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Arkansas

Publisher Weekly

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ASSOCIATION

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Serving Press and State Since 1873

SPJ plans session on journo ethics

The Arkansas Pro Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) is planning a session on “Ethics for Journalists” scheduled for Thursday, February 22, at Vino’s Brewpub in Little Rock. The event is free.

Anonymous sources, graphic images and conflicts of interest are just some of the ethical issues journalists must navigate on a regular basis. Included in this session will be a presentation on “What Would You Do?” with competitors on two teams



learning about the SPJ Code of Ethics by playing editor in a variety of sketches designed to test ethical reasoning.

Judges will award points for each response.

The team with the most points wins the game.

If you’d like to compete, email Sarah DeClerk at

sdeclerk@arkansasonline.com by Friday, February 9.

Spectators are also welcome at this fun and educational event.

ANF 2018 summer internships announced

The Arkansas Newspaper Foundation (ANF) has announced that their 2018 ANF Paid Summer Internship program is set to begin for this year.

Four newspapers in Arkansas will be selected to host a summer intern. The ANF will make \$1,500 matching grants available from the ANF to the four lucky newspapers selected from application received. Newspapers are selected to participate on a first-come basis. Host newspaper applications are due by March 10, 2018.

Over the years, ANF has placed students in community newspapers across the state. Not only do these students receive valuable first-hand experience that will assist them in their career choice and help them navigate the interview process, they often are hired after graduation by Arkansas newspapers.

Last year, ANF received student applications from across the state, including from students at Arkansas Tech University, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, Harding University, University of Central Arkansas,

College of the Ozarks, and Arkansas State University.

Host newspapers for the 2017 summer internship program were *The Times-Dispatch*, Walnut Ridge; *The Daily Record*, Little Rock; *Carroll County Newspapers*, Berryville; and, the *Harrison Daily Times*.

“These internships have been a positive experience for our participating newspapers, as well as benefitting the student interns greatly,” said

Karen Brown, ANF Executive Director. “Internships provide insight for both parties – newspaper staff and students.”

Please watch the ANF Facebook page

(<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Arkansas-Newspaper-Foundation/157891060935155>) for the ANF Summer Intern host newspaper application and additional information regarding the internship program for 2018. If you would like more information about the ANF Matching Grant Program for paid summer internships, email Karen Brown, Executive Director, at arknewspaperfoundation@gmail.com.

APA Advertising Contest deadline approaches

We know several APA newspapers are working on their annual advertising contest entries because we’ve had calls, but just in case you have overlooked this opportunity be reminded that the deadline for submitting entries in the APA’s annual Better Newspaper Advertising Contest is Wednesday, January 31.

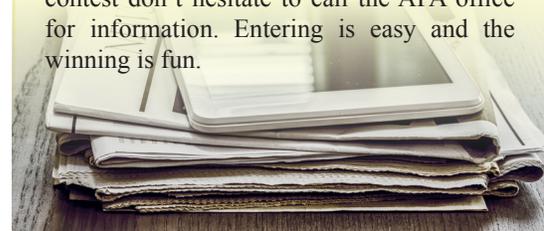
There’s more information on the contest that can be found on the APA web site at www.arkansaspress.org. Otherwise, you can call the APA office with questions or email APA contest coordinator Terri Cobb at terri@arkansaspress.org if you are having challenges with your entries.

If you would like to take a look at the advertising contest site, give a click to this link: <http://www.newspapercontest.com/Contests/ArkansasPressAssociation.aspx>.

Members of the Louisiana Press Association who will judge the contest in February will determine the winning entries. The awards themselves will be presented at the APA’s annual advertising conference set for Thursday and Friday, March 15-16, at the Rockefeller Institute on Petit Jean Mountain.

As always the contest is divided into several categories, and also divided into weekly and daily newspaper divisions. The categories range from the best single ads to the best online ads. Special sections also have their own category, as do ads that incorporate the use of humor.

If you have questions regarding the contest don’t hesitate to call the APA office for information. Entering is easy and the winning is fun.





Tom Larimer's *Potpourri*

Snow days.

Doesn't that conger up memories of hoping to get enough snow so that school would be canceled, and the giddiness at the news that sure enough it had been?

Those days would be filled with sledding, snowman building, snowball battles, games of "fox and geese," and other snow-related activities. Those days produced a major break from the routine, but more importantly it allowed us to "escape" school and to do what we wanted to do.

Thanks to technology and the Arkansas legislature, a lot of students don't get that blissful time off from school. Homework is the order of the day for many, studies that will at least partially fill the "snow day" of a lot of Arkansas public school students.

Not that there's anything wrong with that, but still.

The late **John Robert Starr**, the former managing editor of the *Arkansas Democrat* during the newspaper "war" days with the *Arkansas Gazette*, wrote a column once about snow days that registered me. He called those on his staff who made it to work on a snow day at the time as "tigers," and that that's exactly what he wanted on his staff.

He didn't elaborate, but I would imagine those who didn't both show up for work on the particular snow event that precipitated that column, those who did not earn the "tiger" label, were likely subjected to a modicum of vitriol from the crusty old editor. Perhaps a modicum might be an underestimation. I'm just guessing.

His point was that despite the inconveniencing weather, there is still work to be done. The "war" was ongoing, and didn't take a break just because of the weather. The newspaper still had to be produced and to do that there had to be some news generated to fill the pages of the newspaper.

Technology has changed a lot of that for us. Where once there was little we could do from home when travel to work was not really practical, now we can almost do anything at home we can do at work. That's good. Well, it's good for the most part. It can definitely be abused.

So Tuesday I'm heading in to work. Sure, there's some snow but really barely a measurable amount. There were some city streets that were snow-packed, but the main thoroughfares and the interstates were clear. Even so, state government had already shut down for the day. The public schools and most of the private schools, too.

I think sometimes we just look for an excuse to take a day off. The genesis of that may well come from those blissful snow days from our formative years.

Of course there's also that "discretion being the better part of valor," too. Most of the closures were announced when it was still uncertain there would actually be any snow, or sufficient to make travel hazardous. It turns out it was sort of a non-event, but our reaction to it turned it into an event. Business came to a halt. We use this as an opportunity not to come to work because, well, nobody else is going to work.

As in almost all of these snow events, the biggest hazard on the

road is not the accumulation of frozen precipitation. It's those out there trying to navigate it that haven't the slightest idea how to drive on slick streets and highways that are the real hazard. Or those who don't perceive the danger and drive like they always do, faster than everyone else with little thought given to how they might manage it if they were forced to slow or stop their vehicle.

There wasn't much of that out there Tuesday morning because there thankfully wasn't much traffic at all. Of course that's because the state, the county and the schools were closed for the day. That takes a lot of people off the road.

But there was little in the way of frozen precipitation on the roads, either. At least a portion of that can be attributed to the work of state, county and city road crews treating the roads, streets and highways.

Other parts of the state got more snow than did Central Arkansas, and the inconvenience factor was considerably higher. I think a lot of APA members were taking a snow day, too, as the telephone at APA world headquarters in Little Rock rang a total of one time Tuesday morning. I guess that could be construed that nobody else was working, or it could be construed that they assumed WE would not be working. We were, barely.

We were not alone in this, of course. Of our six tenants upstairs in the APA building, only one of them showed up for work Tuesday. The building was uncharacteristically quiet at least for this one day.

That afforded precious time to get some things done, the first of which was to clear the walkways in the front of the building to make it safe for those who might have actually showed up for work. Shoveling snow and spreading snow melt is hardly something I relish, and never have actually, especially when the wind is howling and the temperature is considerably south of freezing.

One thing this week's weather event did do was to arrive in time for all of our member publications to be able to photograph it for this week's publications. I look forward to seeing some of those images and how they're utilized in the newspaper.

That's the one thing that can still be said of snow events, they are pretty to look at. Of course it would have been better if they'd have come around Christmas time, but for those who really like this sort of thing it's better late than never I suppose.

The really nice thing about snow events in Arkansas is that they don't tend to linger. Unlike some areas up north where snow today will still be around come spring, snow here will be a distant memory by springtime, perhaps recalled only in the photos displayed in the newspaper of the first snow event of 2018.

It will surely be gone here by this weekend when temperatures are forecast to be back up in the 60s.

Now that's more like it.

—
Have a great week.

Tom

APA Members In the News

Hendrix joins *Ashley County Ledger* as reporter

Nathan Hendrix, 32, has joined the staff of the *Ashley County Ledger* in Hamburg as a reporter just after the first of the year.

Hendrix joined the *Ledger* after graduating from the University of Central Florida in Orlando with a bachelor's degree in journalism.

He is a veteran of the U.S. Army, and was a linguist in the Republic of Korea for over seven years. He also served a tour in Iraq.

He has family ties in the Ashley County area.

Hibbard ends record run at *The Times Dispatch*

The ending of 2017 marked a milestone for both *The Times Dispatch*, Walnut Ridge, and for one of its integral staff members, **Janice Kay Hibbard**. After 53-and one-half years, probably the longest span of any employee in *Dispatch* history, Janice retired. To be precise, her status is semi-retirement, as she is now working only one day a week as of Jan. 1. Janice joined the newspaper staff not long after her graduation from Walnut Ridge High School in 1964.

"Janice is the last of a group of longtime *Times Dispatch* staffers, who have been and were an integral part of our organization for decades and who worked with four generations of my family," said **John Bland**, publisher.

Among Janice's duties were circulation and advertising manager and advertising sales, as well as general bookkeeping, billing, bill collecting, troubleshooting and much more. "Whether selling advertising or collecting an overdue payment, Janice could do both in an equally pleasant manner. Well before 'good customer service' was a popular term, Janice's number one priority was always pleasing the customer," Bland added.

NEW ADDITION? LET US KNOW!

We want to know about your new hires, retirees and promotions!

Send your staffing changes to info@arkansaspress.org to be updated online and included in our weekly bulletin and monthly newsletter.

2018 APA Press decals distributed

The 2018 Arkansas Press Association "PRESS" decals were sent out to APA member newspapers this week, and additional copies of the decal may be ordered from the APA office.

The PRESS "clings" have for years been a fixture on many vehicles operated by APA members, identifying the vehicle as working press. The decals

have been sent to APA publishers and editors, although additional copies may be requested by emailing to info@arkansaspress.org.

Each APA newspaper should have received two of the 2018 versions. The decals are intended for use by actual working press at the newspapers, meaning publishers, editors, reporters and photographers.

The logo for the Arkansas Press Association features the word "ARKANSAS" in a red, sans-serif font at the top. Below it, the word "PRESS" is written in a much larger, bold, red, sans-serif font. At the bottom, the word "ASSOCIATION" is written in a red, sans-serif font, similar in size to "ARKANSAS".

City of Mansfield sued for FOIA violation

Fort Smith Attorney **Joey McCutchen** announced today that he has filed a lawsuit on behalf of City of Mansfield Mayor Larry Austin. The suit alleges a violation of the open meeting provision of the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act connected with a series of text messages between several Mansfield City Council Members and City Reporter/Treasurer **Becky Walker**. On December 21, 2017 the City of Mansfield held a scheduled City Council Meeting in which all six Mansfield City council members requested that Mayor Austin resign from his position. On December 23, 2017, through a series of text messages, several City Council Members and Becky Walker secretly discussed and agreed upon a plan to remove all of Mayor Austin's duties and powers. A public meeting was subsequently held in which the City Council passed an ordinance to remove the duties of the mayor, which Mayor Austin vetoed. The suit alleges that the text messages constitute

an illegal meeting which was not public and for which no notice was given, as is required by the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act.

McCutchen said, "The Mansfield City Council and Becky Walker, through a series of text messages, devised a secretive and unlawful plan—out of the public eye—to effectively remove Mayor Austin from his position." Arkansas law is clear that a Board of Directors cannot hold a meeting to discuss public business without giving advanced notice to the media.

McCutchen also said that "removing the powers of an elected official in this manner is an attempt to undermine and circumvent the democratic process." The suit seeks that the Circuit Court to declare that the text messages constitute an unlawful meeting, and enjoining the City of Mansfield from holding further meetings without notice as required by the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act.

Annual reminder: Don't use 'Super Bowl' in promotions

Here's your annual reminder that "Super Bowl" is copyrighted and may not be used in advertisements of "Super Bowl Specials" or "Super Bowl Parties," or any other reference in advertising to "the big game."

Also, the Super Bowl logo, NFL shield and team names and designs are also trademarked. Use of them in ads should also be avoided.

So if you have an advertiser looking to capitalize on "the big game," remind them that you'll need to call it that, "the big game," or

some such other moniker other than "Super Bowl."

Super Bowl advertising, mostly of the broadcast variety, has created billions of dollars in advertising since the inaugural game over 50 years ago. Spending on advertising on this year's Super Bowl is expected to near \$400 million. It ads up quickly when a 30-second spot costs \$5 million.

It's okay to use "Super Bowl" or "Super Sunday" in news coverage.



James Morgan Braswell

James Morgan Braswell, 83, of DeWitt, former owner of the *DeWitt Era-Enterprise* newspaper, died December 11, 2017, at his home with his family by his side.

He was born June 26, 1934 in Norphlet, AR, to **Morgan Durrett Braswell** and **Minnie Kate Clark Braswell**.

In 1996, James was awarded the Golden Fifty Service Award by the Arkansas Press Association for over 50 years of service to the newspaper industry of Arkansas.

During DeWitt's 150th celebration of its founding, James was given an award recognizing the *DeWitt Era-Enterprise*, founded in 1882, for being the oldest continually operated business in DeWitt.

Funeral services were Thursday, December 14, at First United Methodist Church in DeWitt. Burial followed in Cedarcrest Memorial Gardens by Essex Funeral Home. Memorials may be made to Caring and Sharing Food Pantry, P.O. Box 8, DeWitt, AR 72042, or donor's choice, www.essexfuneralhome.com.

Summit visit urged to take newsprint fight to Capitol

The National Newspaper Association (NNA) is urging members to fight back against threatening countervailing duties that could dramatically increase newsprint prices. The first round of U.S. duties was announced Monday and will begin affecting Canadian paper producers on Jan 16. The new duties will range from 4.42 percent to 9.93 percent.

NNA President **Susan Rowell** is urging publishers to attend NNA's Community Newspaper Leadership Summit March 14-15 to aggressively urge Congressional action to oppose a misguided tariff that jeopardizes community newspapers.

The preliminary duties are just the latest volley in a battle that began last summer when a small newsprint mill in Washington State filed a complaint with the Commerce Department. Another set of possible duties to further raise paper prices looms later this year, with a continuing investigation to ensue through summer.

Registration for the event is available here. NNA will supply background papers and issue briefings for those who will visit their congressional delegations while in D.C.

Public Notice Recourse Center criticizes FCC Commissioners for smug dismissiveness

In comments filed last month with the Federal Communication Commission (FCC), the Public Notice Resource Center (PNRC) criticized Commissioners who mocked opposition to a recent proposal that would eliminate FCC rules requiring broadcasters to publish a notice in a local newspaper when they file certain license applications with the Commission.

"We were struck by the dismissive tone adopted in the statements of (some of the Commissioners) respecting the notion that local newspapers might still serve as the most effective means to deliver notice to the public," said PNRC in its comments. "How did we reach a point where their consideration of the issue of public notice is so facile they ridicule a longstanding practice without bothering to provide any evidence that the alternative they're promoting would be an improvement?"

The public notice requirement the FCC is now proposing to eliminate was adopted in 1962 to ensure the public knows about applications filed by broadcasters operating in their communities. The rule was designed to provide local communities with a meaningful opportunity to participate in the broadcast licensing process. Despite that rationale, the FCC's proposal failed to explain how eliminating newspaper notice would promote citizen input in the licensing process. It focused instead on providing broadcasters with "flexibility" and reducing their "costs and regulatory burdens."

PNRC noted that "the cost and burden of placing a public notice advertisement in a newspaper are microscopic" and that the FCC has no reason to provide broadcasters with flexibility in how they inform the public.

"The Commission's goal should be to eliminate broadcasters' flexibility by developing rules that provide them with precise instructions about how they must notify the public to promote the highest level of input," argued PNRC. "After all ... (the broadcasters) are the proverbial foxes guarding citizen henhouses here. They have every incentive to use any discretion the Commission may grant to minimize participation in the process by which their applications will be reviewed."

Newsprint is inherently superior to the Internet as a source of public notice due to intrinsic differences between the two mediums, PNRC argued. "The serendipitous process (of

reading a newspaper) guarantees that public notices in local newspapers will be seen by many people in the community who didn't pick up the paper intending to read them." By contrast, public notices on the web "get lost and are easily hidden." To illustrate this danger, PNRC highlighted relatively recent controversies in Arkansas and Michigan in which local officials admitted that notices posted on government websites failed to inform citizens about local projects with major environmental impacts.

Newspapers still reach a significant audience and most papers now post notices in both the print edition and on their website, said PNRC. "So if the Commission eliminates newspaper notice requirements (for broadcast license applications), it will also reduce the presence of those notices on the Internet. Could it be any clearer, then, that doing so would significantly diminish citizen input in the licensing process?"

In his statement supporting the Commission's proposal, Chairman **Ajit Pai** mocked the notion that newspaper notices may still be the most effective means of reaching local citizens. "Google it if you don't agree with me," he giped. Commissioner **Brendan Carr** also made light of current notice requirements by noting they were approved the same day the Beatles released their first single and the first James Bond movie premiered, as if that was somehow conclusive.

Around the same time the Commissioners were ridiculing the concept of public notice, Chairman Pai released his now-infamous Harlem Shake video, in which he taunted those who disagree with his position on Net Neutrality. He also mocked fellow Commissioner **Mignon Clyburn** that same week after she passionately expressed opposition to the FCC proposal on Net Neutrality.

"Mocking opposing viewpoints appears to be a problem at the FCC," said PNRC Chairman **Brad Thompson**, president of Detroit Legal News Publishing. "The Commissioners have an ethical and legal responsibility to fully consider positions they disagree with. Yucking it up during their proceedings is inconsistent with that responsibility and precludes the possibility they might learn something."

PNRC was joined in its comments by 35 associations representing newspaper publishers.