily Journal in Tupelo over the summer is another example of this.

Torches get passed all of the time, but these two fellas have had a long and lasting impact not just on newspapers in our state but the Association itself. Lloyd, for instance, worked for papers in Greenville, Meridian, Gulfport and elsewhere. He also served as president of the Association and as chairman of the Foundation.

Stan’s reception was a touching event where the affection and respect the paper’s staff, its corporate parent and the community at large obviously felt for the guy.

It was a reminder that in so many ways what we do truly is more than just a job.

MY HEART was even heavier to travel to Prentiss recently to pay my respects at the loss of Patsy Speights, longtime editor of The Prentiss Headlight and another past president of MPA.

Patsy had been ill for a long time but she quite literally never let it get her down. She had numerous scares over the past several years but always rebounded. One could never count her out.

Just before she died, Patsy and I shared a conversation that was as much “business as usual” as any we’d had. As a matter of fact, she had just that day been discharged from the hospital and was on her way home. Indeed she was; a week later, she was gone. Feisty as ever, Patsy was one to do things on her own terms. Even to the end.

Layne Bruce is executive director of MPA-MS. His email address is lbruce@mspress.org.

Committee begins planning sesquicentennial observances

Plans for MPA’s 150th Anniversary celebration in 2016 include a special commemorative publication, a gala banquet at the annual convention and special events for past presidents of the Association.

A Sesquicentennial Committee met at the MPA office in August to begin planning for observances that will begin at the Mid-Winter Conference in January. Past President Lisa McNeece, associate editor of The Calhoun County Journal in Bruce, is chairing the committee.

Members include Vice President Don Norman of the Starkville Daily News; Director Stephanie Patton of The Leland Progress; Past President Charlie Mitchell of The Tunica Times; Rita Howell of The Panolian; Past President Brooks Taylor of The Tunica Times; Past President Bill Jacobs; former owner and publisher of the Daily Leader; and former board member David Hampton, retired editorial director of The Clarion-Ledger.

“The committee will decide on the exact format and content of the historical publication, but it will likely emulate a product published in 1991 that marked the 125th anniversary of MPA,” said Executive Director Layne Bruce.

Bruce said discussions will also take place about an oral history project that will compile a book of interviews and remembrances of members to video.

MPA is the sixth oldest association of its kind operating in the United States. The Wisconsin Newspaper Association, established in 1853, is recognized as the first association founded to represent newspapers of a
OBITUARY

Speights, longtime Headlight editor, dies at 70

Patsy Speights, who for 25 years edited The Prentiss Headlight and was a past president of the Mississippi Press Association, died Sept. 29 at her home in Jefferson Davis County following a lengthy illness. She was 70.

Services were held Oct. 2 at Saulters Moore Funeral Home Chapel in Prentiss. Burial was in Hepzibah Cemetery.

She officially retired in 2012 but continued to work periodically at the newspaper. Speights served as a past chairman of the MPA Education Foundation and as state chair for the National Newspaper Association. In 2008 she was presented NNA's McKinley Memorial Award for service to her industry and was later inducted into the MPA Hall of Fame.

"While she gained the respect of the local community, she also gained the respect of her newspaper peers on a state national basis," said former Prentiss Headlight owner and publisher Bill Jacobs.

"In political circles, she also gained the respect of governors as well as congressmen and senators. To each of them – peers and politicians – she is known simply as 'Patsy.' No need for her last name, for speaking about Patsy can mean only one person – Patsy Speights, editor of The Prentiss Headlight."

She is survived by her husband, Larry Speights; daughters Dana Speights Walker of Silver Creek, Dawn Speights Greenlee of Monticello, and Dannell Speights Roberts of Hattiesburg; five grandchildren; sisters Gayle Shifalo of Hattiesburg and Poem Weems of Ridgeland; and extended family.

She was preceded in death by her brother, Joe Holloway, and her sister, Ann Stamps.

Members of the Mississippi Press Association were designated honorary pallbearers.

"Patsy loved MPA, its members & the newspaper industry. I'll never forget all the good experiences we shared through the years, and I never tired of hearing her 'speech' about 'a day in the life of a country editor.' She was one of a kind, and I'll miss her greatly."

— CAROLYN WILSON RETIRED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MISSISSIPPI PRESS ASSOCIATION

"I admired the 10-foot-tall spunk she sported in that small frame. You never had to wonder where you stood with her."

— JIM TONEY EDITOR & PUBLISHER, THE BELZONI BANNER FORMER BOARD MEMBER, MPA-MPS

"Patsy... embodied what it is to be a community newspaper editor. She reported the good news and the bad. Mostly, she kept the public accountable by telling the truth unflinchingly..."

— JULIAN TONEY EDITOR & PUBLISHER, THE NESHOBA DEMOCRAT FORMER CHAIRMAN, MPA EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Patsy cast a long shadow over her town, industry

In the days when we were colleagues in the Mississippi Press Association, I learned quickly that Patsy Speights was a substantial, formidable woman and a truly great small-town newspaper editor.

Just as quickly, I learned that Patsy was possessed of a sharp tongue, a dry wit, and the personal courage of a Pier Six brawler. She was a politician's worst nightmare, and her rural Mississippi sense of justice and fairness left little room for excuses or deviation.

Speights retired in 2012 after a remarkable 25-year career as editor and general manager of The Prentiss Headlight weekly newspaper that served Jefferson Davis County. She died last this week at age 70 after a long illness. How I will miss her laughter and "no bull" sensibilities.

In Speights, the people of Prentiss and Jefferson Davis County were served by a feisty, fearless editor who literally exhausted her health working to give them the best community newspaper possible. Not only was she a dedicated and no-nonsense reporter covering the beats of crime, government and politics, but she also worked tirelessly to improve the quality of life and the economic development of the newspaper's territory.

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U.S. Supreme Court hands down rulings in 1st Amendment cases during 14-15 term

The United States Supreme Court decided three cases during its October 2014–2015 term that address First Amendment issues. While none involves defamation or privacy issues, they are of sufficient interest to warrant a brief review. One addresses state laws that prohibit judicial candidates from personally soliciting campaign contributions. Another involves a state’s right to dictate the content of its specialty car tags. The third finds that a municipal sign ordinance is unconstitutional using an unexpected rationale with potentially far reaching implications.

In Williams-Yulee v. The Florida Bar, 135 S. Ct. 1656 (2015), the Supreme Court in a 5–4 decision held that a provision of the Florida Code of Judicial Conduct that prohibited judicial candidates from personally soliciting campaign funds for judicial elections while permitting those candidates to establish committees of responsible persons to raise such funds did not violate the First Amendment. Thirty-nine states, including Mississippi, elect their trial or appellate judges at the polls. In 39 states, such funds did not violate the First Amendment. In a concurring decision, Justice Kagan held that the sign ordinance violated every possible First Amendment test including the “laugh” test. It was therefore unnecessary and imprudent Justice Kagan explained to find that the sign ordinance was content-based discrimination to which the court’s stringent scrutiny test applied. Justice Kagan predicted that the Justices would soon become the Supreme Board of Sign Ordinance Review for the entire country. Justice Thomas’ opinion, joined in by six members of the court, is a significant step in advancing the libertarian philosophy that pervades and undergirds numerous First Amendment decisions of the Roberts Court. The decision has the potential to have an impact far beyond the content and regulation of public sign ordinances.

Finally, in Reed v. Town of Gilbert, Arizona, 135 S. Ct. 2218 (2015), the Supreme Court, in a 9-0 opinion written by Justice Thomas, held that a municipal sign ordinance that placed greater restrictions on the display of temporary signs addressing where people might go and worship on Sundays than political campaign signs is content-based discrimination barred by the First Amendment. The court rejected the city’s contention that its sign ordinance should be upheld based on aesthetic or public safety reasons. In a concurring decision, Justice Kagan held that the sign ordinance violated every possible First Amendment test including the “laugh” test. It was therefore unnecessary and imprudent Justice Kagan explained to find that the sign ordinance was content-based discrimination to which the court’s stringent scrutiny test applied. Justice Kagan predicted that the Justices would soon become the Supreme Board of Sign Ordinance Review for the entire country. Justice Thomas’ opinion, joined in by six members of the court, is a significant step in advancing the libertarian philosophy that pervades and undergirds numerous First Amendment decisions of the Roberts Court. The decision has the potential to have an impact far beyond the content and regulation of public sign ordinances.

NAA appoints Chavern as new president, CEO

ARLINGTON, Va.

Newspaper Association of America announced that its board of directors has selected David Chavern, a seasoned public policy and advocacy leader, as its new president and CEO, effective October 14, 2015. Chavern succeeds Caroline H. Little, who led the association for four years and announced her retirement earlier in 2015.

In his new role at NAA, Chavern will work closely with board members and staff to navigate the organization through a continued period of significant opportunity for newspaper media. With technological advancements changing the ways in which people consume the news, and innovation were certainly deciding factors in the board’s selection.

Chavern has built a career spanning 30 years in executive strategic and operational roles, and most recently completed a decade-long tenure at the United States Chamber of Commerce. From 2014 to 2015, he served as the President of the Center for Advanced Technology & Innovation at the Chamber. He established the center, which is the first U.S. Chamber office focused solely on technology and innovation, and led a research and outreach program which was dedicated to the economic power of data-driven innovation.

Salter

From Page 5

At her retirement in 2012, Bill Jacobs wrote of Speights: “She was the epitome of the Norman Rockwell painting of a small-town newspaper editor. She did it all: covered meetings, wrote news stories, sold advertising, laid out the pages and made sure the papers got to the post office on time each week.

“In political circles, she also gained the respect of governors as well as congressman and senators. To each of them — peers and politicians — she is known simply as Patsy. No need for her last name, for speaking about Patsy can mean only one person — Patsy Speights, editor of The Prentiss Headlight.”

There have been so many women of substance in Mississippi journalism — Hazel Brannon Smith, Norma Fields, Mildred Dearman, Ruby Del Harden and Alyne Arrington — to name a precious few. Patsy Speights joined those remarkable women in the MPA Hall of Fame in 2012, the year she retired — a status Patsy earned many, many times over.

Sid Salter is a syndicated columnist and past president of MPA. His email address is sidsalter@sidsalter.com.

Anniversary

From Page 4

particular state.

The first recorded meeting of editors who eventually formed MPA was held at the state Capitol in June 1866. The association was operated by its own membership until the 1930s when MPA partnered with the Godwin Advertising Agency of Jackson. Agency principal George Godwin appointed his longtime associate George Lemon Sugg, a former managing editor of the Jackson Daily News, to the head of MPA, a position he held for nearly 40 years.

The association truly branched out with its own staff and first full-time manager in the late 1970s. Mississippi Press Services, its advertising services unit, was founded in 1978. The MPA Education foundation followed in 1983.

Headquartered in Jackson, MPA now represents the business and professional interests of 110 member newspapers in 81 counties.
Clinton

From Page 1

I could do (a newspaper), and Mayor Aultman said, ‘go to it.’ “

“She was very instrumental in helping us pull the trigger.”

He and business partner Dr. Ryan Tracy, a Clinton dentist, published their first issue in October 2010. The paper comes out twice a month, on the first and third Thursdays.

Residents can pick up copies on 75 racks across the city. Additionally, children enrolled in Clinton Public Schools in kindergarten through sixth grade are given copies to take home in their backpacks.

“Our papers don’t necessarily follow the normal business model, because we didn’t know what a normal paper did,” he said.

Despite not knowing the business, Mansell thought he was up for the challenge.

“Living in Clinton and being involved in the community, when the Clinton News closed, I saw how much it hurt us by not having a paper. I thought there was a need, so I took a leap of faith. I saw how well it worked here, and decided to look at launching papers in other places.”

The Pelahatchie News began in 2012, and the Wesson News came along in 2013. “When we went to Pelahatchie, Mayor Knox Ross said, ‘Now that the Pelahatchie News exists, we are real.’ We are real proud of that quote,” Mansell said.

Today, the Courier has a circulation of 9,000, and 5,374 Facebook friends. Many of those friends logged on to the Courier’s Facebook page following the devastation of the 2014 tornado.

“Because we’re in a small town, we knew the police and were able to get into the neighborhoods and get pictures. We wanted to document as much as we could,” he said. “We were able to put the information out before anybody.”

In addition to covering hyper-local news, the paper sponsors groups like the Attache Show Choir at Clinton High School. “We want to be as important as the chamber of commerce,” he said.

Aultman was mayor at the time The Clinton News closed, and remembers the city’s efforts to recruit publishers to open a new publication.

“The (parent company) decided to move it to their downtown office, and that created a disconnect immediately,” he said. “We met with several publishers trying to find someone to restart it. During that time Clay and Dr. Ryan Tracy said they could do it.

“It works because they’re here in the community and work in the community. It’s been very successful,” she said.

Mansell spends much of his time at the Courier checking e-mails and working with advertisers. “What I enjoy most is spending time when them, learning their business and seeing what promotions we can offer,” he said.

When he’s not working with the paper, he’s out in the community. He’s vice president of the Clinton chamber, treasurer of Main Street Clinton and on the board for Brilla, a minor league soccer team, among other responsibilities.

Mansell still owns one treat shop, Brick Street Pops, a gourmet Popsicle shop he opened at the corner of Monroe Street and East Leake Street, in Olde Towne Clinton. “They didn’t want the whole corner to be office buildings,” he said.

He and his wife Amanda have been married 13 years and have one daughter, AnnaBelle. They are members of Arise Church, also in Clinton.

When Mansell isn’t in the office, volunteering or spending time with his family and friends, he will likely be out at ribbon cuttings and other community events, making sure the Courier is there to report on it.

“We want to build up the community,” he said. “Hyper-local news sells. People want to know what’s going on in their towns.”

Bruce elected to term as NAM vice president

MPA Executive Director Layne Bruce has been elected to a one-year term as vice president of Newspaper Association Managers, Inc., a consortium of North American trade groups representing the newspaper industry.

Lisa Hills, executive director of the Minnesota Newspaper Association, was elected NAM president. George F. White, executive director of the New Jersey Press Association, was elected secretary.

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Briefly

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From Page 1

I could do (a newspaper), and Mayor Aultman said, ‘go to it.’ “

“She was very instrumental in helping us pull the trigger.”

He and business partner Dr. Ryan Tracy, a Clinton dentist, published their first issue in October 2010. The paper comes out twice a month, on the first and third Thursdays.

Residents can pick up copies on 75 racks across the city. Additionally, children enrolled in Clinton Public Schools in kindergarten through sixth grade are given copies to take home in their backpacks.

“Our papers don’t necessarily follow the normal business model, because we didn’t know what a normal paper did,” he said.

Despite not knowing the business, Mansell thought he was up for the challenge.

“Living in Clinton and being involved in the community, when the Clinton News closed, I saw how much it hurt us by not having a paper. I thought there was a need, so I took a leap of faith. I saw how well it worked here, and decided to look at launching papers in other places.”

The Pelahatchie News began in 2012, and the Wesson News came along in 2013. “When we went to Pelahatchie, Mayor Knox Ross said, ‘Now that the Pelahatchie News exists, we are real.’ We are real proud of that quote,” Mansell said.

Today, the Courier has a circulation of 9,000, and 5,374 Facebook friends. Many of those friends logged on to the Courier’s Facebook page following the devastation of the 2014 tornado.

“Because we’re in a small town, we knew the police and were able to get into the neighborhoods and get pictures. We wanted to document as much as we could,” he said. “We were able to put the information out before anybody.”

In addition to covering hyper-local news, the paper sponsors groups like the Attache Show Choir at Clinton High School. “We want to be as important as the chamber of commerce,” he said.

Aultman was mayor at the time The Clinton News closed, and remembers the city’s efforts to recruit publishers to open a new publication.

“The (parent company) decided to move it to their downtown office, and that created a disconnect immediately,” she said. “We met with several publishers trying to find someone to restart it. During that time Clay and Dr. Ryan Tracy said they could do it.

“It works because they’re here in the community and work in the community. It’s been very successful,” she said.

Mansell spends much of his time at the Courier checking e-mails and working with advertisers. “What I enjoy most is spending time when them, learning their business and seeing what promotions we can offer,” he said.

When he’s not working with the paper, he’s out in the community. He’s vice president of the Clinton chamber, treasurer of Main Street Clinton and on the board for Brilla, a minor league soccer team, among other responsibilities.

Mansell still owns one treat shop, Brick Street Pops, a gourmet Popsicle shop he opened at the corner of Monroe Street and East Leake Street, in Olde Towne Clinton. “They didn’t want the whole corner to be office buildings,” he said.

He and his wife Amanda have been married 13 years and have one daughter, AnnaBelle. They are members of Arise Church, also in Clinton.

When Mansell isn’t in the office, volunteering or spending time with his family and friends, he will likely be out at ribbon cuttings and other community events, making sure the Courier is there to report on it.

“We want to build up the community,” he said. “Hyper-local news sells. People want to know what’s going on in their towns.”

Bruce elected to term as NAM vice president

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A few things you’ll never hear me say...

Throughout my career as a consultant, I’ve heard managers, editors—even, even designers—say things that disappoint me.

I made up my mind many years ago to avoid saying those things—and I hope that you’ll put them on your list of things you’ll never say.

Here they are:

“Let’s play with the design.”

Nope. Design isn’t play. It’s hard work. If you’re not ready to do that hard work, then you’re not ready to be a designer.

“We have color on every page now. Let’s use as much color as we can.”

No, let’s not. Many things are still said better in black and white.

“We’re in the business of...”

writing.” No we’re not. We are in the business of bringing meaning to readers’ lives.

“There are no rules.” Oh, yes there are. Lots of them. And you’d better know what they are before you can even think you’re ready to break them.

“Let’s jazz it up.” Design is not about “jazz.” It’s about organizing content and giving that content quality display.

“Times is a good typeface for text.” No. It’s not.

“It’s OK to write long stories. Readers will take the time to read them.” No. They Won’t. More now than ever, readers want their information in smaller pieces. They will take the time for a longer story—if you take the time to break it into shorter chunks.

“It’s OK to make the text just a bit smaller on this story. It’s a good piece and we have to fit it in.” Never. Edit...edit...edit. The story has not been written that can’t be cut.

“Readers want more stories, not more photos.” Oh, yeah? Then why is it that research shows time and again that the first thing readers look at on a page is the photo (or other visual)?

“Body text should be set justified.” Sez who? More and more newspapers (and other publications) use flush left text. Most readers don’t notice—and those who do, don’t care.

“It’s OK to miss deadline.” No. It’s not. Ever.

Henry Carrothers

Social Media

Don’t think social media is worth the time and effort in your small newsroom? You might want to reconsider, says Jaci Smith, managing editor of the Faribault (Minn.) Daily News.

Facebook co-founder Mark Zuckerberg reported in August, “For the first time ever, one billion people used Facebook in a single day.”

For Smith, statistics like this reaffirm how useful social media tools can be in connecting with a news audience.

“I don’t think you can say it more powerfully than that,” she says. “We need to be using social media.”

Smith, a 2014-2015 fellow at the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute, started a social media training program at the Daily News known as “Social Media Ninja School.”

Smith recently spoke at the Missouri Press Association’s annual convention about why newsrooms should be using social media. She gave six examples of how she uses Facebook and Twitter in her newsroom.

1) Listen to your audience and find out what they like.

When Smith looked at the insights page on her news outlet’s Facebook page, she said she was shocked to see the success of videos on the page. (Videos were the second highest type of post on the Facebook page, after links to content.) It surprised Smith because the Daily News doesn’t produce a lot of videos.

However, seeing the insight has reminded her of how important it is to learn what type of content is important to an audience.

“Before doing anything else you need to listen, and by listen I mean you need to find out what your audience wants and where they want it,” she says.

Remember, your audience may differ in their preferences on different platforms, says Smith.

The Daily News has found their audience likes play-by-play coverage on Twitter, whether it’s a city council meeting or a sporting event, says Smith.

2) Don’t be afraid to let people comment on your website and on your Facebook page.

The comment feature allows readers to continue discussions about issues in the community. Commenting also allows readers to share story ideas, point out story errors and offer feedback and follow-up suggestions, says Smith. Be sure to respond to comments on the sites and let people know you’re hearing them.

Some conference attendees said they have turned off commenting on their sites. Smith challenged them to reconsider.

“One of the things that I would challenge you to think about is ‘how can you turn that all back on again … and channel the conversation in a more positive direction?’”

3) Be proactive about setting boundaries for comment sections before people start sharing their feedback.

Letting people know nasty comments and personal attacks won’t be tolerated has been helpful when it comes to managing comments on the Daily News’ website and Facebook page, says Smith.

Repeat offenders are blocked from posting, says Smith, and readers help police the site. Keeping trolls at bay “tends to change the tenor of the conversation,” she says.

4) Use social media to collect content.

If you have a small news staff, your local community can help be your eyes and ears.

For example, a citizen posted a photo of a crime scene van on the Daily News’ Facebook page, which alerted the news outlet to a potential news story.

“Without him, we wouldn’t have known,” says Smith.

Encourage people to share their photos with you. Smith says the audience is eager to share photos, especially ones of their children.

In one promotional campaign, Smith gathered enough photos to monetize a full photo gallery — with ads — in the newspaper.

Tell your readers up front if you wish to use their submitted photos online or in the print product and make sure you ask for full names and contact information up front when needed.

5) Create a social media policy handbook for your newsroom and make it required reading.

Social media can be a great tool for newsrooms but it can be a source of trouble if you aren’t careful. Create a social media policy handbook and let everyone know your guidelines for personal and professional use of social media. Remind your staff that they represent the news outlet at all times.

For example, the Daily News discourages reporters from “friending” sources on Facebook.

It also forbids staff from using photos from people’s private Facebook pages without prior consent.

6) Invite your advertising department to use social media, too.

Ad departments should use social media to “establish themselves as experts,” says Smith. Platforms like Twitter can be a place to share advertising trends and news about upcoming local promotions, she advises.

Jennifer Nelson is a senior information specialist for the Reynolds Journalism Institute at the University of Missouri. Her email address is nelsonjenn@jonline.com. Follow her on Twitter @nelsonjennRJI.

Publisher: Online media powerful tools for engaging readers

Ed Henninger

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It’s March 1. The Legislature is in full swing. Your newsroom is primed to follow every twist and turn in the legislative hallways. As the saying goes, “The lawmakers are back. Protect your pocketbooks.” Newsrooms are on full alert to follow and translate the impact of legislative decisions on your readers’ everyday lives.

Fast forward to the waning summer. The Legislature is the last thing on your newsroom’s radar, right? Wrong.

The dog days of summer provide an excellent opportunity to check in on the actions of policy-makers as new laws take effect. It’s a chance to inform and educate your readers as well as hold your legislators accountable. Consider these two recent reports from Minnesota newspapers:

• From the Minneapolis Star Tribune: “After a two-year delay, Minnesota’s much hated 1989 sales tax rebate program for capital equipment purchases ended last week. The change is a major coup for small businesses and the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, which lobbied hard for legislators to rescind a law many considered an unnecessary hardship.” The story details the practical impact of the law change on the ability of businesses to reinvest this money into operations.

• From the Worthington Daily Globe: “After much debate on both sides of the aisle, legislation to establish 110,000 acres of new water quality buffer zones across Minnesota took effect July 1. The measure will result in nearly 1,700 acres in additional conservation land in Nobles County.” The story examines and explains the rules for compliance.

Hundreds of new state laws take effect in July. Around the nation, July 1 marks the beginning of a new fiscal year and the date recently passed legislation goes on the books.

New laws in Minnesota covered the spectrum from agriculture, environment and education to health care, jobs and transportation. Here is a sampling:

• Money is allocated to implement the new teacher evaluation system in school districts that don’t participate in the Q-Comp alternative teacher compensation program.

• Manufacturers must equip phones with an antitheft function.

• Of domestic abuse, criminal sexual conduct or stalking, who fear for their safety will receive some protection from eviction if they need to terminate a lease early.

The range of new laws is likely similar in most other states. Localizing their impact is a great way to underscore that what happens at the Capitol affects your readers in many ways.

Newsrooms shouldn’t stop there, however. A periodic check of new laws is a reminder that election coverage should not take a permanent back seat until the next filing period opens. Reviewing laws can be done in concert with holding your elected policy-makers and their respective governing bodies accountable. For example:

• Prepare periodic scorecards of how your lawmakers are performing, especially with regard to their campaign pledges. Review their objectives and offer appropriate editorial commentary.

• Elections can produce new voting blocs and, as a result, a change in the dynamics of governmental bodies. Not all may be recognizable to readers. Reporters are in excellent position to provide analysis on a regular basis.

Election coverage is an exhaustive and painstaking process that commands your newsroom’s attention for months. The unfortunate result is that many newsrooms put election coverage in the rearview mirror as soon as they record the “votes and quotes” of election night.

Election editions may close the books on one election cycle. But they also provide the springboard for the next cycle. It’s a worthwhile exercise for staffs to review the election edition periodically and refresh themselves about what the voters said and what the victors promised.

Many candidates mostly receive a free pass on answering the tough policy questions as press releases are exchanged during the churn of election campaigns. Reporters have a better opportunity to follow and analyze actions once the winners have been seated and the dynamics of the governing bodies take shape. These stories will hold lawmakers and governing bodies accountable and will provide meaningful coverage for your readers.

Have you fallen into an order-taking rut? Are you passively relying on your accounts to tell you what and when to advertise? Are you following their creative directions like a police artist (“Make the hair longer, make the ears bigger.”)? Are you keeping up with events in their industries? Do you know which products are selling? Do you know what offers have worked in the past? What about seasonal merchandise? Should they consider featuring those products in a separate ad or a bigger ad?

There’s no excuse for being in a rut. If we look, we’ll find plenty of opportunities.

We can learn a lot about selling by studying other sales people. Each time someone tries to sell us something, we see the good and the bad come to life – from a consumer’s point of view.

I remember a trip to a clothing store to buy a new suit. I had shopped there before and knew I would have no trouble finding what I wanted. I was a hot prospect, ready to buy.

When I arrived, all the sales people were huddled around the front desk, talking and telling jokes. Expecting someone to follow me, I walked directly to the suit section and found my size. I glanced at the front of the store and realized that – even though I was the only customer in the store – no one had noticed me.

I picked out a suit and tried on the jacket. It looked like a good possibility, so I took the trousers into the dressing room, rolled up the legs and put them on. Then I put the jacket back on and stood in front of the mirror. With a few standard alterations, the suit was just what I wanted.

Another glance to the front revealed no signs of life. So, having made a buying decision, I found the alteration department and asked for the tailor.

There I was – standing at the mirror, pants rolled up 12 inches, coat sleeves reaching my knuckles, price tags hanging from the sleeves, tailor on the way with pins and chalk. Then a salesperson walked up and said, “Can I help you?” (No kidding, that’s what he said.)

“What a relief,” I thought. I was afraid I was going to have to write up the sale myself. (I wonder if they would have paid me a commission.)

In spite of the inattention, I did buy the suit. But that’s all I bought. The store was staffed with poor observers. In addition to taking ten minutes to recognize a customer, my sales person missed a chance to sell a couple of shirts and ties to go with my new suit. If he had been good at his job – if he had been more than an order taker – perhaps he could have sold another suit, as well. He made a sale and lost a sale at the same time.

Months later, I walked through that shopping mall again. The store was no longer there.

Copyright © 2015 by John Foust. All rights reserved. E-mail John Foust for information about his training videos for ad departments: jfoust@mindspring.com.
A change to Domestic Mail Manual 207.16 effective Sept. 14, 2015, limits the number of marked copies, which must be submitted when there are “multiple editions of a Periodicals publication.” The wording now states that you must submit only “the main or most prominent edition of the issue and must have all other editions available for review upon request.”

This is important to newspapers, which have multiple editions with different preprint combinations indicated by weight, even though the “mainsheet,” or ROP version of the main newspaper, does not change. Some post offices have required multiple marked copies of the main newspaper to accompany each different weight version, even though nothing changed inside that ROP section or sections.

Also, the advertising content may be verified by either the original entry or additional entry office, meaning it does not have to be verified by both. Although National Newspaper Association’s request to clarify that the marked copy may be submitted the next business day after entry of the mail was not included in this change, we will be working the issue through Business Mail Entry Headquarters. Many reasonable postmasters allow it to come later. NNA has not yet gotten USPS to eliminate the marked copy except on request. The unexpected hurdle was that magazine reps on our Periodicals group reneged on their support. Changes in Periodicals rules are always hard to achieve, because of the sensitivity of compliance with rules intended to keep Standard mail from leaking into the class.

Another reason for resistance is that advertising measurement of newspapers is required to compute higher, zoned pound rates on ad matter by distance outside the county, and allows lower zoned rates for all editorial or nonadvertising matter. With concern that Periodicals are already not costing cover, mailers worry about loosening rules that may cost USPS ad-rate postage money.

Rules concerning ad measurement are shared below, with citations from the U.S. Postal Service Domestic Mail Manual and Customer Support Rulings. Both are available at the Postal Explorer website.

### Advertising Standards (DMM 207.4.12)

Advertising is defined in DMM 207.4.12.1 as:

(a) “All material for the publication of which a valuable consideration is paid, accepted, or promised, that calls attention to something to get people to buy it, sell it, seek it, or support it.”

(b) “Reading matter or other material for the publication of which an advertising rate is charged.”

(c) News stories run in return for an ad in the same issue must also be counted as advertising (though put more simply here than in DMM.)

Therefore, paid obits are counted as paid linage.

(d) “House ads” for newspaper subscriptions, advertising, websites, or businesses owned by the newspaper are also considered paid advertising, whether in display advertising or reading matter.

Public-service announcements “for which no valuable consideration is received by the publisher … which promote programs, activities or services of federal, state or local governments or of nonprofit organizations, or matters generally regarded as in the public interest” are not treated as advertising. (DMM 207.4.12.2)

### Measuring Advertising (DMM 207.17.2.2)

“The total advertising and nonadvertising portions may be determined by column inches, square inches, pages, or by another recognized unit of measure,” so long as the same unit is used for both portions.

Newspapers cannot be forced to use a certain method.

Most newspapers use column-inch measurement. One must compute the total units of space in the entire publication, as well as the total units of advertising. For instance, a 20-page paper might contain 2,580 total inches of space (6 columns x 21.5 inches x 20 pages = 2,580 inches). If the advertising units measured 1,565 inches, 1,565 divided by 2,580 equals 60.66 percent.

Round advertising percentage to two decimal places, as shown in the previous sentence. Round up numbers five and up; round down four and below. Slash marks through the advertising with a colored marker are adequate. Also, to determine the weight per copy, weigh 10 copies and divide by 10. The weight is expressed in decimal pounds rounded off to four decimal places. (DMM 207.2.2.2)

### What about white space?

When using column or square inches, the marginal space should be disregarded. It will take its proportionate share in the percentage of advertising and nonadvertising matter arrived at for the whole issue.

CSR PS-12 also states “the border of a page, space between columns, and space between advertisements are neither advertising matter nor matter other than advertising.”

PS-12 also rules that, “In determining the advertising and nonadvertising percentages, one full page of advertising material must equal the same measurement as one full page of news content.” In other words, if one page of all news counts as 129 inches, one page of all advertising will count as 129 inches, even if there are a variety of ad sizes on the page. This is true “regardless of the amount of blank spaces between each advertisement on a page.”

### What about page headings?

Headers that accompany ad matter are considered advertising. Likewise, headers accompanying news matter are nonadvertising (CSR PS-143). An advertising index is considered advertising (CSR PS-251)

### How do we measure pages with varying columns?

Some papers convert 8-column classified pages to 6-column pages (172 inches to 129 inches) for consistency in measurement. You could follow this practice for tab sections with 4 or 5 columns per page versus broadsheet pages with 6 columns per page.

It is also acceptable to measure inches on tabloid pages as the number of inches times the height (5 columns by 12 inches = 70 inches, rather than half of 129 inches, or 64.5). This measure slightly overstates the ad percentage, however.

### How about advertising supplements of various widths?

With the broadsheet or tabloid newspapers open to the two pages that show standard columns, open the supplement with its spine nested inside the broadsheet centerfold. Match the printed width of the ad supplement to the closest number of columns (typically four or five) that it approximates. For example, an eight-page tab whose ad matter measured closest to four columns wide, with 10 vertical inches, would contain 40 inches per page. That would be 320 inches added to the total column inches in the newspaper, and then 320 inches added to the advertising matter.

### What is the maximum amount of advertising in an issue?

Regular paid newspapers cannot exceed 75 percent advertising in more than half their issues. A weekly could have 26 issues over 75 percent, but after that nonadvertising matter must be added to any issues that would exceed 75 percent. (DMM 207.6.1.3a)

You can have 75 percent advertising, just not 75.1 percent and above in more than half the issues.

Requester newspapers historically cannot exceed 75 percent advertising in any issue. However, a rule change said Requester newspapers may exceed 75 percent advertising 25 percent of the time, effective Jan. 27, 2013. This change to 207.6.4.1b was requested by NNA on behalf of its Requester members and is halfway between the current paid and Requester rule. Issues over the limit can be mailed at Standard Mail rates on an occasional basis. (CSR PS-147)

When an issue is prepared in editions, if one edition is more than 75 percent, the entire edition will be considered more than 75 percent. Averaging is not allowed, unfortunately. (CSR PS-241)

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NYT plans to double digital revenue by ’20

» Advertising Age

New York Times Co. plans to double its digital revenue in the next four years by increasing the number of paid online subscribers and attracting more young and international readers.

The Times generated $400 million in revenue through online advertising and subscriptions last year and aims to bring in $800 million by 2020, Times CEO Mark Thompson and Executive Editor Dean Baquet said in a memo to staff Wednesday.

The Times reached a milestone on July 30 as the number of paid digital subscribers surpassed 1 million. As more people get their news online, especially on smartphones, the newspaper’s print advertising revenue has declined. It fell by 13% in the second quarter.

“The next million must be fought for and won over with the Times on their phones,” the company said in a strategy document released called “Our Path Forward.” Both digital revenue and digital subscribers have been growing by double-digit percentage rates, the company said. The paper needs to increase the pace in coming years “to return the Times to a position of growth and outpace the slow but inevitable decline in print.”

Postal study underway

Lisa McNeece, left, of the Calhoun County Journal talks with Chung Kim of the United States Postal Service at the Bruce Post Office recently. Kim and a team from USPS headquarters in Washington recently visited Calhoun County on an agency initiative to improve service and delivery times for newspapers as part of a National Newspaper Association partnership.