Steve Trolinger recalls APA success stories during tenure as president

How many times do you get to make legislative history? Steve Trolinger recalls a historic win for Arkansas Press Association (APA) during his tenure as APA president in 1994.

“The AFL-CIO in Little Rock decided newspaper carriers should be employees, a designation that would have been a disaster for community newspapers,” Trolinger said. “Dennis Schick, Milton Scott and I worked the Capitol halls to get a law passed to have newspaper carriers named independent contractors. Gov. Jim Guy Tucker vetoed the law, but with help we went back to the Legislature and got the veto overridden. It was the first gubernatorial veto to be overridden since Reconstruction.”

During the same year, there was some controversy over a move to sell the association’s clipping service. Though the operation made money, running the clipping service took up a huge amount of staff time. “In hind sight, the move was a good one. It took a load off staff people and enabled APA to focus on the business of newspapers,” he said.

Trolinger’s newspaper journey started in his native Amarillo, Texas, where he and his brother were newspaper carriers for what is now the Globe-News. He wrote for the paper before going to the University of Oklahoma and becoming a night police reporter for the Daily Oklahoman.

After his tenure in Oklahoma, he edited several small daily newspapers for the now-defunct Worrell chain in Virginia and northern Illinois. He worked for the Jefferson-Pilot chain in Plant City, Fla., and for the Chicago Tribune Company, gradually getting advertising experience and becoming a general manager. He was in Naples, Fla., when he decided to move...
The Arkansas Newspaper Foundation (ANF) has announced the following applicants have been selected by the host newspapers for internships for the summer of 2018.

“Each host newspaper expressed their appreciation to those who applied,” said ANF Executive Director Karen Brown. “We had more qualified applicants this year than ever before. Each applicant had many outstanding qualifications and attributes.”

**Steve Trolinger**
Continued from page 1

Trolinger put his experience at newspaper chains to work by partnering in a new venture, Community Publishers, Inc., in 1982. “We bought a small daily in Bentonville, which was then a town of about 7,000, in a highly competitive newspaper environment,” he said. “My mentor was Ray Kimball from DeQueen. I was a young, cocky publisher, and he helped me get my head on straight.”

Over the years, CPI acquired newspapers in Arkansas, Missouri and Oklahoma, along with commercial printing operations. At one time they had 24 papers and three commercial printing operations, with 350 employees.

Trolinger has fond memories of many newspaper friends and co-workers during those years. He is proud that three additional CPI employees eventually became APA presidents – Jane Christenson in 1991, Mike Brown in 2004 and Jeff Christenson in 2005.

He believes community newspapers are important as the one place to find out what is going on and who is doing what. It used to be everyone read the paper and found a treasure trove of information there. He fears the loss of that connection.

“All of us who love the business hope a financial model is found that allows community newspapers to survive,” Trolinger said. “It’s a tough business, and we need young people to figure it out. I think I retired at a good time.”

Trolinger was a partner at Community Publishers, Inc., for 31 years. Today he and his wife Marian live in Stuart, a small Florida town that allows no high-rise buildings. Stuart was named by Coastal Living magazine as the number one coastal town in America a few years ago.

Marian, a retired healthcare attorney, and Steve were married just three years ago, but they’ve know each other since the third grade. They reconnected at their high school reunion in 2012.

“It’s a great life, and we have great friends down here. My plan was to spend lots of time fishing, since we live right on the ocean,” he said. Instead, he volunteers for their Methodist church soup kitchen and food pantry and provides gardening services for a nonprofit. The Trolingers bought an old house and a lot of time has gone into remodeling it.

“I miss newspaper people – they are fun to be around. I especially miss my APA and CPI friends in Arkansas,” he said. “But not the Arkansas winters.”

Today marks deadline for APA board at-large nominations

Today, April 26, is the deadline for at-large board member nominations. Three APA members have been nominated by the nominating committee process and are published in a separate article in this week’s Arkansas Publisher Weekly. Ballots in the annual election will be mailed May 11.

To make an at-large nomination, letters of recommendation from three APA member newspapers in good standing are required. APA members may nominate themselves or others to be included on the annual ballot.

Need a press safety vest?

Brightly colored safety vests are available from APA for $20. The safety vests, which are presently in limited supply, are required of journalists working accidents or other incidents on a public roadway. To obtain a vest, visit our APA online store at this link: https://arkansaspress.site-ym.com/store/ViewProduct.aspx?id=5016426.

Arkansas Newspaper Foundation interns announced

The Arkansas Newspaper Foundation (ANF) has announced the following applicants have been selected by the host newspapers for internships for the summer of 2018.

“Each host newspaper expressed their appreciation to those who applied,” said ANF Executive Director Karen Brown. “We had more qualified applicants this year than ever before. Each applicant had many outstanding qualifications and attributes.”

**The Times-Dispatch, Walnut Ridge**

**Cassidy Kendall**, a journalism major from the University of Central Arkansas.

**Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Fayetteville**

**Andrea Johnson**, a junior at University of Arkansas in Fayetteville who is majoring in News/Journalism with a minor in Spanish.

**Carroll County News, Berryville**

**Whitney Gladden**, a journalism major who is a graduating senior at the University of Arkansas.

**Nashville News-Leader**

**Grace Talley** of Nashville, a freshman at Ouachita Baptist University who is majoring in graphic design and mass communications.
Press decals available

These spiffy Arkansas Press Association (APA) “PRESS” decals are available for “working press” members of APA. To obtain a decal, call the office at (501) 374-1500 or email info@arkansaspress.org. They are simply to identify the vehicles of members of the working press and do not constitute free admission to anything.

Third notice of APA board member nominees

This is the third and final notice that three APA members have been nominated to fill the vacant APA board of directors positions. The nominees were chosen in March by the nominating committee and validated by the board of directors at its annual spring meeting at APA headquarters in Little Rock.

Nominating committee members include of the immediate past president, one sitting APA Board member and two at large members. Those roles were filled this year by Nat Lea, Ellen Kreth, Britt Talent and Teresa Hicks.

The nominees include:

• Kelly Freudensprung of Benton, publisher of The Saline Courier
• Crystal Costa of Fort Smith, publisher of the Times Record
• John Robert Schirmer of Nashville, publisher/editor of the Nashville News-Leader.

These three candidates along with four others will appear on the ballot in APA’s annual election to be held in May.

Today is the last day to make an at-large nomination. A letter of recommendation from three APA newspapers in good standing is required for an at-large nomination.

Designated voter letters were mailed earlier this week, and the ballots for the annual APA election will be mailed in mid-May. The newly elected APA board members will assume their seats on the board at the conclusion of the annual APA SuperConvention.

Thank you contest judges

Thank you to these Arkansas Press Association members who helped judge the Louisiana Press Association Better Newspaper Contest:

Harold Coggins, Advance Monticellonian, Monticello
Jeff Mitchell, Eric Besson, Sonny Albarado, Phillip Martin, Staci Miller, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Little Rock
Rebecca McGraw, Arkansas Press Association
Terry Hawkins, Dumas Clarion
Jennifer Allen, Hot Springs Village Voice
David McCollum, Log Cabin Democrat, Conway
DeWayne Holloway, Montgomery County News, Mount Ida
Lisa Thompson, Rusty Turner, Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Fayetteville

Karen Sherrell, Carrie Johnson, Pacesetting Times, Horseshoe Bend
Frank Fellone, North Little Rock
Dennis Schick, North Little Rock
Pat Stuckey, Saline Courier, Benton
Millie McClain, Eric Moore, Tanner Newton, Byron Tate, LeAnn Brown, Sheridan Headlight
Rusty Fraser, Lori Freeze, Daphne Morton, Stone County Leader, Mountain View
Elizabeth Horn, Waldron News
Becca Bona, The Daily Record, Little Rock
Graham Thomas, Herald-Leader, Siloam Springs
Arshia Khan, Arkansas Life Magazine, Little Rock

Guest Editorial:

Nine Ways to Regain Your Readers’ Trust

By Tim Gallagher, president of The 20/20 Network

In my 12 years of parochial school education, I routinely earned B’s in math. They should have been A’s because I normally got the answer correct, but the teachers would dock me because “You didn’t show your work.” They didn’t believe me that I knew the answers. I could have been cheating because I did not show how I got the answer.

This is one of the reasons for the ever-fading trust in journalism. We don’t show our work.

Most of you have seen both “The Post” and “Spotlight.” In ancient times there was “All the President’s Men.” At the end of both current movies, the audience I was in cheered. These movies showed what it is to be a journalist. How carefully we craft articles after numerous interviews and resolving conflicting versions of the truth, often hidden by government officials or powerful people. Journalism is difficult.

We work and work and work until we get the “best obtainable version of the truth” by deadline, Watergate reporter Carl Bernstein said in 1998.

The trouble is the public thinks we make it up. They think we have our minds made up on how the story is going to appear before we have gathered the first fact.

The vast space of the web, and our opportunities on social media, provide journalists with a chance to show the public how we work. We can regain their trust by pulling back the curtain.

Here are nine ideas on how to do it:

Tell them how you did it. Jay Rosen wrote in a splendid column for PressThink that we ought to explain how we do what we do. He credited ProPublica for doing this well. Take it a step further. On each web version of locally written stories, attach a note from the reporter detailing the sources used and the documents read. Attach links to these sources and documents when appropriate.

Your editor is your best voice for

Continued on Page 4

Arkansas Publisher Weekly 3 April 26, 2018
explanation. I regret that only about one of every four columns I wrote at the newspaper dealt with how we practiced journalism. I should have done this weekly. You get to be editor not necessarily because you are a great columnist. You get to be editor because you know how to edit. The public wants to hear about how you and your staff do your jobs. (And for goodness sake, explain that reporters do not write the headlines. And then explain the difficulty of writing good headlines.)

Acknowledge that every article has a point of view, but your job is to be fair. Some people criticize it as “he said, she said,” some journalism. But the public respects journalists who try to fairly represent “the other side” with more than a single comment. An article that seems so one-sided might have the opposite effect and make the reader sympathetic to the other side.

Stop being so negative. Most of life is not what’s on the police blotter, or the school board members who can’t get along, or a politician saying there isn’t enough money. Yes, our job is to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable, but even the afflicted and the comfortable have a sense of what’s right about the community. We lose credibility when we are constantly the community scold. You might think you do enough good news. Double what you do.

Tell readers what you know and what you don’t know. Rosen also cited this idea in the column and you see it often on major breaking news stories. It ought to be added to the routine stories as well. We don’t know everything by deadline.

Explain it to me like I’m a 10-year-old. Too many articles assume the reader knows as much background as the reporter. They don’t. Articles on local government need extensive background. (Here is where your website is your friend.)

“You’re doing this just to sell newspapers.” Who hasn’t heard that chestnut? To the extent you possibly can, explain to your readers the economics of how a newspaper works.

Print biographies of the people doing this work. Run small bios in print and preserve them on the web. Make them personal so that your readers know this is a newspaper run by human beings like them. It is easier to trust that way.

Talk with us about how we produce the newspaper. A tech town hall is a great way to meet with 2,000 of your closest friends. Show your work. You’ll likely get an A.

Tim Gallagher is president of The 20/20 Network, a public relations and strategic communications firm. He is a former Pulitzer Prize-winning editor and publisher at The Albuquerque Tribune and the Ventura County Star newspapers. Reach him at tim@the2020network.com.