

Suzie Campbell takes the helm at the OPA

Suzie Campbell, publisher of the Countywide & Sun in Tecumseh, officially assumed the role of president of the Oklahoma Press Association (OPA) on July 1.

OPA members elected Campbell during the association's annual business meeting, held June 6-7 at the OPA Convention in Shawnee. She succeeds Shauna Belyeu and will serve a one-year term as president.

Before her newspaper career, Campbell held various positions, including nearly 10 years at Tinker Air Force Base. She also worked at an attorney's office and OU Health Sciences Center before open-



OPA President Suzie Campbell
ing her own business, Magic Memories, in late 2004. She began working part-time at the Countywide & Sun in 2005.

"In March, my mother saw an advertisement for a graphic

artist at the Countywide. I faxed a resume to then-owners Gloria and Wayne Trotter, and Gloria called me for an interview," said Campbell.

Although she told the Trotters that she only averaged about five years at a job before she became bored and began looking for something new, she was hired immediately.

"In August of that same year, I went full-time, and I can honestly say I have never been bored."

At the Countywide & Sun, Campbell worked as a graphic artist, advertising sales rep, circulation manager and in accounting.

The Trotters tried to

convince her to purchase the paper over the years, but it wasn't until March 2017 when they received an offer from someone else that Campbell decided to buy it.

"The newspaper had always been locally owned, and I wanted it to stay that way," she said.

On April 1, 2017, Campbell became owner and publisher of the Countywide & Sun.

"I thought I knew what I was getting into, but there is so much more that I still have to learn. Thank goodness Wayne and Gloria are still a phone call away, and Brian Blansett [publisher of The Lin-

Continued on Page 3

Key card swipes are public records

Oklahoma Attorney General Gentner Drummond issued an opinion stating that employees' key-card access to buildings is an open record subject to disclosure under the Oklahoma Open Records Act.

"The public has a right to know whether our elected officials and the people they hire are showing up for work," said Rep. John Waldron, D-Tulsa, who requested the opinion.

The opinion states that

a news organization sought records from an agency of one person's key-card entry into the building for the years 2023 and 2024. The agency denied the request, claiming an Open Records Act exception relating to terrorism and security monitoring permitted the agency to keep the records confidential.

AG Opinion 2025-9 states that if portions of the record are subject to an exception of the Open Records Act, the

public body must "redact the information that is exempt from disclosure and allow access to the remainder of the record."

The official Opinion of the Attorney General states: "A data log that reflects employees' use of key-cards to access a public body's building is an open record subject to disclosure under the Oklahoma Open Records Act. If portions of the record are subject to

an exception to the ORA, for instance in title 51, section 24A.7 or 24A.28 of the Oklahoma Statutes, and the exempt information is 'reasonably segregable' from the rest of the record, the public body must redact the exempt information and provide access to the remainder of the record."

(Read AG Opinion 2025-9 at oklahoma.gov/oag/opinions/ag-opinions/2025/2025-09.html)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Weatherford Daily News files FOIA request over \$50,000 settlement to local police officer

The Weatherford Daily News has filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request seeking records related to a \$50,000 payment made by the City of Weatherford to Officer Joseph Cox.

Cox, who has served as president of the local police union since 2022, was the subject of a settlement discussed by city commissioners during a special meeting held in executive session. Details sur-

rounding the payment remain unclear.

In response, staff members from the Daily News submitted FOIA requests to the mayor, city attorney and city clerk. The requests seek access to all settlement agreements and meeting minutes involving the City of Weatherford – or any of its departments, agencies, employees, or representatives – that were funded in whole or in part by public dollars

between January 1, 2025, and December 31, 2025.

The newspaper's goal is to provide transparency regarding the use of taxpayer funds.

"We filed the request because we believe the public deserves the right to know why the city gave Joseph Cox \$50,000 out of the taxpayers' pocket," said Phillip Reid, publisher and owner of Reid Newspapers.

Shawnee News-Star hosts student awards gala

The Shawnee News-Star presented awards to students in grades 9-12 at its annual Best of Tri-County Area Preps gala on June 3.

This is the ninth year The News-Star has sponsored the event.

CherryRoad Media Chief Operating Officer Lee Bachlet spoke at the event about the work involved in putting together and hosting such a major awards program for local students and athletes. CherryRoad owns the News-Star.

Bachlet reminded the approximately 500 guests in attendance that The News-Star needs the community to support the local newspaper through their subscriptions.

He encouraged attendees to become subscribers to The News-Star for coverage of local news and sports, as well as support of the Preps program and gala.

At Preps 2025, The News-Star awarded nearly \$12,000 in scholarships and prizes.

Preps honors local students from all 14 public high

schools in The News-Star's coverage area: Asher, Bethel, Chandler, Dale, Earlsboro, Macomb, Maud, McLoud, Meeker, North Rock Creek, Prague, Seminole, Shawnee and Tecumseh.

Local sports writers select athletes; A board of local community leaders selects Students of the Month and Student of the Year based on the submissions from high school administrators.

OPA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

JULY 24

1:00 – 2:00 PM

OMC WEBINAR: AI Agents for Summarizing Public Meetings

The team at Our Hometown will demo the latest updates to their AI Summarizer for Public Meetings. The AI app has been repackaged into a WordPress Plugin that automatically checks selected YouTube channels for new meetings and generates a summary. It is now being beta tested and will be available to all publishers soon.

JULY 31

1:00 – 2:00 PM

OMC WEBINAR: How We Doubled Our Subscription Price and Lived to Tell the Tale

Almost two years ago, Joey and Lindsey Young, co-publishers of Kansas Publishing Ventures in south central Kansas, put their company in the hands of three university researchers and took the plunge to try new ideas for revenue with their flagship community weekly, Harvey County Now. Hear all about the experiment, how these ideas transformed their business in unexpected ways and how you can use what they learned in your own newsroom.

SEPTEMBER 18

2:00 – 3:30 PM

NA WEBINAR: Become a Photoshop Guru with Kevin Slimp

Hold on to your seats! This is going to be one incredible class, filled with information that will take you from wherever you are to "Photo Editing Guru" status in 90 minutes!

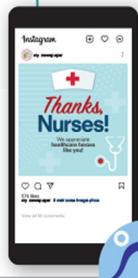
OCTOBER 16

2:00 – 3:00 PM

NA WEBINAR: Getting More People to Pick Up Your Newspaper with Kevin Slimp

Kevin Slimp has traveled from coast to coast and border to border visiting with community newspapers planning for growth. Now you can learn some of what Kevin has learned in his travels over the past few years and find new ways to get people to pick up your newspaper.

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Ellis County Star names Shonda Little as editor

Shonda Crowdis Little is the new editor of the Ellis County Star, announced Dub Wagon, publisher of the weekly newspaper.

Little began her journalism and writing career in 2003 at the Elk Citian but has also worked at the Beckham County Record, Elk City News, GoWest

magazine, Western Ag magazine, BlogHer, and National Public Radio.

Wagon said Little covered crime extensively in Beckham County as well as hard news and feature stories.

"For those reasons and many more, she was a great pick to help me continue to

grow the Ellis County Star into a weekly newspaper that has something for every citizen every single week," Wagon said.

Little said that it's refreshing to have her name on a newspaper that has the primary goal of covering western Oklahoma.

OPA President

Continued from Page 1

coln County News] is a great friend and mentor."

Campbell said her goal after graduating from Dale High School in 1982 was to own her own business.

"I never dreamed it would be a newspaper. Now, I can't imagine doing anything else. Newspapers are still the best source for local news," she said.

As a professed tech nerd, Campbell embraces the digital format of newspapers while still holding tight to the print version.

"We have very diverse generations to serve. We have the older generation, who still

cling to the printed paper, and the younger generation, who are all about the digital. As news leaders in our communities, we need to embrace the digital tools available to reach our younger citizens," Campbell said.

As the newly elected president, Campbell said she is looking forward to visiting with other OPA members to discuss their ideas, needs and challenges.

Other officers elected for one-year terms at the business meeting were Erin Dyer-Thompson, co-publisher of the El Reno Tribune, as vice president; Brian Blansett, publisher of The Lincoln County News, for a second one-year term as treasurer; and Shauna

Belyeu, general manager of The Eufaula Indian Journal, as immediate past president.

The membership also renewed a three-year term on the OPA Board of Directors for Ed Choate, publisher of the Muskogee Phoenix. Connor Choate, co-publisher of the Marietta Monitor, and Jason Collington, editor of the Tulsa World, were elected to fulfill vacated terms.

Katherine Miller, publisher of The Norman Transcript, was elected as a new board member serving a three-year term.

Other members of the OPA Board of Directors are Brett Wesner, Wesner Publications, and Shaun Witt, Oklahoma Watch.

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- 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!



Regular meeting of OPA Board of Directors held during OPA Convention in Shawnee

The Oklahoma Press Association Board of Directors met June 6 during the OPA Convention at the Grand Casino Hotel & Resort in Shawnee.

Officers attending were President Shauna Belyeu, The Eufaula Indian Journal; Vice President Suzie Campbell, Countywide & Sun; and Treasurer Brian Blansett, The Lincoln County News.

Directors attending were Past President Sheila Gay, Woodward News; Erin Dyer Thompson, El Reno Tribune; Ed Choate, Muskogee Phoenix; Shaun Witt, Oklahoma Watch; Connor Choate, Marietta Monitor; and Jason Collington, Tulsa World. Brett Wesner, Wesner Publications, was unable to attend.

Staff at the meeting was Mark Thomas, Executive Vice President/Secretary, and Lisa Sutliff, CAE, Member Services Director. Katherine Miller, The Norman Tran-

script, attended the meeting as a guest.

After calling the meeting to order, Belyeu asked the board to review minutes of the April 10, 2025, meeting. The minutes were approved as presented.

Treasurer Blansett called on Thomas to review the OPA and LSP financial statements ending April 30, 2025. Thomas said OPA currently has a profit but expenses for the end of the legislative session and convention will occur in June. LSP has a loss due to an expensive defense case this year, as well as a revenue decline. A reform to the Legal Services Plan benefits and dues structures is needed to sustain the program in the future, said Thomas. The board acknowledged receipt of the OPA and LSP financial statements as presented.

Thomas also discussed two capital expenditure requests

for the OPA building to be completed in the next few months – a \$1,710 skylight replacement and conversion of more than 300 fluorescent light fixture ballasts at a cost of \$2,839.17. The board approved recommendations of the two capital expenditure requests as presented.

MEMBERSHIPS APPROVED

The board unanimously approved affiliate news media membership applications for The Mabel Bassett Balance and The Warrior Standard. Both applications were submitted by Poetic Justice organization out of Tulsa. The Balance is published quarterly at Mabel Bassett Correctional Center in McLoud and distributed to the community living and working at the center. The Standard is published quarterly at Eddie Warrior Correctional Center in Taft

and distributed to community members living and working there. Notices of application were published in the May issue of the Publisher.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

In the Government Relations Committee update, Thomas reviewed a list of bills impacting OPA members from the 2025 legislative session including passage of HB 2167, which increases the fees for public notices for the first time in 20 years. The bill passed the House and Senate with overwhelming majorities but was vetoed by Gov. Stitt, along with many other bills. On the last day of the 2025 session, the House and Senate voted to override the veto. The new rates in HB 2167 will take effect on Nov. 1, 2025.

The board congratulated and thanked Thomas for his
Continued on Page 5



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Tishomingo Mayor Laura Wood urges residents to stop relying on social media

Tishomingo Mayor Laura Wood recently urged city residents to stop turning to social media for information about city business.

In a page 1 story in the July 9 edition of the Johnston County Sentinel, Managing Editor John A. Small reported that Wood labeled some of that information as deliberate lies being spread by individuals with their own personal agendas.

Small said the mayor was speaking in her role as chair of the Tishomingo Municipal Authority (TMA) at the board's regular meeting when she responded to recent criticism posted on Facebook that claimed that TMA funds are being improperly used.

Much of the criticism centered around allegations that

TMA funds were being used on projects such as the recent construction of a park.

"Wood categorically denied those allegations, noting that such use would be illegal, and that the allegations are easily disproven by a simple review of documents that are on file at City Hall and available for public inspection," Small wrote.

Although the TMA is comprised of the same membership as the city council, the TMA board is a separate entity. Its funds are limited to use on infrastructure needs, contrary, Wood said, to claims being made on social media.

"Anyone who has questions should call City Hall, instead of getting their 'information' from the lies being spread on social media," Wood said.

"The press is the best instrument for enlightening the mind of man, and improving him as a rational, moral and social being." - Thomas Jefferson

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Johnston County Sentinel

Volume 125, Number 2 • 10 Pages

Mayor to residents: 'Stop relying on social media' Wood calls recent Facebook criticism 'deliberate lies'

By John A. Small
Managing Editor

Tishomingo Mayor Laura Wood urged city residents this week to stop turning to social media for information about city business - labeling some of that information as deliberate lies being spread by individuals with their own personal agendas.

Speaking in her role as chair of the Tishomingo Municipal Authority (TMA) during that board's regular meeting Monday night, Wood responded to recent criticism posted on Facebook



Laura Wood

as the current projects involving construction of a new city wastewater plant and the Corbin Well water line - than is legally available to the council.

Projects such as Gadsden Park are handled

Those comments came at the conclusion of a pair of back-to-back meetings of the council and TMA board highlighted by the approval of resolutions related to the wastewater plant project.

During its regularly scheduled meeting earlier in the evening, the city council approved a resolution authorizing the issuance, sale and delivery of a promissory note to the Oklahoma Water Resources Board as part of its efforts to apply for

funding through Oklahoma's Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) - a low-interest loan program to assist communities with wastewater and pollution control projects.

The CWSRF program is funded by EPA capitalization grants, state matching funds, loan repayments, investment earnings, and bonds. Jones had told council members in February that such a loan application would be a "preemptive" move in

tended to assist the city in the event that construction bids come in over budget.

Those comments were echoed at this week's meeting during a joint presentation by representatives of two of the city's partners on the wastewater plant project: Brynden Williams, director of engineering for Durant-based Wall Engineering; and Chris Wolff of Municipal Finance Services.

As Jones had during the earlier meeting in

February, Wolff told council members Monday that the \$3.3 million being sought through the CWSRF program would serve as a contingency in the event that a funding gap should arise between the original cost estimate of \$16,929,355 and now.

As previously reported in the Sentinel, much of the funding for the new wastewater plant is being provided through the American Rescue

➔ See COUNCIL Page 2

Small wrote that her sentiments were echoed by City Manager Bryce Jones, who said that the city's final budget report for Fiscal Year 2024-25, which shows city expenditures from both TMA and general

budget funds, has been posted on the city's website and can be reviewed by anyone wishing to do so.

"It's all right there to see for anyone who takes the time to look," Jones said.

Board Meeting

Continued from Page 4

diligent efforts on HB 2167. Thomas said dormant bills could be alive next year, including HB 2166, authored by OPA to modify the definition of a legal newspaper, among other modernization efforts.

Thomas also discussed HB 2163, which created the Public Access Counselor (PAC) position in the Oklahoma Attorney General's Office. The PAC position serves both records custodians and requesters to determine whether records are open or closed, aiming to avoid legal action. Many public bodies opposed the bill, and Gov. Stitt vetoed it; however, the legislature overrode the veto on the last day of the session.

SB 535, which modifies the Open Records Act, passed into law without the governor's sig-

nature. It allows a public body to require advance payment of estimated fees for records requests if those fees are expected to exceed \$75. Thomas said the public may review the original pages before being charged for copies.

Chairman Connor Choate encouraged the Board and committee to seek ways to keep the Legal Services Plan in a healthy financial position. An active lawsuit under Plan B has been assigned to the Court of Civil Appeals to reach a decision. The case has reached the \$20,000 limit to Plan B; however, if the case is overturned on appeal, LSP will have the right to recoup attorney fees.

OTHER BUSINESS

In other business, Thomas and the board thanked outgoing president Shauna Belyeu and outgoing past president

Sheila Gay for their service on the board.

OPS BOARD MEETING

President Belyeu asked board members to review the minutes of the April 10, 2025, meeting. The minutes were approved as presented.

Thomas reviewed the OPS financial statements for the period ending April 30, 2025, and said net income is projected to be lower than budgeted at the end of the fiscal year. The board acknowledged receipt of the statements.

Following the management review session, Belyeu said the board appreciates Thomas' work to improve the industry. The board also complimented Thomas, Sutliff and the staff for their passion and thoughtful actions that benefit members.

Transcript names new sports editor

Davis Cordova is the new sports editor at The Norman Transcript.

He previously covered sports for The Express-Star in Chickasha as well as surrounding communities.

Cordova graduated in May 2024 with a Sports Media degree from the School of Media and Strategic Communications at Oklahoma State University.

While in school, he worked at The O'Colly, OSU's independent student newspaper, where he covered OSU football, women's basketball and baseball.



—Speed Topics—

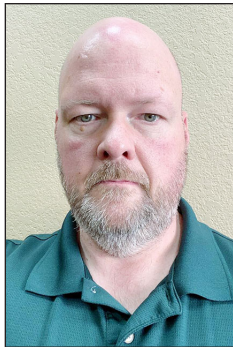
A few presenters from the Speed Topic sessions at the June 6–7 OPA Convention shared their ideas with us. Take a look at all the great information they provided! Also, see Wilma Newby's Photoshop tips on Page 14.

Developing Sustainable Ad Packages

presented by SEAN STEPHENS, CLINTON DAILY NEWS

When a local advertiser racked up more than \$3,000 in unpaid bills and then balked at the thought of a monthly payment, the fallout was costly: a \$17,000 account gone.

But instead of stewing in frustration, Sean Stephens, publisher of the Clinton Daily News, turned the loss into motivation, launching what he called the "\$17,000 plan."



"I got mad, but then I got motivated," he said. "I started thinking: how do I counter that? And more importantly, how do I blow it out of the water?"

The answer: sustainable, relationship-driven advertising packages that offer daily visibility and built-in value across the entire publication year. These packages include features such as daily sports page placement, branded game updates, bundled obituary coverage and custom placements on under-utilized pages, including classifieds.

For example, one funeral home pays a flat monthly rate that includes all obituary notices. It's a move that not only helps

grieving families but drives daily relationships.

"We're not just selling space. We're fostering long-term relationships," Stephens explained. "Our job is to help local businesses make a lot of money and make a little for ourselves in the process."

Stephens emphasizes flexibility, simplicity and fairness over rigid contracts.

Most advertising packages operate on handshake agreements and are billed monthly with detailed line-item invoices showing each inclusion, from a graduate edition to a Kid's Scoop sponsorship.

"It's a partnership," he said. "If they don't succeed, we don't succeed."

The most important step in the sales process

presented by CARRIE CARBERRY, SEQUOYAH COUNTY TIMES

Carrie Carberry reminded her peers of a powerful truth: newspapers remain one of the most trusted and vital sources of information in their communities – if only they remember their value.

"We believed the national narrative that newspapers were dying," she said. "But when Covid hit, people didn't turn to social media; they turned to us."



Carberry, who is advertising manager at the Sequoyah County Times, urged newspaper teams to lead with confidence. When sales representatives walk into a business unsure or discouraged, that uncertainty is evident, she said.

"But when we know our value, we don't just hear 'no' and walk away. We ask, 'Why? What are you looking for?' Because we can help meet that, whether in print, digital, or both."

A standout example was the newspaper's treasure hunt promotion, where the publication partnered with local businesses to give away a treasure chest full of prizes. The staff distributed keys to businesses

that readers receive when they make a purchase. The campaign brought in foot traffic, boosted ad revenue and reminded people that the paper was still alive, relevant, and creative.

Crucially, she emphasized that newspapers don't just sell ad space; they build community.

"I don't want just to take your money. I want your business to be open next year. We grow together," she said.

Carberry's call to action was simple but powerful: Believe in what you do because your communities still do.

Knock it off!

Five things you should immediately stop writing

presented by TED STREULI, OKLAHOMA WATCH

Great journalism demands clarity, relevance, and purpose. Yet, too often, reporters fall back on routines that do more to fill space than inform readers, Ted Streuli told members of the press during his Speed Topic session.



It's time to break the habits that weaken your storytelling, said Streuli executive director of Oklahoma Watch.

Covering a public meeting doesn't mean publishing a minute-by-minute

recap. Instead, focus on the debates, decisions, and consequences that matter to your community. Press conferences, too, can be misleading distractions, Streuli continued. "Unless you know the event will deliver real news, your time is better spent reporting on meaningful developments," he said.

Regarding quotes, Streuli said they should add value, not noise. "When public officials or spokespeople give vague, evasive answers, press them again or report their refusal to answer. Don't let empty words take up valuable column inches. Likewise, avoid letting personal anecdotes dominate your work. While it's tempting to draw from your own life, your readers

care more about issues that affect them directly."

Cluttered storytelling weakens the impact of your work, he said. "Just like a good soup, only include the most potent ingredients; trim unnecessary quotes, repetitive backgrounds or tangents. Skip the jargon and avoid tired clichés," he advised.

Streuli also urged journalists to beware of political statements that sound nice but say little; push for substance; and, most importantly, craft strong leads. Ditch the metaphor-laden intros and get straight to the heart of the story.

Streuli said elevating your journalism isn't about working harder; it's about being sharper.

Showing up where the potential audience is today

presented by JASON COLLINGTON, TULSA WORLD

"Stop relying on tradition or filler," he said. "Start building trust and engagement by delivering reports that truly inform, challenge and connect."



In today's fractured media landscape, the path to growing audience trust isn't paved with branding; it's built through relationships, said Jason Collington, editor of the Tulsa World.

Many potential readers and subscribers don't become customers simply because they never have the opportunity to meet

you. They haven't had the chance to trust you, like you or even know what you offer, he said.

The strategy is clear: stop pushing your brand and start building your reputation. Collington said journalists and media leaders must literally get personal. Instead of expecting audiences to find their way to traditional platforms, it's time for newsrooms to meet people where they are. That means leaving the newsroom and stepping into real and digital spaces where disengaged communities live.

Companies need to have more humanity and make personal invitations. Offer access and insights in ways that showcase your value beyond headlines, Collington suggested. This involves getting in their ear through video and audio podcasts,

landing in their inboxes with curated and personalized email newsletters and finding your way, he said. The old ways are not working.

The truth is that institutions don't build trust; people do, he continued. Journalists, often the most informed people in any room, should lean into that credibility – not through opinions but through authentic, personalized fact-sharing.

Collington said it's time to stop relying on yesterday's strategies because they're not working.

But by showing up personally and consistently, media leaders can reintroduce themselves to the communities they serve and help audiences rediscover the importance of journalism, he concluded.

Oklahoma Watch Executive Director Ted Streuli leads a Speed Topic session at the June 7 OPA Convention in Shawnee. Streuli discussed how to write meaningfully by focusing on what readers care about. The Speed Topics sessions featured three 20-minute rounds with five topics in each segment to choose from.





MONTHLY CONTEST WINNERS



APRIL 2025 WINNERS

Daily, Semi- and Tri-Weekly Photo Winner:

BILLY HEFTON

Enid News & Eagle



Column Winner:

ALLIE PRATER

Cushing Citizen

Adventures with Allie: Living with History

We like to think of history as something kept behind glass. Something that is protected by experts, preserved by grants, catalogued by committees. But in truth, the preservation of a town's character and history doesn't rest solely on the shoulders of a historical society or a town council. It lives in the everyday choices we all make. Preserving the spirit and soul of a small town is everyone's job.

As someone who has always lived with history all around me, these thoughts are not just the ramblings of someone who thinks older buildings are nifty, these are the thoughts of someone who has been inside of a home built by Pueblo Indians centuries ago ...

All entries judged by members of the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame

Weekly Photo Winner:

MATT SWEARENGIN

Durant Democrat



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Editorial Winner:

KIM POINDEXTER

Tahlequah Daily Press

Mullin's 'joking' threats are no laughing matter

Anyone who has been in the presence of Sen. Markwayne Mullin – like the journalists he “jokingly” threatened a few days ago – may be reminded of a banty rooster, crowing and strutting in a hen yard, and praying the bigger, tougher Rhode Island Red won't come flapping his way.

Mullin's latest round of blustering came over the weekend via a video on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter. He suggested journalists might produce “less false stories” – technically, “fewer” is the right word, not “less” – if the violence used back in the day to settle differences returned to the fore.

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MAY 2025 WINNERS

Daily, Semi- and Tri-Weekly Photo Winner:

ANDY DOSSETT

Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise



All entries judged by members of the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame

Weekly Photo Winner:

DEANNA MADDOX

Yale News



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Column Winner:

ALLIE PRATER

Cushing Citizen

Adventures with Allie:

See you from the stock tank

There's nothing quite like being 8 months pregnant at the start of summer. The world is warming, flowers are blooming, and my ankles have vanished without a trace.

People keep telling me, "You're glowing!" And I appreciate the sentiment, but I feel more like I'm simmering. I'm not so much glowing as steaming, like a dumpling left too long in the basket. My internal thermostat is broken, the baby has taken over all my vital organs, and I've developed a deep and personal relationship with my hand-held fan.

Don't get me wrong, I love this baby, I absolutely do. But growing a human while nature simultaneously tries to roast me like a rotisserie chicken is a test I did not study for. My doctor says I should take walks. Outside. In Oklahoma. In May. That's adorable.

I waddled to the car yesterday morning, planning on going to the park for a walk and nearly melted into a sidewalk puddle.

Editorial Winner:

DAVID STRINGER

The Lawton Constitution

GPIF settlement still leaves lots of unanswered questions

At least one chapter of the sad demise of the Great Plains Improvement Foundation came to a close last week as the City of Lawton settled a claim related to Section 8 properties that were improperly sold by the foundation.

It's a complicated mess, but the gist of it is GPIF owned the properties and the city was the transferring entity which moved federally-designated funds for low income housing to the foundation to support the program's goals. One of the restrictions of taking those monies was the properties couldn't be sold without permission from the city. The City of Lawton held liens on the properties through HUD-backed mortgages.

When a lien's filed, there's supposed to be a record at the county. When a property is involved in a sale, it's routine that the buyer's representatives (or lender) check the title over to make sure there are no liens and that the title is free and clear. If you've ever bought or sold property, you know the drill.

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MONTHLY CONTEST WINNERS



Stillwater News Press celebrates historic move to the Berry House



The Berry House at 502 S. Duck is the new home of the Stillwater News Press. (Photo by Jason Elmquist, Stillwater News Press. Reprinted with permission.)

The Stillwater News Press marked a new chapter in its history with an open house and ribbon-cutting ceremony on June 12 to celebrate its relocation to 502 S. Duck Street. The newspaper's new home is the historic Berry House, built in 1908 and known for its distinctive architectural style and connection to former Oklahoma Lieutenant Governor James E. Berry, who served from 1935 to 1955.

During the celebration, visitors had the opportunity to tour the iconic residence and learn about its rich past. Refreshments for the event were provided by local favorite Roscoe's Feed Shack.

The Stillwater News Press

has deep roots in the community. It evolved from the merger of multiple newspapers, tracing its lineage back to the Stillwater Advance, established in 1892 – 15 years before Oklahoma achieved statehood.

The newspaper experienced various ownership changes over the years. In 1929, E.E. "Hook" Johnson became publisher, with C.R. Bellatti and R.M. Bellatti joining as part owners. Together, they combined the Stillwater Daily Press and the Stillwater Daily News, forming the foundation of today's Stillwater News Press. The Bellatti family led the newspaper for more than five decades until its sale to Community Newspaper

Holdings Inc. (CNHI) in 1997. CNHI remains the current owner.

With its move to the Berry House, the News Press begins a new era, continuing its commitment to local journalism and community engagement. Publisher Mike Kellogg emphasized the symbolic significance of uniting two historic Stillwater entities.

"Our goal is to continue the heritage that the Bellatti family established," Kellogg said. "The Berry family also played a major role in this community, and we hope to honor that legacy."

Kimie Calcagno, Director of Membership for the Stillwater Chamber of Commerce, presented the News Press

with its official "first dollar" of profit to mark the grand opening.

"The Stillwater News Press has long played a crucial role in the community—sharing stories that matter, informing residents, and giving Stillwater a voice," Calcagno said.

As the ceremony concluded, local nonprofit Wings of Hope presented the newspaper with a butterfly statue – a symbol of hope and transformation – promoting awareness of domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault. The butterfly is decorated with original comics by artist Patrick Jalbert, with funding provided by Dr. Robert Breedlove, a columnist for the News Press.



Wings of Hope Executive Director Brandi White and staff stand with Stillwater News Press Advertising Director Katie Bean, Editor Beau Simmons, artist Patrick Jalbert, Dr. Robert Breedlove and Publisher Mike Kellogg at the unveiling of a Wings of Hope butterfly on the grounds of the newspaper's new location.

Photo by Jessica Marshall, Stillwater News Press. Reprinted with permission.



Stillwater Chamber of Commerce Director of Membership Development Kimie Calcagno, right, presents Stillwater News Press Publisher Mike Kellogg with a commemorative dollar marking the News Press' move into a new location.

Photo by Jason Elmquist, Stillwater News Press. Reprinted with permission.

Journalism vs. advocacy

Joe Hight, the endowed chair of journalism ethics in the Mass Communication Department at the University of Central Oklahoma, was recently asked by Editor & Publisher to answer this question: "When does compelling journalism become advocacy?"

Hight replied:

"Our mass communication program has media ethics as a core curriculum in both professional media and strategic communication. ... For our strategic communications graduates, they may ultimately advocate for their clients – what the goals of that client are – in contrast to a journalist, who is not an advocate," Hight said, stressing that each discipline should adhere to ethical standards.

"I think that's something that needs to be stressed: Ethics positively impacts your credibility, your brand and who you really want to be. Ethics is an important part of who you are.

"When you do good journalistic work, good data journalism, for example, and when you tell stories that compel people to act, that has impact," Hight added. "That doesn't mean you have to be an advocate for an organization. It means your stories are ones that people see as credible and compelling enough that they act because of it. I think journalistic organizations that consider social issues important – criminal justice issues, things like that. Those types of stories should have an impact."

Read responses from other experts on Editor & Publisher's website: <https://tinyurl.com/4498trxe>.

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Christmas in July subscription sale

The special not only gives residents a great deal on staying informed, but also benefits a local charity.



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**Stigler News-Sentinel
readers search for keys
to open treasure chest**

Readers of the Stigler News-Sentinel are searching for the key that opens a treasure chest filled with gift certificates and prizes from local businesses.

[illegible]

On July 21, individuals will try the keys they collected to open the treasure chest at the News-Sentinel. Non-winning key holders will be asked to provide contact information to be entered into a second chance drawing that will be held at the end of the contest if the lock has not been opened.

Lawton Constitution invites readers to help with recovery efforts in Kerr County, Texas

“Kerrville is a fellow member of Southern Newspapers,” said David Stringer, publisher of The Constitution. “So we have a connection to those folks in ‘Hill Country.’ Many individuals have lost loved ones and everything they own and if any of our readers had an interest in helping, we wanted to point them in the right direction.”

The Community Foundation of the Texas Hill Country is a non-profit agency serving as a collection point for recovery efforts.

Several newspapers ramping up Readers' choice award contests

Voting in the **McAlester News-Capital's** annual Readers' Choice Awards is wrapping up. The awards encompass more than 120 categories, enabling voters to select their favorite businesses and recognize individuals. "We want to hear your opinion on the best businesses in our community, so make sure to cast your vote in our Readers' Choice," said News-Capital Publisher Reina Owens. "This is a fun time of year as people get excited to support their favorite businesses, and it shines a light in our community."

Also winding up its Best of Cherokee County Readers' Choice contest is the **Tahlequah Daily Press**. Voting in the Daily Press contest is online only. An online aggregator tabulates nominations and final tallies. At the end of July, the Daily Press will produce a magazine naming the winners.

Voting started July 16 in “The Best in the World” contest created by the **Tulsa World**. This contest names the best of everything in Tulsa in more than 150 categories. The five people and businesses with the most nominations in each category advance to the voting round. The event where winners are named is scheduled for September 11, with results being published in the Tulsa World on September 14.

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.

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Simple ideas to improve photos for web printing



Computer Notes

from the road
by Wilma Newby
wnewby@okpress.com

At the recent OPA Convention, I discussed ways to make photos print better on newsprint. This month I'll share some of those tips with all of you.

To start, set up Photoshop in CMYK format, which works better on newsprint. In the **Edit** menu, go to **Color Settings** and look for **Working Spaces**. Click on the arrow at right and go to **Custom CMYK** at the top of the list.

In this box look under **Ink Options**, then **Ink Colors** and select **SWOP (Newsprint)**. The Dot Gain changes to 30%. This percentage is how much a drop of ink bleeds into the absorbent newsprint. These setting help the program know what to do when making the conversion from RGB to CMYK. The medium we are printing on is absorbent instead of smooth-coated stock. If you were printing something like magazines, you would change to a coated stock setting.

The pressman where your paper is printed may be able to tell you the exact percentage of bleed that works best with that press.

Photos running on black-and-white pages of the paper should be turned to **Grayscale** under **Image > Mode > Grayscale**. Doing this makes the

photo look better in the paper and enlarged photos from poor quality cameras will hold more detail. Make this change after lightening the photo to the point that it will look good in the paper. It may need to be lightened once more after going to grayscale.

Now look for **Lab color** under **Image > Mode**. When going from RGB to Grayscale try stopping on lab color and try a **Gaussian Blur** on the **B Channel** to get rid of noise in bad quality photos. When done, go to grayscale. This often improves the photo quite a bit.

The next step to creating a quality photo for newsprint is **Image > Image size**. If you have a low-quality photo with low resolution, image size should be addressed early in the correction process. Resolution that can be held on most web presses is 170 DPI, but going higher will not cause problems with photos. Many papers use 300 DPI resolution when trying to fix low quality photos. Note the setting for how it is going to **re-sample** the photo at the bottom of the box. Make sure it says **best for enlargement** or, if you're reducing the size look for **best for reduction**. This lets Photoshop do its best to improve the photo.

If you're going to run a very large photo, consider upping the resolution to 300 DPI for photos that were 72 DPI when opened. That 22-inch-

wide photo will look good at 170 DPI when you bring it down to around 11-inches wide. Remember to change all the settings in the image size box at once so Photoshop can work its best.

Another tip is to create a folder of photos that printed well in the paper on the desktop of the person making photo corrections to use as a reference tool.

To examine the corrected photos, use the **info tool** under **Window > Info**. This tool can be used to read the CMYK setting of the good photo to compare with the photo you're trying to correct. You can visually see if the colors are in the ballpark when you compare things like grass, streets and people's faces.

A **flyout menu** in the **Info panel** allows you to set the photo to CMYK or Grayscale.

With the quality of photos from newer SLR cameras, you shouldn't need to do much to the photo, especially if the photo was taken in a bright area. So don't overcorrect.

Most photos need a little lightening up to run well on the press. Use **Curves** or **Levels** to do this with a little bit of lightening in **Brightness/Contrast**.

Most newspapers have their own way of lightening photos, and this is OK if the photo comes out good. Those with high-end cameras that save in RAW format may open them

that way and lighten the photo there.

However, not all papers are lucky enough to have a high-end camera. But even if you don't have a great camera or are working with a lesser quality photo, you can still make it pop.

Most photos can use some sharpening but be careful not to overdo it. To use, go to **Filter > Sharpen > Unsharp Mask**.

Use the top **Amount** slider and run it up a little. If you're seeing halos in high contrast areas of the photo, bring it back down. This tool can often help a blurry photo look better.

At the end of the photo correction process, convert to **CMYK**. You may think the photo looks flat but that's only because monitors are RGB and don't display CMYK well.

Convert to grayscale after you correct the image size and lighten the photo. If needed, lighten more and use the unsharp mask.

Practice using the info dialog box with photos that print well. This is a good way to train new people and improve the overall quality of photos in your newspaper.

Remember that a truly bad photo will never be as good as a quality photo. If you must use a bad photo, make it grayscale and place it on a black-and-white page of the paper.

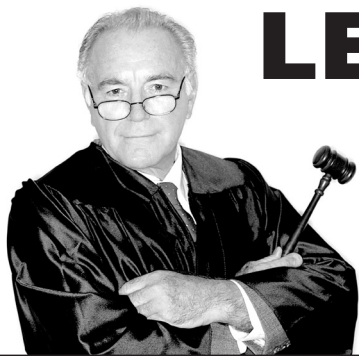
Even with all the correct steps and corrected photos, there may be times when they still don't look good in print. If this happens, spend some time trying to find out what happened and see if there's a way to correct it for next time.

LEGAL ADVICE

is just one of the benefits of being a member of the Oklahoma Press Association's Legal Services Plan. Remove the worry of needing professional advice by enrolling today. For more information contact:

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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.

DEATHS

LOUISE HIGHT CAIN, the former owner and publisher of the Atoka County Times, died July 4, 2025. She was 84.

Cain was born December 2, 1940. She graduated from Atoka High School in 1958.

She married Foster Frederick Cain in 1976. The couple was married for 28 years before his death in 2004. Their marriage marked a powerful partnership.

Foster, a professional newspaperman, continued a family tradition of publishing that spanned four generations.

Foster moved to Atoka and purchased the Atoka County Times in 1972. Together, Louise and Foster became the driving force behind the newspaper. Louise served as publisher for many years, overseeing the production of more than 2,500 issues before retiring in 2023.

When not working, she enjoyed friends and family.

She was a longtime member of the Atoka First Baptist Church, where she previously served as a Sunday school teacher. She was also a member of the Oklahoma Good Sam's Club, serving as the club's president in 1997.

Cain is survived by her son Mark Dale Cain, three grandchildren and one great-grandson.

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Remembering our friends & colleagues who died the previous year.

Alex K. Adwan June 15, 2024	Harrison 'Lyle' Becker June 14, 2024	John Louis Spire Sr. June 4, 2024	Charles 'Chuck' Sidney Lake July 11, 2024	Darrell Dion Sumner July 1, 2024
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The Lawton Constitution donates to local charities

The Lawton Constitution was once again able to assist three local charities, thanks to a \$10,000 gift from the Carmage and Martha Ann Walls Foundation.

The foundation allows publishers at all Southern Newspapers Inc.-owned papers to choose a local non-profit or non-profits to receive funds each year.

The Lawton Constitution split the gift with the United Way, Lawton Food Bank and Embrace Hope.

"Walls Foundation gifts allow our paper to make a significant impact on non-profits that make our area better and help local volunteers to carry out their mission," said David Stringer, Constitution publisher.

"The legacy of the Walls family is not just one of promoting quality journalism, but also promoting a deep sense of caring for the communities we serve."

Carmage Walls founded Southern Newspapers. Martha Ann Walls served as president of the company for most of its history.

In the past 16 years, the foundation has given more than \$3.6 million to the communities Walls-owned newspapers serve, including Texas-based newspapers in Galveston, Baytown, Brazoria County, Bay City, Lufkin, Nacogdoches, Paris, New Braunfels, Kerrville and Seguin; as well as Lawton.

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Send your news or story ideas to

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PUBLIC NOTICE JOURNALISM CONTEST

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- (b) helps readers understand a specific public notice, or
- (c) explains the consequences of a public body's failure to publish a notice in a newspaper.

PUBLIC NOTICE CONTEST RULES

ELIGIBILITY:

Staff at all OPA legal newspaper and general news media member publications as well as Individual members are eligible to compete. Entries must have been previously published in print or on the publication's website. All entries will compete together. One entry per writer per month will be accepted.

HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRIES:

Each month, submit your entry at okpress.com/public-notice-contest. Attachments should be in PDF format. Entries may also be emailed (full-page tearsheet) to amarshall@okpress.com. Include the author's name, name of publication and date of publication.

ENTRY DEADLINE:

All entries published in the previous month must be received by OPA by the 15th of the current month.

AWARDS:

One winner per month will receive a Certificate of Achievement, a \$100 check and recognition in The Oklahoma Publisher. Annual Sweepstakes winner will receive a plaque, a \$200 check and recognition in The Publisher.

ENTER ONLINE AT:
okpress.com/public-notice-contest

Proposals sought for detention center medical staffing, admin

PAGE 1

APRIL 30, 2025

PAXSON HAWS
Managing Editor

The Cleveland County Sheriff's Office is soliciting proposals for medical staffing and medical administration at the F. Dewayne Beggs Detention Center.

According to the request for quotes published in the public notice section of The Transcript last week, each city and county detention facility in the state is required to provide adequate health care to inmates, including medical, dental and mental health services.

The CCSO and the detention center have faced significant scrutiny over the past two years following the deaths of several inmates. Five inmates died in custody in 2024; Nicole Deann McComb on Aug. 28; Daniel Edward Freeman on Aug. 25; Thomas Sanchez Pesina on May 4; William Kenneth Moore on April 19. In 2025, there has been one death of an inmate in custody, Jacob Shane Dieball, 27.

The detention center's current medical provider is Turn Key Health, which has provided services to facilities in Oklahoma and Tulsa County as well as Cleveland County.

Read entire winning entry at
okpress.com/public-notice-contest