The publisher of The Calhoun County Journal in Bruce was elected the 142nd president of the Mississippi Press Association during the newspaper trade group’s annual meeting on the gulf coast.

Joel McNeece, 44, will serve as president of MPA and Mississippi Press Services, Inc., an affiliated advertising and marketing service.

McNeece and his wife, Lisa, and sister-in-law, Celia Hillhouse, own and operate the 5,000-circulation weekly newspaper. Lisa McNeece is a former president of MPA and her father, the late S. Gale Denley, is a past president and member of the MPA Hall of Fame.

McNeece has worked in the newspaper industry for more than 20 years during which time he has won numerous awards for writing in news, sports and his weekly column.

In 2009, McNeece was honored with the Dan Phillips Leadership Award from the National Newspaper Association. He currently serves as Mississippi state chairman for NNA.

McNeece has served multiple times as president of the Bruce Chamber of Commerce, three times been named Chamber Member of the Year and served 13 years on the organization’s board of directors.

The ArkLaMiss Conference returns to Vicksburg and the Ameristar Casino and will be led by keynote presenter Steve Wagenlander (below).

CIRCULATION MEETING

NOV 6-7 IN VICKSBURG

A noted expert in audience development and circulation marketing will be the keynote presenter at the annual ArkLaMiss Circulation Conference in Vicksburg Nov. 6-7.

Steve Wagenlander, publisher of Summerville Communications in South Carolina, will lead sessions on building and maintaining readership and marketing of your print and digital products. Wagenlander previously served as Corporate Director of Audience Development for Evening Post Industries in Charleston. Along with his corporate responsibilities, Wagenlander served as the Director of Audience Development for the Post and Courier.

Taylor new publisher of The Clarion-Ledger

Page 3.

NATIONAL SURVEY: CONSUMERS INTERACT REGULARLY WITH NEWSPAPER MEDIA

“The research found in How America Shops and Spends 2014 confirms that newspaper media continues to be a powerful asset for advertisers to engage consumers and encourage them to make purchases,” said NAA president and CEO Caroline Little. Page 5.
The official newspaper of the Mississippi Press Association

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www.mspress.org

The Mississippi Press Association | Established 1866
Mississippi Press Services | Established 1978
MPA Education Foundation | Established 1983

President's Column

MISSISSIPPI NEWSPAPERS ARE THE STORYTELLERS OF OUR COMMUNITIES

I am two months into one of the greatest honors of my life – serving the Mississippi Press Association (MPA) as its president – and am reminded daily of the many people who are responsible for this incredible opportunity.

When the late Dr. Art Kaul at the University of Southern Mississippi convinced me to change my major to journalism so many years ago, I would have come closer to believing I would step foot on the moon one day than to have been chosen to lead the state’s press association. It’s a credit to Dr. Kaul, his relentless pushing and prodding and passion for newspapers, that I discovered the ink in my veins.

Many others followed in Dr. Kaul’s footsteps as inspirations in my journalism career – Sid Salter, Charlie Mitchell, Tim James, Wyatt Emmerich, Jim Prince, Patsy Speights, Jim Abbott, Layne Bruce, Tim Kalich, Charlie Dunagin, Ray Mosby, Dan Phillips, Bill Jacobs, Tom Andrews, David Hampton, Randy Ponder and many more.

I came to know them all through MPA.

More than great friends, MPA is family. It was at an MPA convention in Biloxi that I met my wife Lisa. I actually spotted her the year prior in a stunning black dress and told my colleague Tim James, from The Wesson Times, “that’s someone I would like to meet.”

Tim quickly replied, “Who, her? That’s just my friend Lisa from Bruce.” It was the following year’s convention when Lisa and I met in the late night hospitality suite.

Eight months later, we were married. Over the past 17 years, I’ve never missed an opportunity to remind Tim of that year he cost me.

The week after meeting Lisa, I met my father-in-law Gale Denley. No one has had a greater impact on my journalism career, and in many ways my life, than my late father-in-law. He instilled in me the importance of good journalism, service to your community, and supporting our industry by giving of your time to MPA.

Over the past year, I’ve had the opportunity to see that the journalism experience is not just personal to me, but to so many who dedicate themselves to this noble profession.

I’ve had the great fortune to visit almost two dozen of our member newspapers during that time with MPA Executive Director Layne Bruce and Will Norton, dean of the journalism school at Ole Miss, to learn of their operations.

I found Bill Knight’s enthusiasm contagious when we visited the Quitman County Democrat in the tiny town of Marks where he and his wife Carol acquired the century-old paper from Josephine Fleming. “This has been incredible,” Knight, a long-time accountant turned newspaperman, said of the experience. “It’s a lot of work, but I’m really enjoying it.”

I could smell the ink in the air in Julian Toney’s print shop in Belzoni; reveled at the hum of the press at the Delta Democrat Times in Greenville; lunched with Dub Shoemaker in Kosciusko; listened to the wild tales of Waid Prather in Carthage; and saw where The Yazoo Herald is not just a newspaper office, but a community headquarters.

The newspapers of our state are the best storytellers, while each being a great story in their own right.

Paul Keane at The Wayne County News broadcasts Friday night football games every fall over his website. Two of the best magazine products you will find anywhere are produced in newspaper offices in Cleveland and Collins. The Clarion-Ledger is shooting more entertaining video than most television stations. One of the most talented editorial writers anywhere can be found in Rolling Fork where he publications the 1,500 circulation Deer Creek Pilot.

When you look around MPA, there is so much to admire and take pride in among our daily and weekly newspapers. We are old school yet innovative, an old friend while still cutting edge, reliable and exciting.

The opportunity to represent all of these marvelous newspapers and incredibly talented journalists is not something I take lightly. It’s personal.

MPA-MPS President Joel McNeece is publisher of The Calhoun County Journal. His email address is joelmcneece@gmail.com.

MPA voices opposition to further USPS consolidation

The state newspaper trade group has voiced strong opposition to an announced plan by the United States Postal Service to further consolidate mail processing facilities in Mississippi.

The announcement, made June 30 by USPS officials, will affect processing centers in Grenada, Hattiesburg and Gulfport, with the two southern facilities being consolidated into Mobile, Ala. Processing in Grenada will be transferred to Jackson, which will be the lone remaining facility in Mississippi after all consolidations occur that began in a first wave initiated in 2013.

The Mississippi Press Association Board of Directors issued a statement objection to the Postal
Chattanooga publisher takes reins of Jackson newspaper

Jason Taylor, former president of the Chattanooga Times Free Press, is the new president and publisher of The Clarion-Ledger.

The announcement was made in July by the Gannett Co., Inc., who owns The Clarion-Ledger.

“Jason is a proven leader with sustained advertising and marketing success throughout his career,” said Robert Dickey, president of Gannett’s U.S. Community Publishing division. “He will be a great addition to the Jackson community and will continue to build upon the accomplishments achieved by Leslie during her distinguished career.”

Taylor was appointed about a month after former publisher Leslie Hurst announced her retirement.

Hurst has spent nearly 30 years with Gannett. She started her career in 1987 as marketing services director for The Times in Shreveport, Louisiana. Over her tenure, she has worked in nine markets and served as president and publisher of Gannett media organizations in Hattiesburg; Huntington, West Virginia; Boise, Idaho; Lansing, Michigan; and Lafayette/Opelousas, Louisiana.

“Leslie’s career with Gannett has taken her across the country. While her address may have changed, her results never did,” said Dickey. “She was a consistent bright spot within the company, highlighted by her multiple Gannett President’s Ring awards for outstanding performance.”

Taylor, 39, began his professional career in newspapers at the Daily News Journal in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, where he served in various roles including advertising sales manager and director of marketing and advertising.

In 2003, Morris Multimedia sold its Tennessee properties to Gannett, which included the Daily News Journal. At that time, Taylor was named general manager of the Times in Gainesville, Georgia, which Morris Multimedia acquired in the transaction with Gannett.

Six months later, Gannett recruited Taylor to the Honolulu Advertiser. During his time in Honolulu he held various positions including advertising director and senior vice president of sales and marketing for the state’s largest newspaper before making the move to Chattanooga in 2007.

During his tenure at the Chattanooga Times Free Press, the paper was recognized as a top-ranked newspaper both regionally and nationally in news, advertising, marketing, circulation and online performance. In 2014 alone the newspaper has topped Editor and Publisher magazine’s Top 10 Papers Doing It Right as well receiving recognition as a 2014 Pulitzer finalist.

Taylor was named 2006 Executive of the Year among Gannett’s then 96 daily newspapers, and also received Gannett Chairman’s Award, multiple American Advertising Federation Addy Awards and Newspaper Association of America’s Athena Awards, Morris Multimedia’s Inaugural Leadership Award, and the 2010 American Advertising Federation Silver Medal Award for lifetime achievement.

He is one of the industry’s top-rated speakers. He has addressed over 80 industry conferences including 38 states, 24 regional, 8 national and 2 international events.

“I have high expectations, but I also have a lot of fun,” Taylor said. “I go 90-to-nothing, and I like to be hands-on.”

Taylor has created, TAYLOR >> Page 7
‘At the end of the day,’ a good one for our group

Thursday was one of those days when I moved from meeting to meeting. MPA President Joel McNeece, along for three of the four meetings, asked me at day’s end if that schedule was typical.

Alas, it’s not. I spend way more time writing email and responding to messages than I care to admit.

So the occasional day that keeps me out of the office – even if it’s just for meetings in other offices – is welcomed.

The trek started with MPA lobbyist Steve Browning and me visiting with a company based in Jackson that has a major footprint in the state – one that is probably only rivaled by our own membership and the U.S. Postal Service.

The point was to pass along the good news about our membership (hopefully you’ve all heard this now): Nearly 1.5 million Mississippians read their newspapers. And we also were hoping to nudge these folks along into buying more advertising in newspapers and on our websites.

We left the meeting feeling very confident – the prospect (whose competitors include State Farm, Geico and some other TV heavy hitters) has some major marketing plans for 2015. They include print. Not a bad start to the day.

ROUND TWO was a lunch meeting with Joel, MPA board members Jim Prince and Pat Brown, publishers of The Neshoba Democrat and The Magee Courier, respectively, and MPA associate member Brian Perry of Capstone Public Affairs in Jackson.

The topic was MPAs effort to drive more political advertising into our newspapers in 2015, a state election year. Perry’s affiliation with MPA and his background in political campaigns and consulting will prove helpful in this task – admittedly, an uphill battle.

Recent headlines about the dollars spent on broadcast advertising in the (still ongoing?) senate primary undoubtedly raised some eyebrows – particularly when we look at the paltry amount that was dedicated to newspaper and affiliated websites between the first of the year and the primary runoff in late June.

Also competing mightily for the advertising dollars is direct mail. It is astounding how much money is poured into the medium since conventional wisdom tells us it usually hits the trash or recycle bin directly after being pulled from the mailbox.

An interesting theory I heard recently was that all of the effort put into direct mail isn’t necessarily intended to move the needle in terms of public opinion. It’s often meant more as a molotov cocktail aimed at instigating talk and/or suspicion about potential scandals within a competing campaign.

So, if broadcast ads play to ego and direct mail to stirring up gossip, then leaving print advertising to sell the principles of a given candidate is a tall order.

But we can take a bigger piece of this pie. Voters are overwhelmingly newspaper readers. It’s a medium that can and should be used to great effect by campaigns.

AFTER MEETING with lobbyists Hayes Dent and Steve Browning on the 2015 legislative agenda, we ended the day with a visit to The Clarion-Ledger and the office of new publisher Jason Taylor.

On the job for about a month, Taylor comes to Jackson from Chattanooga, Tenn., where he was president and publisher of The Times-Free Press.

Our gain is definitely Tennessee’s loss. Jason had just been elected president of the Tennessee Press Association when he answered the call to leave Chattanooga for Jackson.

Jason is, well, a stick of dynamite. His enthusiasm for the industry and his record of success in Chattanooga and elsewhere is admirable and most impressive.

I came away from the meeting optimistic that he will lead the newspaper and parent company Gannett to make some much needed investments at the paper – chief among them, improvement in employee morale.

Layne >> Page 12

Criteria available for ad contest; deadline Oct. 7

The criteria and entry packets for the 2014 Better Newspaper Contest Advertising Division are now available. Copies were mailed in early September to member publishers or can be downloaded now from the MPA website.

Entries are due to the MPA office by 5 pm, Tuesday, Oct. 7, 2014. They will be judged this fall by a panel of volunteers from the Louisiana Press Association.

This will be the final contest cycle to be submitted manually with printed tear sheets. Beginning with next year’s editorial contest, entries will be submitted in PDF format online. Details of the change are included in the entry packet for the current advertising contest cycle.

Awards for advertising excellence will be handed out Jan. 31, 2015, during the Mid-Winter Conference at Jackson’s Hilton Hotel.

For questions or more information about the contest or entry process, contact member services manager Monica Gilmer, 601-981-3060. Good luck!
New research from the Newspaper Association of America reveals that eight in ten U.S. adults – 79 percent – took action in the past month as a result of seeing a newspaper ad. In an average week, more than half of U.S. adults – 57 percent – say they have made a shopping decision based on a newspaper ad, whether in print or online.

These findings are highlighted in “How America Shops and Spends 2014,” a survey of more than 1,500 adults conducted for NAA by Frank N. Magid Associates. The goal of the survey is to discover patterns of behavior from consumers, by focusing on how advertising media is used for shopping and purchasing, the role of newspaper media in these decisions and the evolving use of inserts, coupons and online shopping.

“The research found in How America Shops and Spends 2014 confirms that newspaper media continues to be a powerful asset for advertisers to engage consumers and encourage them to make purchases,” said NAA president and CEO Caroline Little. “Newspapers continue to reach massive audiences through print, digital and mobile platforms. Those audiences are invaluable to advertisers. The research reveals that consumers value ads in newspaper media for a variety of reasons, including the fact that newspapers are trusted and provide quality journalism and local content.”

Key findings in the report:

- Four in 10 adults have taken an action online as a result of reading or seeing an ad in a print newspaper in the past 30 days.
- Preprints in the weekday and Sunday newspaper move consumers—not just self-described newspaper readers—to act in a variety of ways. Nearly eight in 10 (78%) adults have taken some action in the past 30 days from an ad in a circular appearing in the newspaper package.
- Of the 51% who sought out circulars online in the past 30 days, more than eight in 10 of them (86%) took some action in the same time period as a result of a print ad circular delivered in the newspaper.
- Newspapers are the leading medium consumers use for coupons. Seven in 10 (69%) cite the Sunday or weekday editions as coupon sources.

NAA is a nonprofit organization representing nearly 2,000 newspapers and their multiplatform businesses in the United States and Canada. NAA members include daily newspapers, as well as nondailies, other print publications and online products. Headquartered near Washington, D.C., in Arlington, Va., the association focuses on the major issues that affect today’s newspaper industry.
Benjamin ‘Butch’ John

LOUISVILLE, Ky.


He was born Aug. 3, 1953, in Culver City, Calif., to Kathryn Rudert) and Malvern John. He moved with his family to Rogers, Ark., where he graduated from Rogers High School in 1971. He earned a bachelor's degree in English from the University of Arkansas.

He married Jana Lam Sept. 29, 1979, in Pauls Valley, Okla., and they shared careers in journalism, working at several newspapers that included The Clarion-Ledger in Jackson.

Butch won numerous state, regional and national awards for his news reporting and sports reporting, which included covering the New Orleans Saints for The Clarion-Ledger and USA Today.

Butch is survived by his wife, Jana, of Louisville; his mother-in-law, Betty Lam of Pauls Valley, Okla.; his brother-in-law, Trey Lam, and his wife, Jo Ann, of Pauls Valley; nieces Jean Margaret Lam of Pauls Valley and Katie Hannon of New Haven, Conn.; nephews Jess Lam of Scottsdale, Ariz., and Stephen Hannon of New Haven; and cousins Mary Jean (Tom) Giles of Cape Girardeau, Mo., and Ben Giles of La Crescent, Minn.

Butch loved cats and believed in the importance of adopting pets from shelters. The perfect way to remember Butch would be with a donation to your favorite animal rescue organization.

A celebration of Butch’s life is being planned in Jackson at a later date.

— From the Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal

M. Wayne Mitchell

BELMONT

Mariel Wayne Mitchell, 77, died Monday, June 23, 2014, in Tupelo, after a long illness. He was born September 18, 1936, in Itawamba County to the late Oliver Russell Mitchell and Bertha Tucker Mitchell.

He graduated from Itawamba Agricultural High School and attended Freed-Hardeman University, the University of South Alabama and the University of South Mississippi.

He served as a minister in Florida, Alabama and several locations throughout Mississippi.

He began his preaching career in 1957 at the Kosciusko Church of Christ.

He purchased The Belmont and Tishomingo Journal from Mr. Delmus Hardin in August of 1976 and later The County Shopper. Also he owned KeMa Publishing.

He was appointed by Governor Haley Barbour in January 2011 to serve on the Mississippi State Board of Funeral Service as an at-large member, and was honored by being selected as the Secretary/Treasurer for this group. He spent the last 17 years as the minister of the Mt. Gilead Church of Christ in Itawamba County, the place where he preached his first sermon in 1952.

A service celebrating his life was Thursday, June 26, 2014, at Liberty Church of Christ in Dennis. Burial was in the Pine Grove Cemetery in Fulton. Senter Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.


He was preceded in death by his father, Oliver Russell Mitchell, and his mother, Bertha Tucker Mitchell.

Pallbearers were Roger Crane, Phillip Crane, Olen Lovette, Johnny Jamerson, Jonathan George and Cody Crane.

Honorary pallbearers were Eddie and Dustin Mitchell, Kasen Bates, Tyler Benson and the Mississippi State Board of Funeral Service Members.

John Franklin Turner

LEAKESVILLE

Funeral services were held at June 26, 2014, at Freeman Funeral Home for John Franklin Turner, 81, native of Washington County, Ala., and resident of Leakesville, who died June 22, 2014, at Wesley Medical Center in Hattiesburg.


He graduated from Washington County High School and the University of Southern Miss. He served in the U.S. Army during the Korean Conflict. He served on the Mississippi Prison Industries Corporation Board of Directors for 18 years, where he had many friends. He owned and edited the Greene County Herald, and was a member of First Baptist Church of Leakesville where he served as deacon and last year was honored as deacon emeritus. He was a founding member of Leakesville Volunteer Fire Department, and was a former Civil Defense Director of Greene County.

In his spare time he loved to fish, turkey hunt and deer hunt.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Daniel Webster and Pearl Turner; brothers, J.C., Bill, and Dan Turner; and son Randy Turner.

He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Leola Manasco Turner; daughter, Cheri (Dennis) Culpepper; son; Russell (Jennifer) Turner; granddaughters, Joni (Chris) McMillon, Jennifer (Curt) Edwards, Mary Grace Turner; grandsons, Perry and Jackson Turner; great-grandsons, Hunter and Ryder McMillon and great-granddaughter, Lilly Edwards; brothers, Waid B. “Butch” Turner of Mobile, Ala., and Cecil Clyde Turner of Gracelville, Fla.; sisters-in-law, Ruby Turner of Chatom, Ala., and Yvonne Turner of Wagarville, Ala.; and nieces, nephews and many friends.

Members.

The State Board of Funeral Service and the Mississippi Prison Industries Corporation Board of Directors for 18 years, where he had many friends. He owned and edited the Greene County Herald, and was a member of First Baptist Church of Leakesville where he served as deacon and last year was honored as deacon emeritus. He was a founding member of Leakesville Volunteer Fire Department, and was a former Civil Defense Director of Greene County. In his spare time he loved to fish, turkey hunt and deer hunt.

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Postal

From Page 2
Service’s plan, joining other industry trade groups and the National Newspaper Association (NNA) in protesting the changes.

“We have seen repeatedly that closures and consolidations negatively affect newspaper distribution and the delivery of business mail,” said MPA President Joel McNeece, publisher of The Calhoun County Journal in Bruce. “We object to this plan by the Postal Service and fail to see how “We need postal reform legislation and quickly,” McNeece said. “MPA stands with other associations, including NNA, in calling for legislation that will address preservation of rural mail delivery. We absolutely believe continued, reliable mail service to American communities is vital to our overall economy.”

McNeece said the announced changes, scheduled to take effect in 2015, will significantly impact rural mail service.

“Newspaper and periodicals delivery, and, in fact, all mail service would be delayed even further,” he said.

According to the NNA, USPS is showing operating profits for Fiscal 2014 after years of significant losses. Postmaster General Patrick Donohoe cited a $40 billion debt on the USPS balance sheet as the impetus for further service cuts. Most of USPS is indebted to the US Treasury, which it owes for accelerated prepayment of postal retiree health costs imposed by Congress in 2006.

“We need postal reform legislation and quickly,” McNeece said. “MPA stands with other associations, including NNA, in calling for legislation that will address preservation of rural mail delivery. We absolutely believe continued, reliable mail service to American communities is vital to our overall economy.”

ArkLaMiss

From Page 1
He also worked for the Indianapolis Star and the Lexington Herald-Leader, is a frequent industry speaker, and has been a faculty member for Inland Press Foundation Circulation Academy. He was named Circulation Executive of the Year by the Newspaper Association of America in 2010, and Prestime Magazine selected him as one of the “20 under 40” top young talents in the newspaper industry in 2004.

The event will be held again at the Ameristar Casino and Hotel on the banks of the Mississippi River. Room rate for the conference is $69 nightly.

A pre-conference Newspaper Management Round Table will 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. 6. A Hot Ideas breakfast will kick off Friday morning activities. The conference, as is customary, will adjourn at noon on Friday.

The MPA Education Foundation will make a limited number of registration scholarships available for MPA members to attend the event. Complete conference agenda, details and hotel information are available online at arklamissconference.com.

Elected

From Page 1
He is also a Paul Harris Fellow and past president of the Bruce Rotary Club. He has served as the chairman of the Bruce Museum Board of Directors since 2006 and twice been named Bruce Citizen of the Year.

McNeece and others were installed during ceremonies at a joint convention with the Louisiana Press Association.

Also elected to leadership positions were First Vice President Don Norman, publisher of the Starkville Daily News; Second Vice President Paul Keane, publisher of The Wayne County News in Waynesboro; and Treasurer Tracie Fowler, general manager of the Hattiesburg American.

Jim Prince, publisher of The Neshoba Democrat and president of Prince Newspaper Holdings, Inc., becomes Immediate Past President and Chairman of the MPA Education Foundation.

Elected to three-year terms as Directors were Stephanie Patton, editor and publisher of The Leland Progress, and Clay Foster, publisher and CEO of Journal, Inc., the parent company of the Daily Journal in Tupelo.

Taylor

From Page 3
launched and managed countless products in the various markets he has worked including dozens of events, banquets, expos, magazines, tourist publications, alternative publications, websites and auxiliary companies.

Taylor has also consulted with 12 other media companies and has served as a mentor to many publishers and advertising directors.

Taylor has served on numerous civic leadership roles in the greater Chattanooga community including the current Campaign Chair for the United Way of Greater Chattanooga, Mentor for the Principals Leadership Academy, and PTA President of Thrasher Elementary School. He has served on many community boards including the Children’s Discovery Museum, River Rocks festival, Chamber of Commerce Public Relations, and the Howard School Advisory Board.

Taylor is active in his church and enjoys trail running, rock-climbing and adventure obstacle races in his spare time.

He and his wife, Honey, currently live in Signal Mountain, Tennessee, and have three young children, Hope, Haley and Jackson.
Clockwise from top left: Charles Dunagin, retired publisher of the Enterprise-Journal in McComb; and W.C. “Dub” Shoemaker, retired publisher of The Star-Herald in Kosciusko, discuss the Freedom Summer of 1964 in a general session; Tim Kalich of The Greenwood Commonwealth accepts the Emmerich Award for Editorial Excellence, the third consecutive year he’s won the honor; a panel from the Sun Herald took part in a discussion on Freedom of Information and the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources scandal they covered; MPA President Jim Prince presents the Photo of the Year Award to Colin Krieger of The Columbus Packet; Clay and Krista McFerrin of The Sun-Sentinel say hello to Jace Patterson, son of Jason and Jamie Patterson of The Yazoo Herald.
Clockwise from top left: MPA Vice President Don Norman (left) presents the a plaque of appreciation to outgoing President Jim Prince; Reece Terry of the Daily Corinthian receives the MPA President's Award for his service to the Board of Directors; LPA President Norris Babin of the Plaquemines Gazette opens the convention with a word of welcome; convention delegates celebrate the close of the event with a sunset schooner cruise; convention sponsor C Spire kicked off the event with a press conference on its new fiber optic high-speed internet service; a capacity crowd attended the Friday evening party that featured entertainment by Cool Rayz.
Four simple rules for ads at top of the page

THANKS TO Tia Rae Stone for suggesting this column. She recently wrote:

“I attended a seminar one time where you told us your rules for top-of-the-page advertising. When you can, would you share them with us on your blog?”

I asked Tia if it was OK to handle her question in a hint or column instead. She agreed…and here we are.

For ads that appear at the top of a section front or anywhere on page 1, I have four simple rules:

1. WE DESIGN IT: Sorry, we’re not going to accept an ad designed by the advertiser’s daughter’s boyfriend, who took a quick course in Illustrator at the community college. These ads are at the top of the page and will draw considerable reader attention—we need to be sure they speak to the reader of the kind of quality work we can do. An over-designed ad will cheapen the look of your newspaper, and you don’t want that. Top-of-page ads should get the best work from your best designer. We design it.

2. TWENTY-FIVE WORDS OR FEWER: We’re not going to clutter the ad with excess verbiage. How do I define “excess verbiage”? When it comes to top-of-page ads, I define it as anything more than 25 words. It’s that simple. Within that limit, you can do a good job of creating a memorable message for your advertiser. The briefer, the better. Twenty-five words or fewer.

3. ONE IMAGE: Take a look at the ads in the illustration accompanying this column. The ad on the left is clean and does the job of illustrating the message: work boots 30% off. No need to show more boots, as in the ad on the right. Readers will assume that Big Bend Outfitters carries more than only one type or brand of work boots, don’tcha think? The single image allows for some negative breathing space in the ad and gives it focus. No need for more. One image. One.

4. CHARGE A HEFTY PREMIUM: Stop giving away some of your best space. Charge a good premium for the ad. Some publishers will double the price of an ad at the top of the page. Make it clear to the advertiser that this is space you’re not just willing to sell to anyone, that his ad will get more looks and generate more traffic. Charge a hefty premium.

So there ya have it: Ed’s arbitrary and capricious four rules for page 1 and top-of-page ads.

I’m convinced they work. Try them…I think you’ll be convinced, too!

Henninger Consulting has served hundreds of dailies, weeklies, business journals, church-affiliated newspapers and niche publications throughout the United States, Canada and Europe. Email Ed at edh@henningerconsulting

POSTAL

NNA: Saturday mail delivery to continue through 2015

WASHINGTON

Saturday mail service is likely to continue through 2014-15 as congressional leadership continues to debate terms for a sweeping postal reform bill.

At the end of June, the House of Representatives resoundingly approved by voice vote an appropriations bill covering the U.S. Postal Service for the coming fiscal year that included the mandate for Saturday delivery. The Postal Service, which announced in 2009 it would end Saturday delivery, continues to oppose Congress’ annual mandates for the service.

HR 5016 moves to the Senate for possible action before the Oct. 1 fiscal year begins, though appropriations bills often die before enactment because of the many riders attached to them by hopeful members of Congress who cannot get their favorite initiatives passed in regular order. If the Senate does not take up HR 5016, Congress would have to pass a continuing appropriation bill to fund the agencies covered by HR 5016. The six-day mandate is highly likely to be included in either bill, noted Tonda F. Rush, National Newspaper Association chief executive officer.

The House was the Postal Service’s best hope for killing the six-day service, with Rep. Darrell Issa, R-CA, chair of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, solidly in postal management’s corner. But most Democrats and many rural Republicans concerned about hurting rural areas with USPS’ continued service cuts squared off against Issa and won.

The Saturday delivery debate has effectively stalled postal reform bills, as USPS continues to argue that the $40 billion of debt on its balance sheet must be addressed with cost savings from service cuts.

From Page 6
October. The policy could set the standard throughout the state by creating a city policy to archive and maintain electronic communications. Mississippi Department of Archives and History laws require all local governments to permanently retain and archive all public records, including text messages and emails that elected officials and department heads make related to public business.

“Tupelo officials should be applauded for turning a negative situation into an opportunity to set a positive example for open government throughout Mississippi,” Ward said. “This newfound sunshine can encourage public access to electronic information in hundreds of local governments in violation of state law.”

The Mississippi Public Records Act of 1983 identifies all local government records as open to the public unless information qualifies as exempt from public access under the state open records law. Changes could include each City Council member using a Tupelo government email address for city business.

Mississippi State Archives and History officials have said they know of none of the nearly 400 local governments statewide currently in compliance with the law.

Founded in 1909 as Sigma Delta Chi, SPJ promotes the free flow of information vital to a well-informed citizenry; works to inspire and educate the next generation of journalists; and protects First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech and press. For more information about SPJ, please visit spj.org.
Newspapers still here, still making money

WASHINGTON

The sky is always falling and newspapers are always dying.

For more than a decade, that has been a common and constant refrain. While working at washingtonpost.com, the Guardian US, and now, the Newspaper Association of America, I have been asked frequently about the state of the industry as people search for the worst.

Though newspaper media is enjoying the largest audiences ever as well as continuing to play a unique and critical role in our communities, there is one fact that always tends to be obscured or outright ignored – newspapers are still making money and newspapers remain a good investment.

A year ago at this time, John Henry and Jeff Bezos made high-profile acquisitions of The Boston Globe and The Washington Post, respectively, which confirmed that newspapers are viable investment options with the ability to grow. Earlier this month, The Washington Post announced record web traffic for July as well as hiring more than 60 people in the first seven months of the year.

A company hiring 60 people in seven months sounds like a healthy one to me.

This summer, the newspaper industry has seen a wave of spin-offs, with Tribune and Gannett both forming publishing-only companies. E.W. Scripps and Journal Communications spun their combined publications off into a new company, Journal Media Group. This is an exciting time for the newspaper industry as these companies will now devote their undivided attention to their publications.

However, as with the investments last year, these spin-offs have been spun into more gloom and doom for the industry. It is simply not accurate.

In fact, buried in the depths of one particular article that signaled the death of newspapers is this gem of a sentence: “Newspapers continue to generate cash and solid earnings.”

Think about that for a moment – an industry that generates cash and solid earnings is on its death bed? I refuse to accept that.

What is true is our industry’s business model has changed dramatically in the past half-dozen years. In 2007, 80% of newspaper media revenue was generated from advertising. In 2013, less than half of total revenue (46%) was from advertising in the daily and Sunday print newspaper. Revenue from readers paying for print and digital news and information accounted for nearly three out of ten revenue dollars, up from less than two in ten in 2007. Income from new, non-traditional sources is now rising rapidly.

What is also true is that the public’s thirst for news keeps rising.

Data from the digital measurement firm comScore show that 161 million people visited newspaper websites in the month of March. We are witnessing audience increases across the country, from the aforementioned Washington Post to The Times-Picayune, which announced 5.6 million unique visitors to NOLA.com this July.

There is more demand than ever for news and journalism. There are also more competitors. There was no BuzzFeed or Facebook or Huffington Post 15 years ago. New digital channels offer consumers a dazzling array of options, all of which compete for time and attention. And advertisers face challenges in trying to catch up to these fragmenting audiences.

In my three years as CEO of NAA, I have witnessed an amazing transformation. Newspaper companies look drastically different in 2014 compared to 2011. There has been an increased focus on digital properties. Newspaper reporters and columnists have taken advantage of Twitter to build brands and large readerships. Innovation on the design side has led to beautiful works of long-form journalism, which include The Unforgotten by the Boston Globe and Breaking Ball from The Wall Street Journal that ran in July.

Newspaper companies are using the power of their brands to create new, non-traditional streams of revenues from event hosting to digital marketing.

The evolution of the newspaper industry continues every day. The explosion of mobile readership thanks to smartphones and tablets has caused newspapers to create new mobile strategies. There is increasing demand from readers for more targeted content, which has given rise to niche sites and blogs developed by newspapers devoted to special areas of interest, such as food, high school sports and fashion.

For me and many in the newspaper industry, it is a fascinating and exhilarating time. We are in the midst a dramatic, historic shift for an industry that has been around as long as the United States of America.

The world has changed and newspapers have changed. The notion of what a newspaper company is should change for the general public. It is no longer simply about print. It is about all platforms. People don’t think, “I’m reading the newspaper” when scrolling through nytimes.com but they should.

Despite all the changes, one thing remains the same – newspapers still make money.

Carolyn Little is president and CEO of the Newspaper Association of America.

Leland publisher named to Top 50 Business Women list

Stephanie Patton, editor and publisher of The Leland Progress, has been named one of the 50 Leading Business Women by the Mississippi Business Journal.

A member of the MPA Board of Directors, Patton formerly worked for Southern Living magazine before buying the Leland newspaper in 2010.

She is a graduate of the Mississippi Economic Council Leadership Mississippi program and will chair the 2015 class. She and her husband, Kenner, are partners in the Thompson House Bed and Breakfast in Leland.

Sun Herald breaks all-time high for unique visits to website

SunHerald.com hit an all-time high in July when the site reached more than 1 million monthly unique visitors. The stats are recorded by the newspaper’s analytics collection site, Omniture.

“It’s a significant milestone and it speaks to the rapid growth of our digital audience,” said Glen Nardi, Sun Herald publisher.

In June, which is a day shorter than July, the paper’s website finished with 861,020 unique visits.

The newspaper and its website are part of the McClatchy Co., Inc.

MPA exec elected secretary of Newspaper Association Managers

MPA’s executive director has been elected secretary of Newspaper Association Managers, Inc., a consortium of North American state, regional and national trade groups representing the newspaper industry.

Layne Bruce will serve a one-year term in the role. Also elected to officer positions were President Greg Sherill, Tennessee Press Association, and Vice President Lisa Hills, Minnesota Newspaper Association. Tom Newton, executive director of the California Newspaper Publishers Association, was elected to a three-year term on the board.
Bridges take selling from Point A to Point B

One of the most impressive bridges I’ve ever seen is the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. It is four and a half miles long and connects the eastern and western shores of Maryland. Rising high above the waves, it enables travelers to cross the bay in a fraction of the time the trip would take by boat.

Although most bridges aren’t quite as dramatic, they all serve the same purpose. They help us move from Point A to Point B, usually over water.

Words can be bridges, too. When we communicate, we use certain phrases to connect pieces of information. Most of these bridges are so subtle that we hardly notice them. But if we didn’t have them, communication would be as choppy as the waters under the Chesapeake Bay Bridge.

Language bridges are especially important in selling. Whether we are making a sales presentation or writing ad copy, bridges help us make the shift from the product to the person. Consider features and benefits. A feature belongs to the product (all-wheel drive, for instance), while a benefit belongs to the person using the product (better traction).

Without a bridge, a sales point is blunt and awkward. When you read or hear, “The vehicle has all-wheel drive. Get better traction,” it’s easy to sense the need for a few words to tie the two thoughts together.

Adding a bridge creates the smooth transition we need: “The vehicle has four-wheel drive. THIS WILL GIVE YOU better traction.”

Now the focus has shifted from the car to the person driving the car.

There are plenty of bridges you can use to connect features and benefits: as a result…this means that…due to this…this creates…this allows you to…this promotes…this generates…because of this. Unless you’re talking to a stilted and formal person, stay away from stilted and formal connectors like “therefore” and “hence.”

Although it is more common to put the feature before the benefit, sometimes you can switch the order. For example: “You’ll get better traction when you drive, BECAUSE this vehicle has all-wheel drive.”

Either way, a bridge is a bridge and will help you communicate more effectively.

In some cases, you may want to use a second bridge to lead to a more meaningful benefit: “The vehicle has all-wheel drive. THIS WILL GIVE YOU better traction. AND your passengers will feel safer riding with you, especially in bad weather.”

The second benefit is more important than the first, because it is emotional rather than logical. But you can’t convincingly arrive at the second benefit (feel safer) without starting with the first one (better traction). Obviously, this progression works only when there is a close relationship between the two benefits.

Word bridges serve two useful purposes. They separate features and benefits, helping audiences see each distinctly. And they link them together to create a smooth flow through sales points.

It’s all a matter of moving your message from Point A to Point B.
In 2010, President Barack Obama signed into law the Securing the Protection of Our Enduring and Established Constitutional Heritage Act (the "SPEECH Act"). Congress enacted the bill to address the problem of "libel tourism," which is when a defamation plaintiff brings suit against a defendant in a country hostile to the freedom of expression found in the First Amendment. The SPEECH Act explicitly bars U.S. state and federal courts from recognizing and enforcing foreign judgments unless that foreign nation's law satisfies First Amendment and due process considerations. The SPEECH Act is designed to ensure that individuals may enjoy the same free speech rights abroad as they have in the U.S.

In Trout Point Lodge, Ltd. v. Handshoe, the United States Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals became the first appellate court in the country to interpret the SPEECH Act applying its provisions to the Mississippi law of defamation. In Trout Point, Doug Handshoe, a Mississippi citizen and owner of a public affairs blog, published entries on Slabb.org alleging a link between the former President of Jefferson Parish, LA, who was indicted and plead guilty to bribery and theft, and two Canadian citizens, who owned a hotel in Nova Scotia, Canadian. The blog included, among other alleged offensive comments, that the two owners of Trout Point Lodge "had Champagne taste on a beer budget," and "worked as a unit to grift their way through life." As a result, plaintiffs filed suit in Nova Scotia, alleging that the content of Handshoe’s blog defamed their reputation, and sought general and punitive damages.

The Nova Scotia court issued a default judgment against Handshoe and granted plaintiffs approximately $427,000 in general and punitive damages. Trout Point Lodge, Ltd. filed the Nova Scotia judgment against Handshoe with the Circuit Court of Hancock County, Mississippi. Handshoe removed the suit to the United States District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi and argued that it was unenforceable under the SPEECH ACT. Chief Judge Guirola entered summary judgment in favor of Handshoe, and Trout Shoe appealed.

Affirming the district court’s ruling, the Fifth Circuit held that the Nova Scotia judgment is unrecognizable and unenforceable under the First Amendment and Mississippi law. The Court noted that “the SPEECH ACT provides that a domestic court ‘shall not recognize or enforce a foreign judgment for defamation,’ unless it satisfies both First Amendment and due process considerations.” The Court continued:

A party may enforce a foreign defamation judgment in a domestic court if either (A) the law of the foreign forum . . . provides free-speech protection that is coextensive with relevant domestic law, or (B) the facts . . . are sufficient to establish a defamation claim under domestic law.

The Fifth Circuit interpreted the SPEECH Act as being designed to prohibit plaintiffs from filing defamation suits in those foreign jurisdictions “that do not provide the full extent of free-speech protections to authors and publishers that are available in the United States. . . .” The Court noted that even though the comments in the blog were offensive, this alone cannot sustain an action for defamation because Mississippi law requires plaintiffs to prove the statements are false.

The Fifth Circuit’s ruling is significant in that it provides future U.S. defendants, sued in other countries, a peace of mind that Mississippi law most likely will not recognize a judgment unless defendants receive the same rights and privileges in foreign countries as they would in the United States. As a result, the SPEECH Act and Trout Point stand as a significant barrier to the enforcement of any judgments arising from, and hopefully a substantial deterrent to, libel tourism. The extensive rights that authors and publishers now enjoy under First Amendment should in the future be protected and preserved if a defamation plaintiff obtains a favorable judgment as a United States citizen in a foreign jurisdiction.

Anastasia Lampton is a graduate of the University of Mississippi and a third-year law student at the University of Mississippi Law School.
Mississippi Newspapers Asked To Help Vietnam ‘Wall of Faces’ Project

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Foundation project “Faces Never Forgotten” needs help obtaining missing photos of Vietnam veterans from Mississippi. These photos will help complete an electronic “Wall of Faces” in the new education center at the Vietnam Memorial Wall.

View the gallery in progress at vvmf.org/Wall-of-Faces. These are effective and moving tributes to fallen soldiers from your area.

MPA is requesting your help in locating a photo of those soldiers missing from our state.

A list of missing photos can be found by scanning the QR code at right.

If there is a soldier missing from your area, perhaps they attended one of your schools and you have a photo in a past yearbook? Some newspapers in other states have done a story on those missing in their area and received assistance from their readers.

MPA will collect the photos and provide as many missing photos to the VVMF as we receive them.

MPA is part of a national effort with other state newspaper associations to assist in this effort.

Help us complete a great tribute to our veterans that can be emulated by other state associations.

Please send any missing photos to MPA member services manager Monica Gilmer, mgilmer@mspress.org.

Scan the code above to your smartphone to download a list of veterans from Mississippi. Column C indicates whether the VVMF project has the veteran’s photo on file. You may also request a copy of this document from Monica Gilmer by emailing mgilmer@mspress.org.
Successful catalog formula can work for papers, too

As Brent Niemuth, direct marketing and branding expert, talked about his Three Ds of a successful direct-mail catalog, it immediately popped into my brain, “Newspapers could use this!”

Brent and I were in a meeting with a large direct retail company that needed help with its catalog. I was there to talk about how to save money on production by creating documents faster. Brent was there to talk about how to increase sales with better design and product positioning.

Brent is not just any “designer,” by the way. Google him. You’ll see he is one of the industry leaders and has helped many LARGE companies. (As I type this, he is in the Big Apple on a photo shoot for Jockey. He also is directing its rebranding.)

Brent’s Three Ds of a successful catalog are:

• Disrupt
• Delight
• Drive

To break it down further…

Disrupt

A catalog can be successful if it disrupts, or grabs the attention of, the potential customer. Being direct mail helps because the potential customer is forced to hold it while bringing in the mail. He or she has to look at it to either toss it in the recycle bin, put it on a table for later, or give it attention right then. At the very least every catalog has a chance for a glance.

Now look at the front page of your newspaper, more specifically, above the fold. If it were sitting on a rack in the local convenience store, would it disrupt? Are there enough “hooks” to catch the eye of someone passing by, or to pick it up if it’s sitting on a table at the local library or restaurant?

Now go look at USA Today’s front, above the fold. I just randomly picked some past issues and counted 10 headlines (plus kickers and subheads in many cases) as well as six pictures. I see Sports, Entertainment, Politics, Death and more, …all above the fold. USA Today is just one example of papers around the world doing this.

Once we’ve disrupted potential readers from their smart phones, digital signage and more. But it’s imperative to accomplish this first step, or there won’t be a second … or third.

Delight

Once your catalog has grabbed a potential customer’s attention, it needs to delight them, giving them a reason to keep it. Better still is if the cover, through photos, offerings or teasers, delights them enough to have them open it and look through the pages. That’s the goal. Put a lot of effort into a cover which delights so well they WANT to thumb through it. It’s even better if the catalog is desirable (delightful) enough to keep and/or pass along to others.

Drive

At some point, the potential customer is going to make a decision. A successful catalog has enough offerings of interest to drive them to the phone, website, app, or mail order form to place an order. An unsuccessful one ends up by the curb.

When I pitched this question recently at a conference where I was speaking, I picked up the closest newspaper I could find and held it up. There were two stories above the fold, with two photos to go with the stories.

Now go look at the front page of your newspaper, more specifically, above the fold. It’s possible it is pulled into the house and sits, or perhaps is glanced at, and then sent to the recycling bin. It’s important that every issue reaffirms their decision to renew their subscription.

The Three Ds apply to every ad as well. As your readers are looking through the paper, it’s important that the ads grab their eye away from stories — or disrupts. Each ad needs to have something that delights the reader into finding out more and must have a benefit that drives the potential consumer to act on the ad, whether getting in the car and driving to the store, picking up the phone, going online, or whatever.

If you can give advertisers the Three Ds, they can enjoy a higher return on the investment they make in your paper, which, in turn … well, you know how it works.

And as you look at newspapers — not just yours, but those around you — and as you travel and pick up papers, ask yourself the same question: “Did something on this front page grab my attention, disrupting what I was doing? Am I interested or delighted enough to walk over and pick it up, and is the content compelling enough to drive me to lay down a dollar for it?”

Perhaps someday this will become a category in the your newspaper associations’ Better Newspaper Contests…”And this year’s winner, in best meeting the Three Ds of Newspapers, is (insert paper here).”

Russell Viers has spoken at publishing events in 22 countries on technology topics, such as Adobe and Quark software. He also shares ideas on transitioning to multi-channel publishing, marketing and design. His email address is russell@russelviers.com.
Save the Date:
Mid-Winter returns
Jan. 30 in Jackson

The MPA Mid-Winter Conference will return to Jackson’s Hilton Hotel on County Line Road Jan. 30-31, 2015.

The two day event will focus on industry trends, advertising and media sales topics. MPA Vice President Don Norman, publisher of the Starkville Daily News and Daily Times Leader, will chair the event.

Topics currently planned for the event include an advertising basics seminar the afternoon of Jan. 30, as well as sessions on contract negotiations and competing with direct mail.

A special demonstration of the new online entry system for the MPA editorial and advertising contests will also be held during the event. the Better Newspaper Contest will move to an online PDF entry and judging system beginning with the editorial division in 2015.

As is customary, the event will be preceded by the MPA Education Foundation Celebrity Roast and will culminate with the presentation of the annual Better Newspaper Contest Advertising Awards. Registration will open in mid-November.

Kermit, newspapers and the Delta

MPA President Joel McNeece visits with Leland Progress Editor and Publisher Stephanie Patton at her Washington County office Sept. 4 as Kermit the Frog, a Leland native, listens in. Patton recently joined the MPA Board of Directors and was paid a visit by McNeece, editor and publisher of The Calhoun County Journal, and MPA Executive Director Layne Bruce.