

USPS discusses Tulsa conversion

About 200 people attended a March 7 public hearing on a recommendation to repurpose the U.S. Postal Service Processing and Distribution Center in Tulsa.

The proposal includes shipping mail received at the Tulsa facility to Oklahoma City for processing.

Many at the meeting held signs that said “Save Our Service.”

USPS officials said the Tulsa Processing and Distribution Center facility would remain open for other Postal Service uses.

The move is part of the Postal Service’s “Delivering for America” plan, a \$40

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Unconventional Interview Questions: *How to make candidates think on the spot*

By JIM PUMARLO

*Reprinted with permission of
Jim Pumarlo and the
National Newspaper Association*

Attention newsrooms: It’s time to get serious about 2024 elections coverage. I hear the collective groan. The reaction is likely shaded by the strident national contests and their seemingly never-ending campaign cycles.

Community newspapers must toss aside the cynicism of the national political scene and focus on what they do best: Help readers make informed decisions at the polls, particularly for candidates seeking seats on city councils, school boards, county

boards and other local elective offices.

You are in excellent position to collect and present information in a clear, meaningful manner — all in the interest of advancing democracy.

Election coverage is a demanding responsibility, especially as many newsrooms deal with diminished resources. Every aspect is scrutinized — from candidate profiles and debate coverage to editorial endorsements and treatment of letters to the editor to how results are reported.

The enormity of the task requires that staffs thoroughly plan all the elements of coverage. The better the

organization, the easier it will be to handle the unexpected circumstances.

Candidate interviews are at the heart of substantive coverage. Each race has its specific issues. Many candidates will be prepped for the usual queries, often aided by written notes. Be attentive to their answers for appropriate follow-up.

But also think of unorthodox questions to force candidates to think on the spot and delve into territory not typically covered at the usual candidate forums.

Avoid questions that cannot be answered by a simple “yes” or “no” without elaboration.

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JUNE 7-8,
2024

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From the President

By Sheila Gay

Publisher of the Woodward News • OPA President 2023-2024



I've been told that I have a "squirrel" mind.

I think of one thing and then move to the next and hopefully circle back to a solution that works in the meantime.

Which brought to mind this fun quote I had seen back in my running days:

"I got up this morning and ran around the block 5 times. Then I got tired, so I picked up the block and put it back into the toy box."

I would imagine this is how most of us feel on most days that end in the word day.

I believe I am an out of the box thinker (aside from the squirrel thing) and can bring a solution to most the issues that arise. As I am also sure most of us have that talent in our industry as well. But there are those days that we feel like we've done everything we could possibly think of and there was still no solution. The block just seems heavy, un-moving and at times grounded with cement.

Ok, this is not supposed to be a negative column so bear with me.

When we find ourselves looking for ideas, answers and solutions, hopefully we turn to resources we have available to us.

I recently went to an event at our local library with no intent to actually get a library card. As I was walking around, I noticed all of the new reading nooks along with computers for all age levels.

I thought what a cool chill place to just sit and read, along with all the new shiny books on display just waiting to be read!

Before I knew it, I was

getting a library card at age 55 and a "date with a book" I had no idea the genre of but was extremely excited to read!

The 347 pages seemed a little daunting but that's another story for another time (squirrel). Oh, and reading is on my 2024 bingo goals card (squirrel).

Oh, I had a library card back when I was younger and an avid reader, but I had not applied for one since all of the change and technology has increased what libraries offer today for FREE.

What really had me was all of the apps and resources available to me outside of the normal reading material. From actual books, to audible, to videos/movies on several platforms available to download to tablets or iPhones, it's incredible and I'm having the best time!

EARN YOUR PRESS PASS

Which brings me to this point and the one word that ties everything together is **RESOURCES**.

Here's the point: OPA has made it possible for journalists to participate in the free "Earn Your Press Pass" through online training.

The program is designed to teach journalism fundamentals to new reporters with little to no experience, so they learn to create valuable news coverage.

Recruiting a new experienced reporter can be difficult, but if you find someone that wants to write and cover their community, then this course will teach them the journalism basics to succeed. Long-time reporters may even pick up a few tips!

A variety of practical course topics are offered. Each training video is around 10 minutes in length; and the full course is approximately eight hours. Some PDF materials are also available with certain courses so you can print or save them for easy reference.

Courses include: Interviewing, First Amendment, Effective Editing, Associated Press Style, Headline Style, Finding Stories, Newspaper Jargon, Simple Photography, Journalism Ethics, Writing a Story, Covering a Meeting, and more.

What a valuable resource and tool for OPA members to have at our fingertips.

If you're ready to review and begin training, email Alexis Martin at OPA, amartin@okpress.com.

OPA also offers training webinars, advertising ideas and contests!

So, bringing it back to the block scenario (remember I'm a squirrel), the block can become tiresome as we run around it looking for solutions and we may give up and put it back in the toy box.

But what if we took a better look at resources available and leave the block out of the box?

All of the solutions to fixing the block could be right in front of us.

If none of this works and as an absolute last resort, throw the block in a river, it's taking up too much time!

Have a great month!

OPA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

For more information on upcoming events, visit

okpress.com/events

Thur., April 11, 2024

NAVIGATING THE AI LANDSCAPE IN JOURNALISM

Dive into the dynamic world of Artificial Intelligence (AI) with Dwayne Desaulniers, as he demystifies the core concepts of AI, explains its mechanisms and guides you on initiating your AI journey.

Thur., April 18, 2024

BOOST YOUR BRAND TRUST AND SEO WITH AUTHOR PROFILES

Let's dive into the SEO advantages and how these pages establish your business as an industry leader.

Thur., May 2, 2024

OKLAHOMA JOURNALISM HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2024 INDUCTION

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

2024 OPA ANNUAL CONVENTION

Mark your calendar and plan to attend OPA's convention.

Got News?

Share news about your newspaper with other OPA members!

If you have a new hire, sales promotion, contest, or have received an award or honor tell us about it so we can put it in The Oklahoma Publisher.

Send your news or story ideas to aanderson@okpress.com or call 405-499-0020

Final chapter for Hooker Advance culminates in 120 year celebration



The Hooker Advance staff, from left, Billye Fischer, Sheila Blankenship and Karla Huxman, celebrate 120 years of the local newspaper on Feb. 21.

The Hooker Advance weekly newspaper marked a milestone of 120 years of continuous publication of local news, photos and advertising last month.

Sadly, it is the end of its publication. Publisher Sheila Blankenship has had the weekly newspaper for sale for more than 15 years but without a buyer, the longtime weekly

paper ceased publication on March 7.

The 120th anniversary was still celebrated with a big 120th birthday bash at the Hooker American Legion Hall on February 21.

"It was wonderful to be able to observe this occasion with so many of our faithful readers, students, friends and

neighbors," said Advance Publisher Sheila Blankenship.

The event was celebrated with barbecue, birthday cake and ice cream. The more than 200 who attended the event had a chance to purchase special centennial Advance editions from 2004, register for door prizes, donate to the Hooker Historical Society, look over the Advance office and staff photos from the past 12 decades, and share memories of their hometown paper.

"I am very proud of how The Advance has always focused on our local and area families and what is important to them; and of how hard we have worked to keep our readers informed on the who, what, where, when, why and how," Blankenship said.

"It has always been an amazing blessing to me to be able to support our community."

Blankenship, who has been publisher since 1995, started working at the Advance two days after graduating from the Oklahoma State University School of Journalism in May 1980.

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- Can I photograph minors without consent?
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- Can I report inaccurate testimony given in open court?
- What are the laws about liquor advertising?

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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See www.OkPress.com/LSP or contact Mark Thomas
at (405) 499-0033 or toll-free in Oklahoma 1-888-815-2672 today!



OG+E[®] PHOTO CONTEST



ABOVE: Tyler Holsapple prepares to ride his skateboard at the Enid Skate Park.

Photo by BILLY HEFTON, *Enid News & Eagle*, January 31, 2024

LEFT: Mariah Dightman to the bucket against Harrah.

Photo by MIKE MONAHAN, *Guthrie News Leader*, January 24, 2024

JANUARY 2024 WEEKLY WINNER:

MIKE MONAHAN

Guthrie News Leader

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

BILLY HEFTON

Enid News & Eagle

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

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

Enter and Win a \$100 Check from OGE ENERGY CORP.

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



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Joyce Carney passes the torch

Joyce Carney has been doing what she loves most — working for newspapers — for more than 50 years.

For the last 42 of those 50 years, she has been publisher of The Country Connection News in Eakly.

Just last year she was inducted into the Oklahoma Press Association's Half Century Club.

"That's a big deal!" said Carney. "I got to sit at the President's table and watch a video of myself on a big screen."

But many of her friends in the newspaper business weren't there to see her receive the award. They had retired.

Carney was ready to slow down but wanted to pass her newspaper on to someone who would love her readers and advertisers like she did.

That's where Cory Cart comes in. Carney learned the young man from Binger that she had watched grow up had moved back home from Louisiana.

The two met and it was soon decided Cart would become publisher of The Country Connection News.



Joyce Carney



Cory Cart

His first issue as publisher was March 6.

"God has blessed me all these years with wonderful coworkers, advertisers and readers," said Carney. "Now He has blessed me with the perfect person to hand over 'my baby' to."

Cart, who said he made his living in the media industry as a public relations practitioner, never expected to become a weekly publisher, but he's ready for the challenge.

He's already implemented some new material including a podcast for The Country Connection News readers featuring stories from Caddo County.

A new weekly devotional by Sally Oliphant-Mickle is being added as well as a column by the newspaper's new travel editor Elaine Warner.

"I look forward to helping Caddo County thrive," said Cart.

USPS Tulsa conversion

Continued From Page 1

billion investment strategy "to upgrade and improve processing, transportation, delivery networks and employee experiences across the country," according to the USPS.

Tulsa's is among at least 17 Processing & Distribution Centers that have been identified for conversion across the country as the USPS continues efforts on its Delivering for America plan.

The Tulsa World reported

that Mary Steelman, executive plant director at the Processing and Distribution Center in Fort Worth, said during the public hearing that delivery service in Tulsa would be unaffected by the change, prompting a wave of guffaws from the audience.

Steelman said no final decision has been made regarding the Tulsa facility. A final decision will be made in one to two months, according the USPS.



A Health Threat Causing Missed School Days

In Oklahoma, it's still legal to smoke in cars where kids are present. When children live with secondhand smoke at home, they suffer more asthma attacks, ear infections and respiratory illnesses — and rack up absences as a result. The research is clear. Why isn't the air?

Learn more about the impact of secondhand smoke at:

**TOBACCO
STOPS WITH ME.com**



Tulsa World promotes Dallas West



Dallas West

Dallas West is the new marketing team lead for the Tulsa World Marketing Team.

The team is led by Misti

Rinehart, vice president of advertising for the Tulsa World.

"Dallas West isn't just a skilled marketing consultant; she's a natural leader," Rinehart said.

"This promotion is more than just a new title. It's a recognition of her ability to unite and empower others."

West joined the Tulsa World in November 2021, specializing in education and health care industries.

She has a bachelor's degree from Rogers State University

and a master's degree from National University.

"The Tulsa World's marketing landscape is undergoing an exciting and dynamic evolution, and I'm thrilled to be part of this pivotal journey," West said.

"I'm committed to leading our talented team toward achieving even greater results. The Tulsa World Marketing Team possesses a collective expertise that fuels my eagerness to witness the remarkable accomplishments we'll achieve together."

OPA Board meets at State Capitol

The Oklahoma Press Association Board of Directors met February 8 at the State Capitol in Oklahoma City.

Officers attending were President Sheila Gay, Woodward News; Vice President Shauna Belyeu, The Eufaula Indian Journal; and Treasurer David Stringer, The Lawton Constitution.

Directors attending were Past President Zonelle Rainbolt, Wesner Publications; Suzie Campbell, Countywide & Sun; Erin Dyer Thompson, El Reno Tribune; Ed Choate, Muskogee Phoenix; Shaun Witt, Oklahoma Watch; and Connor Choate, Marietta Monitor. Brett Wesner, Wesner Publications, was absent.

Staff attending were OPA Executive Vice President Mark Thomas and Member Services Director Lisa Sutliff.

After calling the meeting to order, Gay asked the board to review the minutes of the December 7, 2023, and January 4, 2024, meetings. The minutes were approved as presented.

The board reviewed the OPA and LSP financial statements and investment reports as of December 31, 2023. Stringer said revenue

and expenses both increased. Thomas said LSP is defending one libel suit, which it is trying to dismiss on the basis of the Oklahoma Citizens Participation Act (anti-SLAPP law).

The board acknowledged receipt of the OPA and LSP financial statements and investment reports as presented.

Three membership applications were approved at the meeting, pending successful completion of publication in the February issue of The Oklahoma Publisher and a 20-day protest period. Membership applications were:

- The Pryor Information Publication (General News Media Membership). The community news website at pryorinfopub.com began in June 2019 and is owned by Tim Lawton, who also serves as editor.

- Ellis County Star (General News Media Membership). The publication is owned by Last Refuge Media, Inc., with Walter Wagnon as publisher. Its first issue was Sept. 22, 2022.

- STATE Magazine (Affiliate News Media Membership). Mack Burke, associate director of media relations at Oklaho-

ma State University, submitted the application for this publication, which is distributed three times per year to 36,000 paid alumni association subscribers.

Committee reports included the Government Relations Committee. Thomas reviewed legislative bills affecting open meetings, open records and newspaper industry business during the February 8 Legislative Summit.

Rainbolt will chair a meeting of the Nominating Committee on March 15 at 10:30 a.m.

Belyeu will chair an online video meeting of the Board Strategic Planning Committee on March 28 at 10 a.m.

OPS BOARD MEETING

Minutes of the December 7, 2023, meeting were approved as presented.

Board members reviewed the OPS financial statements as of December 31, 2023. Stringer said advertising revenue is higher than budgeted and staff are looking toward political season. The board acknowledged receipt of the financial statements as presented.

Nichols joins Clinton Daily

Angela Nichols recently joined the staff of the Clinton Daily News.

As the newest reporter on the staff, Nichols will be writing business stories, criminal reports and municipal government updates.

Originally from Altus, Nichols is a graduate of Navajo High School and Southwestern State University where she received a bachelor's degree in strategic communications with a minor in public relations.

She has lived in Clinton for almost a year after moving from Weatherford.

Nichols said as the lead news reporter at the Clinton Daily News, she hopes to become acquainted with more people in Clinton.

After 30 years NIE feature Kid ends

For 30 years, Faith Wylie, John M. Wylie II and Carolyn Estes researched and created the Newspaper in Education (NIE) feature "For the Kid in You."

Now they are retiring.

"We have enjoyed providing this feature for 30 years and thank our subscriber newspapers and their tens of thousands of kids," said John Wylie.

The Wylies published the Oologah Lake Leader from 1984 to 2017. Estes served as advertising director for the weekly newspaper.

Even after the Wylies sold the newspaper, they continued producing the "Kid," which was syndicated nationally to more than 30 weeklies and dailies.

For more information about the Kid, contact Faith Wylie at flwylie@att.net.

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*Remembering our
friends & colleagues
who died
the previous year.*

Mary Elizabeth Claiborne
February 3, 2023

Dayle McGaha
February 27, 2023

Keith Skrzypczak
February 11, 2023

Harry Leroy Hix, Jr.
March 24, 2023

Carl Ray Lewis II
March 6, 2023

John G. Lord
March 13, 2023

DEATHS

KAREN GOODWIN, former editor/publisher of the Rush Springs Gazette, died February 15, 2024. She was 77.

Goodwin was born June 8, 1946, and grew up on the family farm in the Alfalfa/Eakly area.

She married Billy "Conn" Goodwin on December 21, 1963.

In 1983, Karen and Conn

purchased the Rush Springs Gazette. Although Karen said she didn't know everything about putting a newspaper together from start to finish, she jumped in and learned as much as she could. In the early years of owning the newspaper, she pulled all-nighters to get the paper to press on time.

After 28 years as editor and publisher, Karen sold the

newspaper to Mary Hill on September 1, 2017.

During her brief years of retirement, Karen served the Cumberland Presbyterian Church wherever she was needed, and enjoyed meditating in her garden.

Karen is survived by her husband, Conn; daughter Lori Lemons; son Shonn; two grandsons and one granddaughter.

JOHN WILLIAM HOLT, an Oklahoma journalist, died February 12, 2024. He was 88.

Holt was born December 10, 1935. He joined the Navy Reserve while in high school.

After spending two years at sea, he returned to finish

his college education at the University of Nebraska, graduating in 1960 with a degree in journalism.

He soon joined the Amarillo Daily News as a reporter. From there, he joined the Oklahoma City Times cover-

ing the state capitol. He later served as spokesman for the highway department and for several energy related businesses.

Holt is survived by his wife Lois; and sons Brian and Kirk.

KENNETH ROBERT MILAM, an Oklahoma journalist, died January 31, 2024. He was 70.

Milam, who was a member of the Choctaw Nation, was born February 19, 1953. He attended Northeastern State University, earning his bachelor's degree in journalism.

He started his writing career at the Muskogee Phoenix in the late 70s, and then wrote for the Tulsa World throughout most of the 80s. After that, he wrote off and on for the Poteau Daily News until he retired.

He made a substantial contribution to the American

Association of Petroleum Geologists Bulletin during his last decade of professional writing.

Milam is survived by his wife, Tina Malinowski; sons Adam, Eli and Ian; daughter Kendal; and two grandchildren.

OJUIETA FAYE (SMITH) SIMMONS, a former employee of the Anadarko Daily News, died Feb. 3, 2024. She was 93.

Simmons was born March 4, 1930, in Mountain View. She graduated from Anadarko High School in 1947 and

then attended the Oklahoma Business College for Women, graduating with a business degree.

She worked at the Anadarko Daily News as a typesetter and helped with payroll. Simmons also transcribed correspondence from then Daily News publisher Joe

McBride Sr. She retired from the newspaper in 1992.

She was preceded in death by her husband William H. "Buddy" Simmons Jr. in 1974.

Simmons is survived by her daughter Sharon Abbott of Verden; three grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

JANICE 'JAN' KAY ROLLINS VASSAR, who worked at several publications, died February 5, 2024. She was 83.

Vassar was born June 19, 1940, in the Indonesian village of Talang-Akar. She spent the early years of her life in Pendopo, Sumatra, Indonesia, where her father worked in the oil industry.

The family later settled in Tulsa.

After receiving her bachelor's degree from the University of Tulsa, she married Paul Miner Vassar in 1962.

Vassar worked in journalism for many years, including KTUL television in Tulsa, for various publications including the Stroud American, the Lincoln County News and

freelance work. From 1985 to 2010 she was editor of the tribal newspaper and head librarian of the Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma.

She was active in the community and state and enjoyed traveling.

Simmons is survived by her husband Paul; and sons David of Dallas and Andrew of Tulsa.

FOI Oklahoma announces 2023-24 award winners

Oklahoma Attorney General Genter Drummond, the publisher of the McCurtain County Gazette, an Oklahoma attorney who created a freedom of information website and a longtime journalist have been named as the recipients of the 2023-24 Freedom of Information Oklahoma's awards.

FOI Oklahoma also is awarding a Special Commendation to the Oklahoma Supreme Court and Chief Justice M. John Kane IV.

All of those being honored exemplify the goal of open and transparent government in Oklahoma. They will be officially recognized this fall at the First Amendment Congress, planned in October at the University of Central Oklahoma.

The award recipients are:

Marion Opala

First Amendment Award:

JOSH D. LEE

According to the nomination, "Josh Lee is the attorney that all attorneys in Oklahoma go to for how to pursue Open Records litigation."

Lee was the attorney and plaintiff in the seminal case

in Oklahoma that declares all police dash cam recordings subject to disclosure under the Oklahoma Open Records Act in the matter of Ward & Lee v. Claremore. Lee created the website FOIBible.com. The website is a tremendous resource to the public, attorneys and members of the media.

"Mr. Josh Lee's work deserves recognition as he is an inspiration to many attorneys in fighting the good fight for the right reasons, and making an agency change their practices," said the nomination.

Ben Blackstock Award: BRUCE WILLINGHAM

The McCurtain County Gazette published a series of stories in early 2023 detailing how the McCurtain County sheriff and county commissioners were conducting illegal meetings, which included threatening to hang Black people and kill journalists. The stories and recording garnered national attention to the plight of open meetings and records in this southeastern Oklahoma county.

"Willingham and his son, Chris, took the ultimate risk

in exposing the importance of sunshine when public officials are involved in potential wrongdoing," the nomination said. "He showed the spirit of Ben Blackstock in performing this public service for his community," said the nomination.

Sunshine Award: ATTORNEY GENERAL GENTER DRUMMOND

The Republican attorney general created a public access position in his office to help ensure state and local officials comply with the Open Meeting and Open Records Act. After taking office in 2023, Drummond also worked to clear a backlog of open records requests at the Oklahoma Attorney General's Office. Drummond's creation of a public access position in his office will have a long-lasting impact on public access to information in Oklahoma. His dedication to open government sets an example for others to follow.

Special Commendation: OKLAHOMA SUPREME COURT & CHIEF JUSTICE M. JOHN KANE IV

After a request from jour-

nalist Tres Savage of NonDoc, the Oklahoma Supreme Court made video recordings of past oral arguments available for the public on the Oklahoma Supreme Court Network website. The decision will give Oklahomans a better understanding about how their court system works and access to arguments in cases that have the potential to affect their legal rights and state government.

Bickham-Hale Service Award: WILLIAM 'BILL' CRUM

After years of service to FOI Oklahoma as a dedicated board member and financial supporter, the longtime journalist is retiring. He is stepping down from the FOI OK board to "invite the next generation to help lead the organization."

"Bill made great use of Oklahoma's open records and meeting laws throughout his career," the nomination said. "His contributions to keeping the people of Oklahoma informed through his reporting and his contributions to the FOI Oklahoma board are worthy of recognition."

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Cultivating advertising, circulation customers



Looking Them Over

by Rod Serfoss
rserfoss@okpress.com

Covering the northeast Oklahoma communities of Inola and Catoosa, the *Inola Independent* consistently produces a quality newspaper filled with a wide range of local news and sports stories that are complimented by attention grabbing photographs.

The *Independent* also does a great job promoting itself. It is common to see ads trying to get new print and online subscribers and lure advertisers.

One that grabbed my attention read, “The *Independent* Has Gone Viral!!! 7 Days A Week / 24 Hours A Day. Advertisers Call 918-543-3134. Also Call To Subscribe For Local Online News”

The Independent Has Gone Viral!!!
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The *Independent* has gone viral ad

Another promoted the advantages of publishing your legal notices in the *Independent*. “Prompt-Accurate-Friendly. Our services include: Accurate & Timely Publication of your legal case, Tearsheets & invoices mailed Promptly, Free filing of paid in full Proof of Publication in the Rogers County Courthouse, Free notarization on the first copy, and additional copies for your own use.”

Too many newspapers are so focused on telling businesses the importance of newspaper advertising they forget

that also applies to their own product.

It would be good for most newspapers to follow the *Independent's* example of using newspaper advertising to promote their business.

The Carnegie Herald did its part to let everyone know about the 80th Annual World Championship Domino Tournament held in the small southwest Oklahoma town.

Unlike Carnegie, very few communities with a population of less than 1,500 can boast of being the home to a world championship.

In promoting the event, *The Herald* did an excellent job letting readers know how the tournament began back in 1945. “Doc Jolly started the tournament in the local VFW Hall. He timed that contest to coincide with local farmers winter quiet time.”

It gained national notoriety after being mentioned in a 1965 *Sports Illustrated* article. In the article former *Carnegie Herald* editor Roy McCurley disputed a tournament in San Francisco’s claim to be the ‘world championship’ noting Carnegie’s tournament had actually predated California’s contest by more than two decades.

This should remind reporters of the important role newspapers have in providing the recorded history of the communities they serve.

The next week *The Herald* continued to do its part to update the history of the World Championship Domino Tournament when the 2024 winners were put in print.

The nameplate on *The County Times* proudly includes the slogan, “The Positive Side of Comanche County.”

From the newspaper’s

office in Cache, *The County Times* does just that!

It is common to see more than 20 quality pictures and stories about good things that are happening in Cache and other communities throughout the county.

During a recent visit to *The County Times*, Publisher Venius Dobson said that focusing on positive news had made her job much more enjoyable because readers continually express their pleasure with the newspaper for making good news its priority.

Even though I didn’t know anyone that appeared in the paper, it was enjoyable to look through several recent editions of *The Times* and see “The Positive Side of Comanche County!”

The *Logan County Courier* exemplifies community journalism at its best!

Each week readers are exposed to stories and pictures covering a wide range of events that have happened in the area.

In recent issues readers of the *Courier* learned about a car accident that claimed the lives of two local people, the United Way in Logan County breaking contribution records, how to navigate through the road construction in the region and saw photos of people honored at the chamber of commerce banquet.

There are also stories promoting upcoming events like the Crescent Ground Hog Day and homecomings in Logan County.

We salute them for the story it regularly publishes titled, “Why you need to advertise your product / business!”

The story explains to businesses that advertising helps educate consumers about how your products or services help

them and what their brand stands for.

It also reminds consumers that the objective of advertising is to inform, to persuade, and to remind.

Judging from the number of ads from area businesses in each edition, the *Courier* is proving newspapers are a great place to promote any business – including your own product.

The Lawton Constitution joins the *Mangum Star* and *Atoka County Times* in conducting readership surveys in the past few months.

The Constitution is the latest Oklahoma newspaper wanting to determine how area residents feel about news, what they’re interested in, what they’re not and how they feel in general about the media.

It was designed to be completed on *The Constitution's* Facebook page and take less than 10 minutes to complete.

Let’s never forget that our readers are our customers. The more we gear our product to them, the more valuable your newspaper becomes to them.

TOP FIVE HEADLINES:

5. **PERFECTION**
– *Choctaw Times*
4. **The Hunt For A Star**
– *The Dewey County Record*
3. **What’s coming to town next?**
– *The Piedmont-Surrey Gazette*
2. **Antarctica in Ada**
– *The Ada News*
1. **Witness: Seeing remains of man changed her life**
– *McCurtain Gazette*

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

How to create new templates in InDesign



Computer Notes

from the road

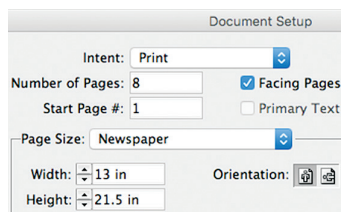
by Wilma Newby

wnewby@okpress.com

If your newspaper's size is changing, it's fairly easy to set up a new template without loosing all the settings from the old template.

You need to know the new measurements for your template, both the overall size with margins and the actual print area.

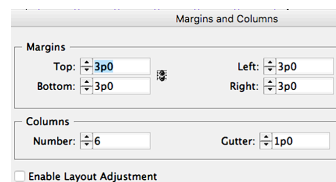
To set up a new template in InDesign, go to **File > Document setup**. Enter the new width and height area (the



width and height of one page plus margins). Set **Number of Pages** and **Facing Pages** to your specifications for the template then click **OK**.

Now we will add the new settings for the margins. In the menu go to **Layout > Margins and columns**. In this box enter the margins the printer gave you and click **OK**.

There is a place in this

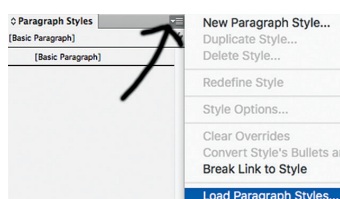


box where you can have the program automatically adjust the content of the paper to the new size layout. I don't advise using this. It produces many unexpected changes that you may not appreciate. Even worse, those changes could go unnoticed until after the paper hits the press. It helps to have preview checked so the results can be seen without leaving this box.

This next scenario looks at how to incorporate new styles into a template. This could be replacing old styles, or using the old style sheets in a new layout. Both can be done in the **Paragraph Styles** palette.

Open **Paragraph Styles**; if it's not showing up on the left side of your screen, look in the menus for **Type > Paragraph Styles**.

There is a flyout menu at the upper right of the palette that brings up a menu list of options. Go to **Load Paragraph Styles...** Another box comes up asking for the document with the new styles; choose it.



If you're creating a brand new template, just import the styles from an older template's InDesign page file. Click **Open**. In the next box choose

override old styles or just bring in all the new ones.

If you make a mistake, you can always select **Undo**. Save when you're happy with the results.

Now let's organize the old styles. In the **Paragraph Styles** palette from the same flyout menu go to **New Style Group...** Give the new folder a name, for example "Old Styles 2024." Then hold down shift and select the old styles to be moved. Drag all the old styles into the folder **Old Styles 2024**.

Problems may come from the **Master pages**. When the document setup is changed, the size of the Master pages is also changed. Changes to the actual size of the headers must be done on the Master pages.

The same is true for folios that are auto-numbered on the Master pages. To tell if your pages are auto-numbered look in the **Pages** palette. Double click the **A-Master** and see if the page numbers are in a format where the actual number is an (A) character instead of a number. If so, the pages are auto-numbered.

If you want to set up auto-numbering, create the (A) character by going to a Master page. Then in the folio where the page number goes leave the flashing (I) beam from the text tool in the line and go to **Insert Special Character > Marker > Current Page Number** and the (A) will appear. When you click on a regular

page in the document, you will see a number where the (A) was on the master. Some pages, like page 1, don't need a page number. To remove it from a certain page go to the flyout menu on the Pages palette and then to **Override All Master Page Items**. Now items from the master page can be changed, moved or deleted.

If you need to resize items on the page, group them before resizing. Holding down **Shift** will keep the objects in perspective when resizing. The **Command/Control** keys will resize without keeping objects in perspective.

When rebuilding templates, it helps to start with mostly empty pages. Remove all old material such as pictures and copy from the pages. If there's time, consider replacing all the ads. You can also start from a blank template already in use.

When you're done deleting old copy, a new template can be created. Go to **File > Save As...** and save the file as an **InDesign Template File**. When opened normally, template files will create a new document without a title.

A template file can be changed from the **File > Open** menu by clicking the **Open Original** item button. Then, if needed, the template can be changed and saved. This is very useful if mistakes were made in the overall redesign.

Creating templates, as well as paragraph and character styles, will not only save time but will give your publication a uniform look.

Spending a little time now to set up templates and styles will save time later.

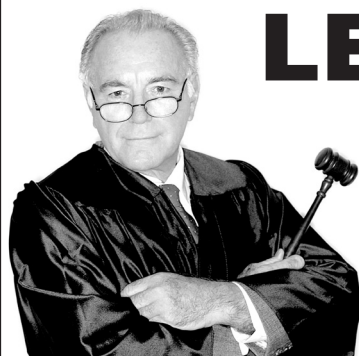
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Sample Interview Questions

Continued from Page 1

HERE ARE SOME SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Routine as well as others, these questions are appropriate for individuals interviewing to be hired by the electorate.

- What prompted you to seek office? Was it a personal initiative, or were you encouraged? By whom?
- What are the most important issues, and how do you plan to address them?
- Who do you identify as your base of support — specific demographics, organizations, special interests?
- Who are the people most opposed to your candidacy, and how do you allay their concerns?
- What is the chief strength and weakness of your opponent?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses, and how will you compensate for your weaknesses?
- What do you bring to the table that your opponent doesn't?
- How can you, as one vote, make a difference on a policy-making board?
- How is your experience — or lack of experience — in the public and private sectors a plus or minus for the job?
- Do you support term limits?
- Do you agree with the philosophy that elected officials should enact broad policy and staff should handle daily adminis-

tration? How do you approach this division of responsibilities?

- You are elected to represent your constituency, yet at some point, the collective wishes and beliefs likely will contradict your personal beliefs. How will you arrive at your vote?
- What specific practices will you use to connect with constituents?
- Does your employment restrict your ability to serve?
- What one issue is not being talked about in this race that should be getting aired?
- How will you address the partisanship that seems to have filtered into all levels of government?
- Political observers routinely rate the U.S. president's first 100 days in office. What can we expect from your first 100 days?
- What is the government's role in providing specific services?
- Can government be more efficient by partnering in the delivery of services and programs? Identify some possibilities.
- Do you advocate public-private partnerships? Identify some possibilities.
- Your opponent is most critical of your stance on this issue. How do you respond?
- Think of your particular community or constituency 20 years from now. What three things must be addressed now to make it better for our kids?

- How will changing demographics affect public policy?
- Address the balance of public policy necessary to satisfy both rural and urban constituencies.
- How will you ensure government is run in an open fashion?
- Are there any state or national elected leaders, past or present, who you admire? Why?
- Under what circumstances would you change your stance on a specific issue?
- On whom will you rely for advice?
- What will be the role of the people who contributed to your campaign?
- What principles will guide your decisions?
- At the end of your term, what do you hope people will say about you?
- If interviewing a candidate for a profile: Who else do I need to interview?
- What one question are you glad we didn't ask? Are there any skeletons in your closet?
- What didn't I ask that you were

expecting or hoping I would ask?

- Do you have anything to add?

Always ask the standard questions as responses might be unexpected and enlightening: Why are you running?

Consider this response from a candidate seeking a spot on the county board. He leaned across the desk and stared at the editor, opening his mouth to reveal his many missing teeth. He then answered, "Dental insurance."

You never know a candidate's underlying reasons for seeking office.

JIM PUMARLO is former editor of the Red Wing (Minnesota) Republican Eagle. He writes, speaks and provides training on community newsroom success strategies. He can be reached at www.pumarlo.com and welcomes comments and questions at jim@pumarlo.com.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article appeared in the March 2024 edition of Publishers' Auxiliary, the National Newspaper Association's publication, and was reprinted with permission.

"I didn't know you had this!"



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OKLAHOMA NATURAL GAS CONTEST WINNERS

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE JANUARY WINNERS

Editorial: **JEFF FUNK**, *Enid News & Eagle*

Column: **CONNIE BURCHAM**, *Watonga Republican*

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

JEFF FUNK, *Enid News & Eagle*

Important Decision: Special session not the time, place for tax cut consideration

Gov. Kevin Stitt is calling the Oklahoma Legislature back into special session Jan. 29 to consider a single topic: cutting the state income tax rate by 0.25%. It's a plan that scores political points but lacks practical common sense. Certainly the idea of paying less income tax is appealing to Oklahoma voters. But, the special session at this point appears doomed to failure, with Senate leadership poised to adjourn the special legislative session just minutes after it begins.

Timing for such a special legislative session is awkward, coming just a week before the Legislature begins its regular spring session. Cutting the Oklahoma income tax, a huge source of money state government uses to pay for important services, is not something that should be done on short notice in a special session. It should be contemplated only as part of full state budget discussions and negotiations.

The Oklahoma Constitution requires the governor and Legislature to balance the budget. So, when Stitt is pushing to cut the state income tax, expense cuts or an alterna-

tive revenue source should be identified. That's not the situation here.

Next month, Stitt will present his State of the State speech and will propose his budget for the coming fiscal year. That's the proper time and place for such a tax cut proposal. By that time, state leaders also will have the latest update on the state's economy and what income state government is expected to receive for 2024-25 operations. Other proposals, such as eliminating the state's sales tax on groceries, can be considered as well.

Many state legislators are understandably reluctant to eliminate a tax or cut a tax rate. Such cuts are effectively permanent, because a large supermajority of both houses is required for the Legislature to reverse course and increase taxes in case of a future revenue shortfall. That's a really high hurdle for any decision and especially a tax decision. With the state receiving a large chunk of revenue from a tax on oil and gas production, and that production tax depending on an often volatile energy market, the state's revenue is far from guaranteed.

JANUARY COLUMN WINNER (*Excerpts from column. Read entire column at okpress.com/ong-contest*)

CONNIE BURCHAM, *Watonga Republican*

Headline: A Bubble Off Plumb

My mother would have been 100 years old today. I find it hard to believe she has been gone 15 years, and I catch myself every day thinking I should call her and tell her about something.

I think about the things she saw change in her lifetime. There were politicians she disliked, and nations she never forgave. She'd lived through the second World War and those nations killed people she knew and loved.

She was pretty tough on us, too. I grew up as part of a tribe of young'uns that she raised solo after my dad died far too young. We'd better stay on the straight and narrow or else. None of us ever found out what 'or else' meant. We were too scared.

I don't know how, but we grew up never knowing we were poor. I mean dirt had more money. I remember going for groceries and driving back as far as we could before we ran out of gasoline. All three of us girls went along so we could carry bags home. Overnight the older brothers found or appropriated gas and the car was home by morning.

As Christmas approached each year, we picked pecans and gathered old newspapers to sell for holiday money. We learned the value of hard work and how to wait for what we wanted. We learned how to separate wants from needs.

Luckily, I had an older sister whose clothes could be cut down to fit me, and a grandmother who lived with us to do the handiwork. Looking at it now, I think Grandma was probably there not just to help with housework and childcare, but also with her own meager Social Security and tiny pension.

I learned not to put emphasis on clothes, looks and other things girls are prone to obsess about. If any of us were leaning toward vanity, the air got let out of us quick with a sharp, "What makes you think anyone is looking at you?" But the same lady found a way to purchase a deep green velvet dress for my first FFA banquet. That was so long ago no one knew what a girl FFA member should wear for the annual 'Father and Son Banquet.' That dress was so precious that I saved it and made Christmas dresses out of the fabric for my own daughters.

My dearest hope is that I have passed far more along to them than deep green velvet. I pray they have the tenacity, perseverance and sheer guts it took to be a runner on Wall Street at 18, to be part of the crowd on the street in New York on VE Day and to raise a herd of children – her own as well as several that needed a safe place to be – as a single parent. I hope they see that...



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The January Oklahoma Natural Gas Column and Editorial Contest was judged by a member of the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame.

1. Each month, submit your entry online at okpress.com/ong-contest. Attachments should be in PDF format.
2. Entries may also be emailed (full-page tearsheet) to amartin@okpress.com. Include the author's name, name of publication, date of publication and category entered (column or editorial).
3. All entries for the previous month must be at the OPA office by the 15th of the current month.
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