

Marietta Monitor's focus is on community

The Marietta Monitor recently conducted a survey to learn what readers wanted to see in the weekly newspaper.

"As a community newspaper, I thought our focus should be on what our community wants us to cover and what they think is important to them," said Connor Choate, co-publisher of the Monitor.

Although he thought creating and implementing a survey would be difficult, Choate found a simple way to do it using Microsoft Forms.

Forms, which is free for those with Office 365 accounts, allows users to create custom surveys and see real-time results as they're submitted.

To develop questions for the survey, Choate searched the internet to see what other newspapers had done, then tailored the questions specifically for the Monitor.

He kept the survey short, limiting it to 15 questions.

The online only survey was promoted with a QR code in the newspaper, by email and on Facebook. Readers simply clicked on the QR code to respond.

"Something I noticed in our market is that our readers still really value a local newspaper. We can take the data from the survey to our advertisers and show them that a vast major-

ity of our readers prefer print editions and think advertising is effective," said Choate.

The survey also showed what sections of the newspaper readers are most interested in, which will allow the Monitor to make better informed decisions on coverage.

"We want to be producing content that our readers think is valuable," said Choate. "Some of the responses made us rethink what we've covering."

But it went beyond that.

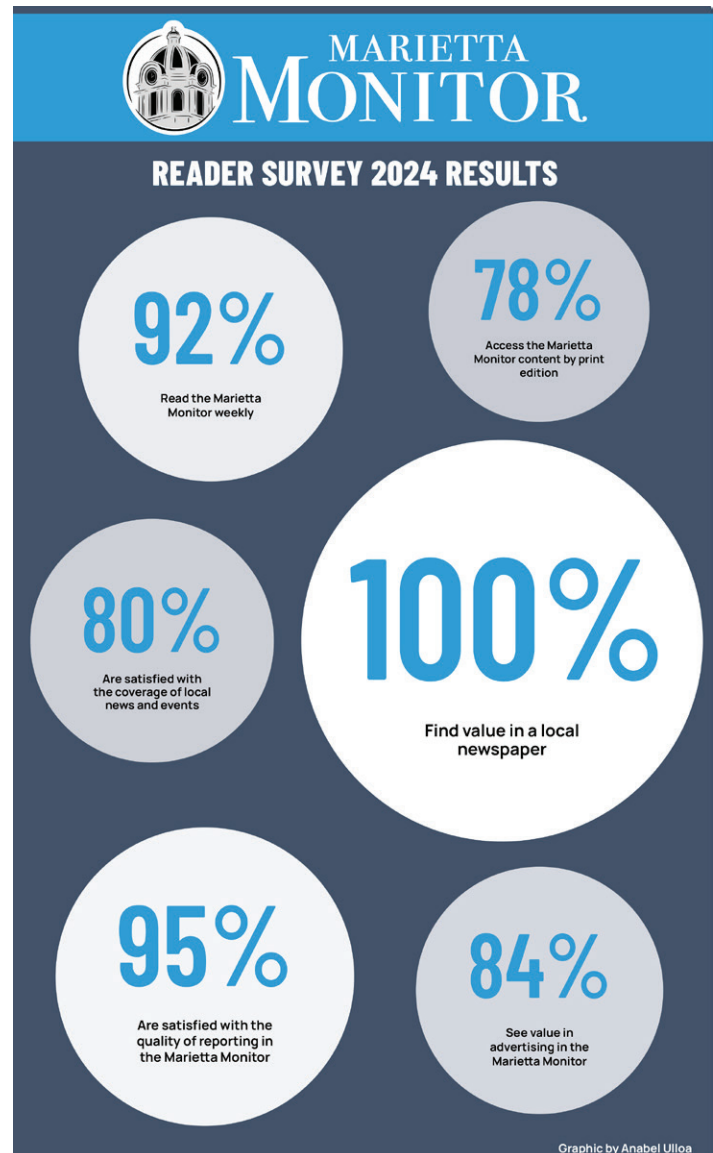
"We are a community newspaper first and foremost but sometimes it can seem like we're the ones making all the decisions and our readers don't get a say in what we're doing," Choate said.

The survey allowed readers to suggest ideas and tell the Monitor what they would like to see covered.

Some readers said they really like seeing the Monitor follow through with their recommendations.

"In our business we need to take a more analytical data driven approach to our newspapers," said Choate. "We have a service of providing local news, but in the end we've got to generate revenue. We're a business. We need to

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Results of the Marietta Monitor's 2024 reader survey were positive. A house ad shows that 100% of those responding find value in the local newspaper and 84 percent see value in advertising in the Marietta Monitor.

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From the President

By Sheila Gay

Publisher of the Woodward News • OPA President 2023-2024



These are my people

com·mu·ni·ty

Noun

1. A group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common.
2. A feeling of fellowship with others as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests and goals.

This has become the very fiber of our industry in more ways than one.

Our industry is a community. We share a common ground of news content, struggles and basically the same goal to serve our community.

A colleague of mine recently said to me, “these are my people, I have always just fit right in.”

At our recent OPA board

retreat in Woodward, I had this same feeling of fellowship.

I was very proud to show the board Woodward and all its hidden gems.

Even though they were visiting Woodward, it was almost like they had been a part of our community for a while.

Everyone just fit right in.

These are my people.



As of late, our Woodward community has stepped up in ways I can't begin to display my gratitude for.

When you are faced with choices and needs, it is sometimes hard to fathom where these needs will be filled.

Our communities have shown each of us time and time again that they are willing and able to be a thread to news.

From press releases to photos to sharing sports scores, our common interests and goals are pushed to the forefront each and every time.

I've talked about resources before and our communities are a valuable resource when asked.

We live in the same place and take up the same air. We fellowship and move our towns in a forward motion. Sometimes, there may be disagreements, but for the common good of the community we persevere.

Everyone may not always think they fit right in but they fit into the community.

These are my people.

OPA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

For more information on upcoming events, visit okpress.com/events

Thur., May 2, 2024

OKLAHOMA JOURNALISM HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2024 INDUCTION

Ten longtime journalists, a prominent First Amendment attorney and a Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient will be among those honored at the 54th annual luncheon and induction ceremony of the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame. The induction ceremony begins at 11:30 a.m. Thursday, May 2, in the Grand Ballroom of the Nigh University Center at the University of Central Oklahoma.

Fri. & Sat., June 7-8, 2024

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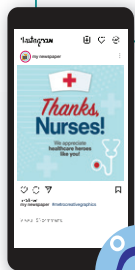
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Sapulpa Herald makes strides in 2023

The Sapulpa Herald built a new print facility in Kiefer last year that features a 10-unit Goss press.

The new press has the capability of printing a 16-page section with eight pages of full color. The state-of-the-art building utilizes fingerprint access to get in the doors, with glass offices and security cameras.

Since The Herald began production in the new building, it has picked up several new print customers.

Another milestone in 2023 was the launching of a new website (sapulpaherald.com) with a digital edition.

Overseeing the progress of The Herald is Publisher Darren Sumner, who recently celebrated 30 years in the newspaper industry.

"I grew up around the business and followed in my father's footsteps as my dad, Darrell Sumner, was a publisher for 50 years before retiring," said Darren.

When the family purchased a second newspaper in Missouri, Darren became the youngest publisher in the state.

After Darren's younger brother Derek graduated from Southeastern Oklahoma State,



The Sapulpa Herald's new print facility is located in Kiefer, Oklahoma.



Combined, Darren and Darrell Sumner have more than 90 years' of experience in the newspaper industry.

the brothers began working together. Eventually their older brother, Don, joined the family business.

The Sumner family published papers for 15 years in Missouri before purchasing

several newspapers in Oklahoma.

"I have spent the last 15 years in Sapulpa and made several good friends," said Darren Sumner.

"It is a great community and I enjoy being a part of it."

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These are questions answered by the attorneys for the OPA Legal Services Plan members in recent months. OPA members always need timely legal advice on issues related to publishing.

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ABOVE: Miss Altus Teen 2024 Harley Snapp performed a jazz dance for the talent portion at the Miss Altus Teen contest.

Photo by KATHLEEN GUILL, The Altus Time, February 9, 2024

LEFT: Enid's Tre Davis scores a dunk over U.S. Grant's Joshua Greene at Enid High School..

Photo by BILLY HEFTON, Enid News & Eagle, February 9, 2024

FEBRUARY 2024 WEEKLY WINNER:

KATHLEEN GUILL

The Altus Times

FEBRUARY 2024 DAILY, SEMI- AND TRI-WEEKLY WINNER:

BILLY HEFTON

Enid News & Eagle

The February 2024 contest was judged by a member of the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame.

View all winning photos and contest rules at **OkPress.com/OGE-Photo-Contest**

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For more information about the photo contest, visit okpress.com/oge-photo-contest



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Congress approves NNA language directing HHS advertising to local news organizations

Three years of planning and effort by the National Newspaper Association and its partners recently resulted in an emphatic recognition by Congress of the vital role community newspapers play in sharing health information to small and rural markets.

As part of the final batch of appropriations bills approved by the Senate on March 23, funding to the Department of Health and Human Services included report language directing the Secretary of HHS to use part of its public health paid advertising budget to reach small or rural markets through local media outlets, including small daily and weekly newspapers. President Joe Biden signed the bill.

"This effort gained traction during the COVID pandemic," said John Galer, NNA's Chair and Publisher of The Journal-News in Hillsboro, Illinois. "While we watched the U.S. government spend tens of millions of dollars in health outreach, almost nothing was spent in reaching many of our small and rural populations through their most-trusted source, the local newspaper.

"We quickly realized that we needed an all-out effort to educate federal officials on the vital role we play in our communities and that we needed to elicit the help of Congress to do so," Galer said. "This

was a very tall hill to climb, and we're very excited to be able to announce this achievement for our members and our industry."

Brett Wesner, President of Wesner Publications in Cordell, Oklahoma, Chair of NNA's Public Policy Oversight Committee and Chair of OPA's Government Relations Committee, singled out Representatives Tom Cole and Stephanie Bice for their contributions in this effort.

"Oklahoma is not only fortunate to have two members on the House Appropriations Committee, but also two members who are enthusiastic supporters of community journalism," Wesner said. "They took aggressive steps at every turn during this process to make sure NNA's language was included, and they deserve our deep appreciation."

Claudia James, Managing Director of Cogent Strategies, a public affairs firm that teamed with NNA on this project, will work to ensure that HHS fulfills its responsibilities under this bill, according to Lynne Lance, Executive Director of NNA.

"Our work with Cogent has been so in-sync with our association that we know now is a great time to celebrate the victory, but to not rest on our laurels," Lance said. "We still have a lot of work to do

to make sure the bill is fully implemented at the agency level."

NNA Chair Galer thanked Martha Diaz-Aszkenazy of the San Fernando Valley Sun, CA; Jeremy Gulban of Cherry-Road Media, Parsippany, NJ; Horace Moore, The Northwest Alabamian, Fayette, AL; and Tonda Rush, NNA's General Counsel, for their specific outreach to members of the House Appropriations Committee and advice on legislative language. NNA would also like to thank Jeb Bladine, Publisher of the News-Register, McMinnville, OR; Laurie Hieb, Executive Director, Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association; Layne Bruce, Executive Director, Mississippi Press Association; and Felicia Mason, Executive Director of the Alabama Press Association and Alabama publishers.

In addition to Reps. Cole and Bice, Wesner thanked the Appropriations Committees in both houses of Congress, with special recognition for Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS), Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL), and Rep. Robert Aderholt (R-AL).

The report language sent to the President reads as follows:

"The Committee recognizes the critical role local media plays in delivering public health messages to small or rural communities. There-

fore, the Committee directs the Secretary to ensure that local media in small or rural markets are part of the Federal public health advertising campaigns. To further this goal, the Committee directs the Secretary, in coordination with the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs and their media buyer contractors, to prioritize local news media in rural areas for HHS Federal advertising campaigns to reach citizens in these communities with key health messages. Local media should include newspapers, including non-daily newspapers, television, and radio. The Committee directs the Office of the Secretary to provide to the Committee within 90 days of enactment an update on the efforts of the Department to ensure that local media in rural areas are part of the Department's public health advertising campaigns, including a breakdown of money allocated to local media in rural areas for each of the health focused public affairs campaigns for fiscal year 2023."

The NNA Public Policy team will be working with the Cogent team to make sure HHS is following these guidelines. As always with government agencies, it will take some time to get things moving.



Learn the best practices for Public Notices at okpress.com/public-notice-training

The Oklahoma Press Association offers three videos that describe and illustrate the standards and best practices for publication of notices along with downloadable material.

Survey

Continued From Page 1

figure out who our readers are, what they respond to, and the only way we can do that is by creating a survey to figure out who our readers are.”

Choate is the fifth generation of his family to work at the Monitor. As co-publisher he works with his grandfather, Publisher Willis Choate, and grandmother, Editor Norene Choate.

Connor graduated from Western Kentucky University where he studied photojournalism. He interned for a couple of newspapers, then took a construction job while trying to find a photojournalism position. He stayed in construction for more than six years.

“But I think when your family has done something for so many generations you have ink in your blood,” he said.

He missed writing, work that felt worthwhile to him and being part of a community.

When he was laid off from

his construction job, he called his grandfather and asked if he could work at the Monitor for a week while he thought about what he was going to do.

“One week turned into two weeks, then three weeks, and then we thought maybe we should sell our house in Tennessee and move here,” Choate said.

A little more than two years ago, Choate and his family relocated to Marietta.

In Oklahoma he has found a community and a state that values newspapers.

“There’s a plethora of great stories out there needing to be told and it makes me really excited about the future of newspapers in Oklahoma and newspapers in general in the country.

“I encourage more people to get involved and see what their readers want, really take pride in being a community newspaper. We need community newspapers more now than ever before,” said Choate.



Connor Choate with his family: wife Grace holding 11-month-old Joseph, two-year-old Thomas, four-year-old Charli and six-year-old Margaux. Connor is co-publisher of the Marietta Monitor and a member of the Oklahoma Press Association Board of Directors.

Sequoyah County Times wins award

The Sequoyah County Times was recently named as the Sallisaw Chamber of Commerce’s March Member of the Month.

The Times was founded in June 1932 by Wheeler and Florence Mayo. The business remained a family operation, with Jim Mayo serving as publisher after his parents’ passing, before his son Jeff took over the role in 2016. Becky Mayo, Jim’s wife, served as business manager until her retirement in 2019.

Jeff and Beth moved to Sallisaw in 2003 with a plan for Jeff to take over management of the newspaper. Jeff’s family has been in newspaper publishing for five of six generations.

Today the company is owned by Jeff and his older brother, Jack, who serves as chief technology officer. It includes nine community newspapers in five eastern Oklahoma counties.

In addition to newspaper advertising, the Times has

a commercial printing arm, Sasquatch Printing. The company’s newest venture is in digital advertising.

Jeff is a past president of the Oklahoma Press Association and current chair of the National Newspaper Association.



Sallisaw Chamber of Commerce president Marley Abell (third from left) presents the March Member of the Month plaque to Sequoyah County Times publisher Jeff Mayo at a monthly membership meeting. Staff members of the Sequoyah County Times joining them are (from left) Melanie Potter, Lynn Adams, Beth Mayo, Carrie Carberry, Amie Cato-Remer, Jan Herod and Amber Nelson.

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Remembering our friends & colleagues who died the previous year.

Harry Leroy Hix, Jr.
March 24, 2023

Carl Ray Lewis II
March 6, 2023

John G. Lord
March 13, 2023

MAJOR GENERAL DONALD FORREST FERRELL, former owner and publisher of the Lincoln County News in Chandler, died March 15, 2024. He was 95.

Ferrell grew up in Oklahoma City and enlisted in the US Air Force in 1946 and would continue to be affiliated with the USAF until he retired in 1991.

After being honorably discharged from active duty in 1949, he became a student at Oklahoma State University, graduating in 1953 with a degree in journalism.

Ferrell met his future wife, Sally Bourne, in 1952. They were married on August 29, 1953. At the time, Don was a reporter for The Daily Oklahoman. He later worked on newspapers in Muskogee and Henryetta before returning to The Oklahoman in 1954.

In 1962, Don and Sally purchased The Lincoln County News. They published the weekly newspaper until 1988. During that period, Don served a term as president of the Oklahoma Press Association and later as president of the Oklahoma Newspaper Foundation.

In 1985, Don was inducted into the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame.

During his presidency of the Oklahoma Press Association in 1984, the newspaper

was heavily damaged in an arson fire.

The newspaper never missed an edition, thanks in large part to the outpouring of help from numerous OPA members. The following year the newspaper moved back into its renovated and updated building, which had been resurrected from the fire.

Don joined the Oklahoma Air National Guard in 1954. He retired from the Guard in 1991 with the rank of major general. His last assignment was as the state adjutant general, in command of both the Army and Air Guard.

Don also had a political career. He was a member of the Oklahoma State Senate from 1966 until 1974 and was Republican floor leader the last two years.

He served as Governor Henry Bellmon's press secretary in 1965 and 1966. Don was active in Bellmon's campaign for the US Senate in 1968 and 1974 and served on his senate staff in Oklahoma and Washington, D.C. for several years. In 1980, Don and Sally moved to Washington during Bellmon's last year in office. As neither computers nor cell phones yet existed, Don called the newspaper staff back home on the telephone every week and dictated his column.

After the Oklahoma City bombing, Don was appointed by President Clinton

to a nine-member board of trustees who coordinated the construction and operation of the Oklahoma City National Memorial. He also was the first chairman of the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism and served in that capacity for six years.

Don and Sally restored several historic buildings in Chandler over the years. In 2014, Preservation Oklahoma awarded them with the Lifetime Achievement Award for their outstanding work.

In 1990, Oklahoma State University recognized Don as a Distinguished Alumnus.

Don was active in the community, serving on the Chandler public library board; as past president of the Lincoln County Historical Society; and for 42 years on the board of directors of the Union Bank in Chandler. He was named Citizen of the Year by the Chandler Chamber of Commerce in 2012.

Don is survived by his wife Sally of Chandler; daughter Cynthia Ferrell Ashwood of Chandler; two grandchildren and one great-grandson.

CAROLYN NELL (MEYERS) MCBRIDE, publisher of the Anadarko Daily News, died March 28, 2024. She was 88.

Carolyn was born February 11, 1936, in Oklahoma City. She attended school in Anadarko, graduating in 1954, and then attended Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford for one year.

After returning to Anadarko, Carolyn took a job at the county school superintendent's office. It was there she met her future husband, Joe McBride Jr.

As the story goes, in 1955 Joe was working for his father's printing company and delivered some logbooks to the county superintendent's office and saw the "prettiest girl I'd ever seen." It was love at first sight for both.

The couple were married July 20, 1957, and welcomed three daughters to their family in the next few years.

In late 1959, the couple purchased a

house and 20 acres of land in Anadarko where they made their permanent home.

Carolyn went to work for the family business in 1968 where she ran the Anadarko Printing & Office Supply and helped at the Anadarko Daily News where Joe was general manager.

After the printing office was sold, Carolyn went to work full-time at the newspaper office serving as administrator in charge of all bookwork and payroll for the company. She became involved with helping set up a bookkeeping/payroll computer program specific for newspapers.

She was named editor of the paper after long-time Anadarko Daily News editor Jack Stone retired, was associate publisher after Joe retired, and later became editor/publisher again, a position she held until her death.

Carolyn's "Point of View" column was

very popular with Daily News readers. She started the weekly column in the late 1980s and continued it until late 2023.

She served her community as a member of the Anadarko Chamber of Commerce, a member and chairman of the Anadarko Hospital Board, and member and secretary of the board of the National Hall of Fame for Famous American Indians in Anadarko. She also was on the board for the Oklahoma Press Association's insurance program. Tourism in Anadarko was one of her greatest passions. Carolyn started The Anadarko Daily News Visitors Guide, which had many stories of early-day Anadarko and Caddo County.

Carolyn is survived by daughters JoNell McBride-Thomas and Carla McBride Alexander, both of Anadarko; her sister Sandra Hill of Tulsa; and two grandsons.

US Postal Service announces plan to raise rates on July 14

For the second time in 2024, the US Postal Service is proposing rate increases that would bump the cost of periodicals nearly 10 percent.

Outside County price changes for Periodicals would see a 9.758% increase; Inside County would increase 9.701%. Overall, the increase would be 9.754%.

The rate increase means newspapers would be paying about 50 percent more for postage than they did three years ago, according to the National Newspaper Association.

"This increase, though

excessive, was not surprising," said National Newspaper Association Chair John Galer of The Journal-News in Hillsboro, Illinois. "The model of continuing to raise rates while providing intensely bad service is becoming increasingly problematic for newspapers and our readers around the country."

The new rates also include a 5-cent increase in the price of a First Class Mail Forever stamp from 68 cents to 73 cents.

The proposed increases would need to be approved by the Postal Regulatory Commission.

CNHI journalism award winners announced

The annual Best of CNHI journalism award winners were announced last month.

The Tahlequah Daily Press in Oklahoma earned first place in the Division II Newspaper of the Year competition for its local news coverage, strong editorials and commentary, coverage of the Cherokee National headquarters and other tribal news. Judges also commended the paper's features and enterprise reporting.

It was the fifth year in a row for the Daily Press to win Newspaper of the Year after the contest was consolidated from three divisions to two.

Kim Poindexter, executive editor of the Tahlequah Daily

Press, was named Division II Columnist of the Year.

Other Oklahoma CNHI winners were Kevin Green of the Claremore Progress, Division II Sports Reporter of the Year; and Derek Hatridge of McAlester News-Capital, Division II Sports Columnist of the Year.

The Daily Item in Sunbury, Pennsylvania, received the Newspaper of the Year top honor in Division I for CNHI's largest daily newspapers.

Newsrooms from CNHI newspapers in 22 states competed in the annual contest with work from 2023.

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OPA newspapers keeping readers informed



Looking Them Over

by Rod Serfoss
rserfoss@okpress.com

A decades long tradition of quality news coverage is still a staple of the *Countywide & Sun* in Tecumseh. The newspaper does an exceptional job covering news and sports in Pottawatomie County.

The local editorials and personal columns are a weekly treat for *Countywide & Sun* readers.



Patti Poteete's column titled "Sanity's Last Stand" is a fun and entertaining part of the newspaper. Recent headlines that lured readers to her column included, "Bathing Suit Shopping? Bring Your Own Mirror," and "Vacations In The Campervan, Not Easy."

I especially like the *Sun's* ad, "Trusted News & Information When You Need It The Most – *The Countywide and Sun*".

People living in Tuttle should be proud to have a quality newspaper like *The Tuttle Times*.

The Times has many well written stories and high-quality pictures of events in Tuttle and the communities it serves in the western region of the Oklahoma City metropolitan area.

The well-designed pages have an excellent balance of color and white space, and the press work on the printed editions is superb. All of this makes the paper very inviting to readers.

From front to back, *The Times* also has scores of well-designed ads that help generate revenue for both advertisers' businesses and the newspaper.

Its editions typically included more than 50 stories, over 40 pictures, and nearly 75 display ads (not including classifieds and legal notices).

The Weatherford Daily News published an excellent tribute to the life and legacy of its hometown hero, Astronaut Gen. Thomas P. Stafford, following his death in March.

The front-page layout with a large photograph showing the moon in the foreground



with the earth rising in the distance and the quote from Astronaut Stafford, "I Grew Up In Western Oklahoma During The Dust Bowl And Depression And I Flew To The Moon. I'm Living Proof That Nothing Is Impossible."

The presentation caused readers to pause and remember the life of their hometown icon.

In all, there were four pages of stories, pictures and tributes from local people who knew him personally.

On a side note, Weatherford is the home of the Thomas P. Stafford Air and Space Museum. It is an affiliate of the Smithsonian and is considered one of the finest and most comprehensive air and space museums in the central United States. It is a must-see destination.

The Durant Democrat has a good balance of hard news, feature stories, sports and storytelling pictures.

The story and pictures by *Democrat* reporter Matt Swearengen in its March 22 edition did an excellent job connecting readers to five Silo Middle School students who were in a school bus that was involved in a head on collision crash and were now being recognized as heroes.

Swearengen's story did a superb job in connecting readers with school officials and the five students being praised for their heroic actions in evacuating everyone from the bus following the collision.

The news pages, which included a compelling front-page picture of the five heroes looking at the damaged bus, was presented in a well-designed package.

Looking over several issues of the *Tahlequah Daily Press*, it becomes easy to understand the newspaper's connection to the community it serves.

In every edition I found good and positive news outweighs the bad in Tahlequah. But that doesn't mean crime news isn't reported in the *Daily Press*.

It appears the *Daily Press*

strives to look just as hard for good news as it does for the bad.

If you want to know the pulse of this northeast Oklahoma town, there isn't a better place to look than the *Tahlequah Daily Press*.

On the topic of balancing news coverage, I continue to hear from newspapers that had the courage to ask their readers what they want to see in the paper.

What many are learning is people are tired of being bombarded with bad news and hunger to read more positive stories about local people, businesses and events.

Readers are saying they want to know what is going on, but they don't want the front page of every edition filled with crime, fire and accidents stories.

Asking the customer what they want and then delivering it is nothing new to other businesses. It only makes sense for newspapers to do the same.

TOP FIVE HEADLINES:

5. **Cow Pie Bingo March 30 in Gracemont**
– *The Anadarko Daily News*
4. **EXTRA! EXTRA! Bulldogs Make History**
– *The Sentinel Leader*
3. **Kangaroo killed on rural highway**
– *Sequoyah County Times*
2. **Time to gather the wagons**
– *The Kingfisher Times & Free Press*
1. **Opposition 1, Verizon 0**
– *Sapulpa Herald*

Rod Serfoss, OPA Business Consultant, looks over OPA member publications for a monthly column, "Looking Them Over." To contact Serfoss, email rserfoss@okpress.com.

Good backups critical to weather spring weather



Computer Notes

from the road
by Wilma Newby
wnewby@okpress.com

Spring is always a good time to look over your office with an eye for preparedness.

We have been working a lot lately to make sure servers are backed up — and that the most important computers in the office have a way to be easily replaced if they were to go down.

Take a good look around your office for computers plugged straight into the wall without surge protectors and then correct that problem.

A good place to look for inexpensive surge protectors is Walmart. But if your town doesn't have a big box store, check out your local hardware store or shop online. I've even seen these devices at grocery stores.

Check the surge protector packaging to make sure it's at least 600 joules; 1200 is better if you can afford it. Devices with reset buttons are the best because there is an actual breaker between the computer and the power surge.

The Lvetek 1680 joules multi plug on Amazon is only \$10; that's a lot cheaper than a new computer. The Nuetsa surge protector with 2700 joules, 8 outlets, 4 USB ports and a 6-foot power cord is only \$16.

An offsite backup of your critical computers and

servers is a necessity. This is also a good time to do minor updates.

Apple computers use Time Machine to back up or restore Macs. Use one large external hard drive to back up all the Macs in the office. Then, that drive can be put in a safe or storm shelter for safety. Disk Utility will allow you to change the format of a drive.

The Time Machine backup lets you recover the operating system in a bad crash. If the computer has MacOS High Sierra (10.13), released in 2017, & has the Apple File System (APFS) proprietary drive format system. Older computers use Mac OS Extended (Journaled) or HFS+. The change to APFS was made to better utilize solid state drives.

Backing up your files to a cloud service is great for file recovery in a crash but often the backup will not include a copy of the operating system. This makes it harder to recover the computer and is another reason to use Time Machine on Macs.

Windows 10/11 computers have File History, located in Settings, for backup search. However, it's limited when backing up the operating system to an external drive. Instead, use Backup and Restore (Windows 7). It is found by searching for **Control panel > Backup and Restore (Windows 7)**.

Several third party software vendors have tried to make the

Windows backup easier to use. One to look at is the EaseUS Todo Backup tool for \$29.95 per year. It also has a one-time purchase Mac backup tool for the same price.

Another one to look at for a reliable backup of Windows computers is R-Drive Image for \$44.95. It's top rated, easy to use and can directly backup images to a cloud resource like Google Drive, Dropbox or OneDrive.

If the computer is mission critical, it should be backed up in two places that can be easily accessed no matter if the internet is down or the computer is dead.

AI IN NEWSPAPERS

Many publishers are actively experimenting with ChatGPT for story creation. Some say they love its ability to turn a bunch of stats into a readable story.

Recently ChatGPT began letting users ask questions for free with no account creation required. That's most likely due to the competition from Microsoft's Copilot, which is included on newer computers and in the Edge browser. Other competition comes from Gemini, Ernie Bot, Llama, Claude, and Grok. Several of these pull data from different parts of the internet. It's good to have an idea about where the AI is getting its data and how old it is. ChatGPT was last updated in 2022.

AI is changing the way

publishers work. All the publishers I talked to about this say they have to carefully read and edit the stories ChatGPT gives back to them. Some say the words are above the reading level of their readers.

Others say AI does a better job than they would at writing particular types of stories such as sports where the content is heavily stat related.

If your paper is using the Adobe Creative Cloud software it is easy to try their AI product called Firefly for ad building. It is a web based program that uses photos with no copyright to generate the requests. Adobe is trying to take the high road in this area.

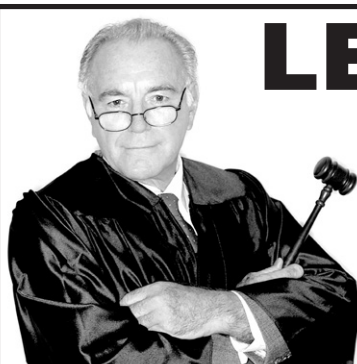
Set aside some extra time for building the ad, as getting used to the AI picture generation program can take a little time. The interface is more like Canva than older Adobe programs.

Unlike Canva, the Firefly program is just creating images to be downloaded and used in ads built in a design program. At first it's best to learn from the suggestions that come up as you type in your request. This is a good way to learn how to use an AI program.

ChatGPT is good at coming up with ad copy. Adding Firefly for the art could quickly create some unique ads for your paper.

Adobe and Microsoft are embedding AI into their programs. Many older computers can't keep up. As we become more dependent on the Internet for newspaper creation, faster computers will be needed for the new AI.

OPA Computer Consultant Wilma Newby's column is brought to you by the Oklahoma Advertising Network (OAN). For more information on the OAN program, contact Oklahoma Press Service at (405) 499-0020.



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Every salesperson needs a parachute

By John Foust
Greensboro, NC

Anthony is a veteran ad salesperson with a common sense philosophy. “You’ve got to have a parachute,” he told me. “When you’re in the middle of a presentation, and you hit an unexpected glitch, your prospect throws you a curve or you can’t think of what to say next, that’s when you use your parachute.”

He explained that the purpose of his kind of parachute is to pull a salesperson out of trouble and keep the conversation moving in the right direction.

“The beauty of a well-stated parachute is that the other person doesn’t know it’s a rescue technique. It seems like it is a continuation of the regular conversation. There are as many parachute possibilities as there are salespeople. The one I most rely on is benefits – not the benefits of running ads in my paper, but the benefits

offered by that particular advertiser.”

Based on my conversation with Anthony, four points come to mind:

1. START WITH BENEFITS.

“The way I see it, there are a couple of advantages in focusing on benefits,” he said. “First, it keeps the advertiser talking, and one topic that every advertiser loves to talk about is their products and services. The second advantage is that learning more about their benefits provides me with valuable details to use in their ads.

2. BRIDGE TO THE TARGET AUDIENCE.

According to Anthony, target audiences and benefits are so closely connected that they can be mentioned together. “If you’re dealing with experienced prospects, it’s a simple shift between the two areas. A big key is to help them visu-

alize a smaller part of a larger group of people.”

3. ASK QUESTIONS.

By asking questions, you can direct the discussion. In most cases, the person asking the questions is in control of the conversation – and that’s a welcome confidence builder. “When the other person does most of the talking, it relieves pressure on the salesperson,” he explained. “Plus, it provides you with a lot of information you can use. I might ask something like, ‘What are some ways that people can benefit from the XYZ Widget?’ Or – if benefits have already been discussed – ‘What are some additional ways that people can benefit?’

“From that point, it’s easy to expand the discussion to target audiences with a question like, ‘And what types of people are most likely to need or appreciate those benefits?’ That can put everything back on track again.”

4. IT’S OKAY TO ASK ABOUT AUDIENCES FIRST.

“Sometimes it’s more practical to start with audiences, then talk about meaningful benefits,” he said. “For example, I might ask, ‘What types of people are likely to be interested in this model of Widget?’ Then I can ask, ‘What are the benefits that will appeal to that group?’ Benefits and audiences provide such easy transitions that there’s no trouble going back and forth between the two.”

Anthony’s technique makes a lot of sense. When you feel like your sales presentation is losing altitude, the whole idea of a parachute is to give you a soft landing.

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Column: **DAVID STRINGER**, *The Lawton Constitution*

FEBRUARY EDITORIAL WINNER (*Excerpts from editorial. Read entire editorial at okpress.com/ong-contest*)

KIM POINDEXTER, *Tahlequah Daily Press*

Woods' 'filth' label for LGBTQ Okies is source of shame

State Sen. Tom Woods' characterization of LGBTQ+ Oklahomans as "filth," and his followup statement that his constituents "don't want them," could be described in many ways, but most aren't fit for a family newspaper.

Woods, during a legislative update Friday morning, was responding to a question from a local woman who wanted to know why LGBTQ+ people are being targeted by the Legislature. Her concern was prompted by the recent death of a 16-year-old non binary Owasso student. Nex Benedict had been bullied at school, and although preliminary reports suggest an alleged beating in a girls' bathroom wasn't the cause of death, many people – including Nex's parents – have questions.

Whatever the ultimate reason for the teen's demise, the prior bullying constituted a bomb ready to explode. And Woods lit the fuse.

A couple of decades ago, it would be shocking if someone in Woods' position made such a revolting statement – one that could potentially incite like-minded individuals to carry out violence against anyone they "don't want." In modern times, it evokes images from the past of guys wearing

hoods and white sheets, with brown dress shoes peeking from beneath.

Since that time, with the advent of social media and the recent tendency of certain politicians to overtly coax their followers into subversive action, perhaps no one should be surprised that Woods revealed his brutal innermost thoughts. But it's difficult to believe the assessment of his constituents is correct, and that they'd like all LGBTQ+ people run out of his entire district on a rail – even innocent teens, who desperately need the support of their families and communities.

Would every single person in Adair County grab pitchforks and torches and go after LGBTQ+ folks who have done nothing whatsoever to hurt anyone else? How about some of those whom Woods represents in Sequoyah and Delaware counties? Without a sweeping door-to-door canvass, it would be difficult to determine, but it can almost certainly be said that while an alarming number of Cherokee County residents might feel that way, most are compassionate human beings. Even those who view LGBTQ+ people as "sinners" would not foment hate against them.

FEBRUARY COLUMN WINNER

DAVID STRINGER, *The Lawton Constitution*

A hammer for every nail

I attribute most of the division in today's political climate to a zero sum-game played by the extremists. It's rarely "Let's see if we can work together to find a solution," but more likely "I have to win and you have to lose. Not only that, but you must be destroyed in the process."

A significant problem is the loss of "nuance" when discussing any political issue. Nuance is what allows us to see shades of gray instead of everything in a binary black or white universe that holds no connection to reality.

I can support a strong border policy, demanding those who enter the country do so legally and within the rules, and not be racist or isolationist.

I can believe Joe Biden may be past his prime, and not be "ageist".

I can strongly disagree with former president Trump that Russia "can do whatever the hell it wants" and not be a member of the "liberal media elite" (whatever the heck that means).

I can support Israel as a nation, see Hamas as a terrorist organization and not be anti-Palestinian.

I can be pro-Second Amendment, yet still question whether civilians should have armor piercing rounds, high capacity

magazines and be in favor of ownership restrictions applied to those with mental incapacity.

I can support the police, and still question the "militarization" of law enforcement, rolling up on a scene in up-armored vehicles, armed to the teeth in a situation in which the threat is minimal.

I can support emerging green technologies, yet still drive a fossil-fueled vehicle because I know that isn't just some economic switch you can flip and magically eliminate climate change.

I can choose to get a vaccine while allowing those who are opposed to make their own personal choice.

I can make a choice as to what I believe, but allow you the freedom to believe differently. I may try to convince you of my point of view (and you can do the same), but that doesn't require I vilify you personally if you disagree with me.

In my mind, that type of subtlety is one of the more resplendent aspects in our society, and too much missing from the current discourse.

Context matters. So does nuance. It keeps you from seeing every problem as a nail and you need to get the biggest hammer.



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