

Publish

JUNE 2021

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Douglas Fry



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COMING NEXT MONTH

The July *Publish* will focus on the Best of the Best Awards and this year's winners in addition to covering the people, information and issues that are influencing the community publishing industry.

5 REASONS EVERY PUBLISHER SHOULD BE SELLING WEBSITES WITH SITESWAN

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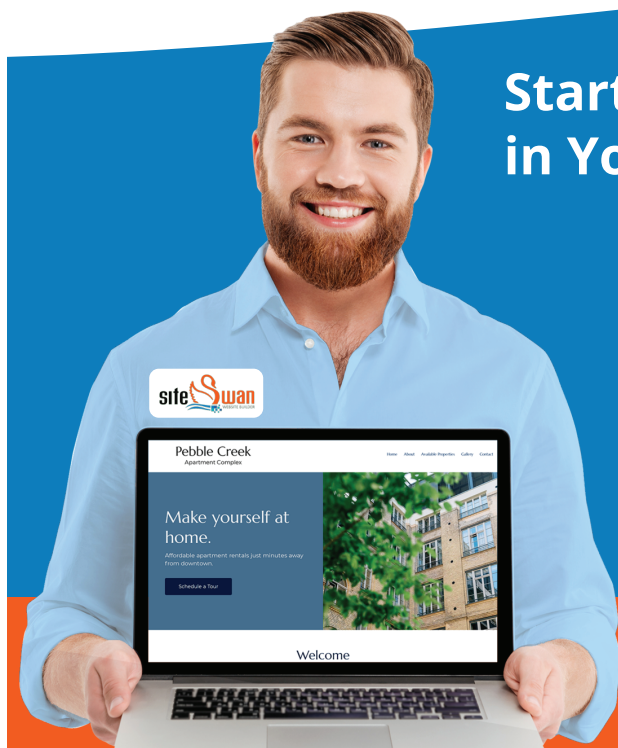
4. Websites Are a Gateway to Other Services

Websites are often referred to as the "hub" of the small business marketing wheel. The website is at the core of your client's local marketing efforts and all other services are spokes stemming from that hub. Control the hub and you can control the entire wheel. This gives web designers a huge amount of control and influence over how small businesses will spend their marketing budgets.

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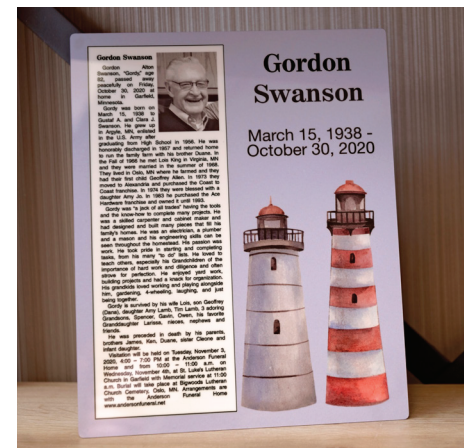
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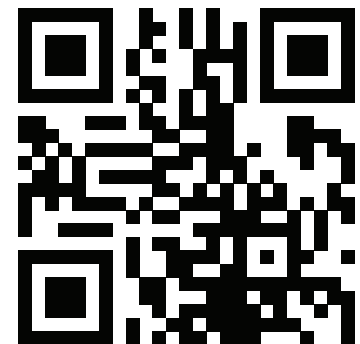
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IT HAS COME TOGETHER



JOHN DRAPER,
PRESIDENT ACP

A number of times over the past year I've written in this space about our move to join two national free paper associations into one. The endeavor was not an easy one, but certainly a worthwhile one.

I try to tackle each day as an opportunity to learn. I think this perspective helps me to maintain a good level of optimism and positivity. This creation of ACP has certainly provided a good number of learning opportunities. I think some of these lessons can speak to all of us in how we navigate our lives or business operations.

Communication cannot be undervalued. Throughout our merger process I spent countless hours on the telephone or in Zoom sessions with key stakeholders including attorneys, staff, and board members from both IFPA and AFCP. I also spoke with random AFCP members and associate members and even some past board members who valued what we are doing for the industry. Each stakeholder had valuable input and genuine care for the deal.

I learned to ask good questions, listen with detail, and then to carry that information forward accurately and in a timely fashion. Good communication skills are something we all hear about at an early age yet can be so easily overlooked. This lesson was imperative to meeting the needs of many while moving forward to the outcome we all desired. How much better can our family lives, our work lives, and our social lives be if we apply this lesson to all we do?

Details matter. Again, this is a lesson we've all been taught but one that can quickly be forgotten amidst constant interruptions and a heavy workload. The details for our associations' merger were many. We had legal matters, banking issues, memberships to merge, databases to sync, communications to coordinate, staff responsibilities to re-assign, and more. All of this while continuing to carry out the day-to-day operations of two organizations and, for many involved, continuing to run our pandemic-riddled businesses.

The details matter because our livelihoods matter. To gloss over the details

would have been not to care about our members, our advertisers, our volunteers and our staff. Our ACP livelihood is these groups. Within our personal organizations we have similar groups of invested parties that are our livelihood. If we show a lack of care for these groups what are we even doing this for?

Action creates results. In my February, 2021 column I wrote about always taking the next step. We often may not know what exactly that step is to be, but taking the next step will get us to the end we desire. This lesson has proven out with the creation of ACP; the finalized merger of IFPA & AFCP.

Inaction was seldom a problem given all the tasks necessary to get to this point. However, in slow times, when we could sense this lack of movement, we regrouped, determined our next steps, then continued the walk (certainly was long walk, not a sprint). In short, action creates more action, and more action creates results. Keep this in mind as you plan your next organizational change, develop your company growth plan, or even plan something as simple as your next special edition.

Perhaps the most exciting lesson I was re-taught throughout this endeavor is that our industry is passionate. I knew this from years of working with free paper publishers and industry professionals, but along this walk this fact became even more clear. Our association stakeholders put aside differences for the common good. Our members were supportive and our volunteer boards put in the extra time to get the job done.

Our staff, Loren Colburn, Cassey Recore, and Douglas Fry, each made sacrifices to create a change that was sure to bring uncertainty. Without their guidance and diligence, driven by their passion, this merger would not have come to fruition. I thank them for this and for the many lessons they provided.

The passion of all of us will drive the future of ACP and the free paper industry. I look forward to many more lessons and to taking this walk with all of you. ■

FIGHT, FLIGHT OR FREEZE



BY DOUGLAS FRY

The other morning I was riding my bicycle through the bucolic countryside near my home. I rounded a curve in the road and saw a “critter” walking across. I wasn’t sure if it was an opossum or an armadillo (a.k.a. “Possum on the Half Shell”) so I slowed down to take a closer look. It was a possum.

The opossum is the only species of marsupial found in North America. Their correct name is “Virginia Opossum.” Locals call this creature a “possum” but that name belongs to the marsupial from Australia which is much cuter and doesn’t have a bad reputation. We often think of the possum as dim witted and nasty. This is probably because they “play dead” when startled or frightened, this the dim witted part. The “nasty” part is that when they play dead they secrete a foul smelling odor that is similar to rotting flesh. Most animals leave that stank, much worse than “stink,” alone.

I’m not done with possums quite yet. The Virginia Opossum is really a beneficial friend to humanity. Who else would clean up road kill, sometimes becoming the same thing in the act of removing litter from our roads? Another thing they do is rid our communities of ticks, not the clock

kind, the insect kind that carry Lyme Disease. Each summer every single possum takes on the duty of ridding our habitat of over 5,000 ticks. To a possum a tick is a delicious nibble of food between road cleansing sessions. Last of all, the opossum is supposed to be very intelligent. However, each attempt by yours truly to communicate with the rascals ends up with them ignoring me. Maybe they are intelligent after all.

Now that you know more than you should about possums let’s continue with the story. I was cruising along on the bicycle watching the opossum cross the road. He nearly got to the far side so I steered the bike in the opposite direction in order to give him a wide berth. What he did next really puzzled me. He was nearly safe in the underbrush across the road when he turned around and headed back the way he came. I had to do an “Evel Knievel” to jump the bike over the retreating possum in order to keep us both safe. I am pretty sure there is a lesson to be learned here.

When you are on a sales call and are confronted with an objection you aren’t ready for you react with the “fight, flight, or freeze” response. With the “Fight” reaction you argue with the customer. This approach never works out well for you. If you respond with the “Flight” approach, like the possum, you lose ground at the very moment you might have arrived at a positive outcome. The final possum response is the “Freeze” or play dead response. This happens more often than any of us will admit. Though we don’t secrete a foul smelling odor when we freeze we still stink up the place. We freeze in place, stutter, stammer, and lose control of the situation.

I suggest that there is a better option than the “Fight, Flight, or Freeze” reaction. You can always go “Forward.” “Yes” might await a few

questions or conversation points ahead. But if you stop going forward retreating back the way you came you’ll never know. What does forward look like? You simply respond, “Ms. Nerdlinger, your question whether ‘anyone actually reads our publication’ is a good one and I’d like to respond to it after you see the whole picture of The Weekly Miracle. May we revisit that thought in a minute or two?” That response affords you several benefits. First of all, you are responding positively to their negative question. The customer feels they are being heard and not simply given a sales pitch. Second, you now have time to think a bit more about their question and formulate a better response. And third, you didn’t retreat in the face of adversity, you moved Forward.

After you finish your presentation you address their concern. “If I remember correctly, Nadia (Nadia Nerdlinger owner of New Narcotics a cannabis store), you asked whether people actually read The Weekly Miracle. As we agreed earlier that is a very important question. Each year a third party polls people in our community and determines who is actually reading us. Take a look at the most recent audit figures. It shows that 95% of the people in North Northland read The Weekly Miracle each week. In fact, a whopping 96% of adults between the ages of 25 and 55 read the publication each week.”

With that forward facing response you answer their question but don’t retreat on your presentation and don’t leave a foul odor in their office. The reason we see so much possum road kill here in the South is because they turn around and go back where they came from at the wrong time. Don’t be road kill. Be forward facing, forward thinking, and you’ll succeed. That’s the one thing you can do, move forward. ■



BY LOREN COLBURN

Interesting question for all of us to ponder! Every company should do a deep dive into this question regularly to make sure of a couple things. First, that they truly understand what their mission is and what they need to accomplish to be successful. Secondly, it forces an analysis of that mission to assure that the mission is still relevant and servicing the needs of the customer.

At its simplest level, community publications are all in existence to provide relevant information to their community members. The information's form may take on a variety of formats ranging from news, to advertising, to general community information... but the main focus is to serve as the information resource your readers will need. The critical aspect to this formula centers on a key component that many times can get lost in the confusion or overlooked by publishers.

The words *"relevant information your readers will need"* must be kept crystal clear within your mission at all times. This will not be a static target by any means, but an ever changing, moving target that will require frequent updates to maintain your strong community connection. It is also not driven by what is easy or inexpensive information to acquire or by the channels publishers might already have in place, which all too often factors into our content selection. It is defined exclusively by your reader's needs and interests.

Publishers are no different than any other company when it comes to adjusting to market or consumer trends. When Pan Am overinvested in its existing business model rather than to continue to innovate, it disappeared. When Kodak was too afraid it would cannibalize its strong film products by investing in digital, it disappeared. When Borders was unwilling to



transition to digital and online book trends, it disappeared. When Toys "R" Us signed a 10-year contract with Amazon to be its exclusive vendor of toys online and three years later Amazon didn't honor the contract, they had missed the opportunity to develop their own e-commerce business and ended up in bankruptcy.

The lesson in this is relatively simple. I hear numerous community publishers say they don't want anything to do with digital. They want to stick exclusively to the main print product they have built their business on for so many years. I'm not advocating they abandon their print product in any way. What I am advocating is that they let the market's needs and wants determine the components of their information delivery process. If their readers want or need the convenience of digital information sources, they are going to find them – if not from them, from someone willing to provide what they need. I am advocating for innovating product offerings to provide the strongest connection between your readers and your information, most importantly between your readers and your advertisers.

Community publications have the most important component to providing a successful digital advertising campaign to advertisers – a print

product to partner with the digital components in order to produce response levels advertisers need for building business. This digital advertising component will not be the downfall of your print product, it will be the critical addition needed to address the information needs within your community.

Don't think like Pan Am, Kodak, Borders or Toys "R" Us and ignore the changes in the marketplace. Think like IBM, Apple and American Express by addressing market changes with constant innovation and adaption, all driven by the needs of your community.

We promise that Publish will apply the same analysis to our mission when it comes to you, our reader. We will track your needs and market changes through a variety of resources driven by our focus on keeping our content relevant to your world. Those resources will include your input through open discussions, surveys, polls and any other feedback we can obtain from the broad spectrum of industry stakeholders. That information will ultimately determine our content, which increases the importance of providing your honest feedback at each opportunity to assure we understand your information wants and needs.

We too will be looking to include the innovations and visual stimulations digital can provide to Publish and our content. We will share what we learn and experience along the way and promise to always focus on the people, events, news and issues that comprise the community publishing industry and address the needs of our readers. Please participate in the feedback process to make sure your voice is part of our direction and don't forget to tell all those media buyers, "If it's FREE, buy it!" ■

WHAT EXACTLY IS OUR PURPOSE?

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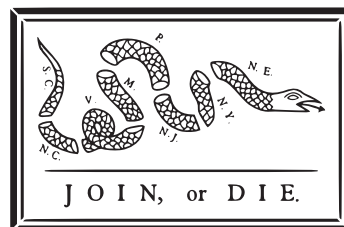
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THE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

"VALLEY FORGE" MOMENT

BY JIM BUSCH

Benjamin Franklin was an amazing man. Prior to our revolution, his was the only American name most Europeans would have recognized. He was one of the world's leading scientists, a popular author, an adept politician and, like many of this magazine's readers, a newspaper publisher. One common thread runs through every aspect of Franklin's life: old Ben was an organizer. Like all true geniuses, he recognized that no one person has all the answers, that none of us is as smart as all of us. Franklin organized a fire department, a public library, the American Philosophical Society, a college and numerous other philanthropic enterprises. The importance of working together was a theme of one of Franklin's publishing innovations—the world's first editorial cartoon. The cartoon shown above was created to encourage the American colonies to work together to fight the French and the Native Americans threatening their western frontiers. At a 1755 conference in Albany, New York, he proposed a plan of union for the British colonies. Though the plan was rejected by the fractious colonies, his ideas found new life in the Continental Congress that led to the signing of the Declaration of Independence from England. In congress, Franklin used his well-honed organizing skills to get the delegates to compromise and work together to create a new nation. Using his characteristic wit and literal "gal-lows humor," Franklin drove home his point about the importance of unity, telling his fellow delegates, "Gentlemen, if we do not hang together, we will most assuredly hang separately."



When Franklin uttered this warning, things looked bad for America. Their rag tag army was facing the largest army and navy in the world and the national treasury was empty but Franklin knew what he was talking about, men like Jefferson and Adams held the congress together and Washington did the same for the continental forces. By working together toward a common goal our founding fathers did the impossible and won our independence. Our industry is at a "Valley Forge" moment; we are facing unprecedented technological and economic challenges. Our association is vital if our industry is to survive and thrive. The ACP is here to connect you to other publishers and industry experts during these trying times. As a wise publisher once said, "If we don't hang together, we will most assuredly hang separately!" ■

ACP MEMBER BENEFITS REVIEW

The Association of Community Publishers (ACP) combines the rich heritage of member benefits from both IFPA and AFCP into one industry leading package for member publications. The programs have been tested, adjusted and refined over the years to continuously meet the needs of community publications and provide the resources to promote the success and growth of members. The following summaries provide an overview of just some of what is available for members through full membership.



CIRCULATION AUDITS

Circulation audits bring credibility to the community publication industry's deep market penetration. ACP pays for third party audits for qualifying members through Circulation Verification Council (CVC). CVC is an independent, third party reporting audit company auditing thousands of editions nationwide.

The audits cover printing, distribution, circulation, websites, digital editions, mobile, email, social media and combines that with extensive readership studies to give an accurate picture of a publication's reach and market penetration. This member benefit saves publishers thousands of dollars each year, with actual savings varying with circulation size.

CVC audits are available to those members who choose to participate at the level where the audit is included. Those audits are provided for the portion of your circulation that you run the ADS Network ads in and are made available to you as a combined audit. This member benefit alone makes membership value far exceed any associated membership costs.

VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON CONFERENCE EVENTS

These ADS Network supported conference events are all inclusive and feature TLI's professional training certification courses combined with upper echelon motivational and industry speakers. The in-person events provide for outstanding networking opportunities back-dropped against some of nation's most interesting destinations. Past locations have included San Francisco, Miami, New Orleans, Orlando, San Diego, Louisville, Baltimore and Las Vegas. Not only will you and your staff be given the royal VIP treatment, the networking and educational opportunities are unlike any other conference you may have attended and all at a significantly reduced cost to the participants. As a member of ACP you owe it to yourself, your publication and your industry to join us at these very special events.

The best way to explain the member benefit value of our conference events is to let attendees explain in their own words...

"The Conference is a very productive event packed into 3 days. A short time away to learn and network. You will get ideas and contacts to carry you through the entire year."

"The Learning Experience is really good. But, the conversations you have with other people in the business that are going through or have overcome the same business experiences and obstacles is really great."

"It is a chance to get away from your business and gain a new perspective, learn new ideas from speakers, or networking with fellow attendees, a chance to sharpen your saw – get training and knowledge in new areas of expertise. The fellowship is amazing!"

"This conference is not only packed with continuing education sessions specific to your daily operations, but you'll rub elbows with many of the best minds in our business who are incredibly generous in sharing their knowledge. I would add that it's always a tremendously enjoyable time."

"This is a must attend conference! Not only do you have a chance to network in a comfortable atmosphere but the education is top notch and relevant."

"You can generate great revenue making ideas to implement in your own paper from people who are currently proving they work. Everyone who attends has great ideas and they are so willing to share!"



This year's conference is coming up September 17-18th and will be a joint conference with the Midwest Free Community Papers (MFCP) in Des Moines, Iowa! This charming setting in the heartland of America makes for the perfect opportunity to relax and enjoy the company of your fellow participants in the community publication industry. Many members will tell you this is the MOST valuable member benefit ACP has if members embrace the opportunity.

INDUSTRY FEATURE



THE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE AND PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

The Leadership Institute (TLI) is a member benefit of ACP designed to provide member companies with an opportunity to gain industry specific, professional training certificates. Members have the opportunity to utilize professional certificate programs that address specific areas of management and sales development with both virtual and in-person programs.

Typical management programs have included the 2018 management certificate program, Effective Hands-on Management, which was developed around the concepts presented by Bruce Tulgan in IT'S OKAY TO BE THE BOSS. The 2019 management certificate program was an actual Coaching Workshop helped participants conduct a personal Coaching Skills Inventory and then reviewed and practiced conducting Effective Coaching Conversations. This year's session in Des Moines will be Creative Leadership and offer training that will stimulate your thinking, recharge your batteries and spark your outside-the-lines creativity as you inspire your employees to excellence.

The Associate Advertising Executive Certification designed by ACP is offered to recognize the highest level of professionalism and growth for dedicated community publication associates. Industry professionals are able to document their knowledge in all aspects of media and marketing as well as their commitment to professional development tested and recognized by their national association.



The Leadership Institute

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

NEW HIRE SALES TRAINING FORM TLI

The 7 course sequence available in the Online Learning Center provides a great way to train incoming sales hires in the basic process of advertising sales. This training is presented utilizing the terminology and delivered from the same perspective they will be dealing with out in the selling situation. Stepping them through the sales call from opening to close, incoming sales reps will have a much better understanding of the key elements to successful sales calls.

The Class Sequence Consists of:

- TLI-104 Opening a Sales Dialogue
- TLI-106 Effective Questioning
- TLI-105 Communicating Through Listening
- TLI-107 Making Recommendations Using Features & Benefits
- TLI-103 Answering the Classic Sales Objections
- TLI-101 Closing the Sale
- TLI-108 Four Essentials of an Effective Advertising Campaign

In addition to this class sequence for new hires, they can also utilize the podcast library available on the ACP website. This component adds the ability to help target specific areas of training or answer specific questions involved in the sales process. These tools can be instrumental in a new salesperson's ultimate success as well as providing a professional sales component to your training program. With 28 specific topics to select from, there are lots of options to improve performance.

"BEST OF THE BEST" ANNUAL PUBLICATION AWARDS

This is your company's opportunity to get some recognition for all the exceptional efforts that go into producing the highest quality publications. Use your success story and individual awards to promote your company,

your staff and your customers. These awards can help boost everything from employee job satisfaction to your company's reputation in your local market.

With over 44 different award categories to enter, regardless of your publication's style, you will be competing against like publications. Everything from editorial material, individual ad designs, cover designs, special sections, promotional materials and digital products can be entered and judged against other entries from across North America.



Publication Awards

Award winners are announced each year during a special presentation. Each winning publication receives a presentation quality plaque detailing their awards for the current year for display in their office. Many of our win-

ners have special celebrations to honor these accomplishments by their staff and recognize the extraordinary efforts that go into producing a quality publication.

The awards program is open to all ACP members and typically draws over 1,400 entries from a major portion of our membership. The entries are submitted at the beginning of January each year and represent work produced throughout the previous calendar year. Watch next month for this year's "Best of the Best" Awards.

BOB WRIGHT MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



ACP presents The Bob Wright Memorial Scholarship annually in May.

Any parent, grandparent or guardian who is working for

a community paper that is a current member of ACP is eligible to apply for one of our annual scholarships for their graduate. This endowment scholarship was created in memory of longtime publisher and friend of the industry, Bob Wright. Bob served on numerous boards of directors as he guided the direction and success of several publishing associations and his own publications. This is one way he continues to give back to the industry in his absence.



INDUSTRY ADVOCACY

ACP works hard to monitor events, developments, trends and opportunities that effect members of the community publication industry. Materials costs, USPS changes and discounts, pending legislation that impacts printers and publishers, and so many other important areas of interest all get close attention. Looking back over the previous months, here are just a few of the issues we have worked to keep industry members aware of, up to date on and their voices heard:

- **Newsprint Tariffs** – In response to the proposed tariffs on Canadian newsprint suppliers, ACP endorsed a coalition of printers and publishers called STOPP to oppose the proposed countervailing duties. Through a series of email blasts, legislative contact initiatives and collective industry support, the efforts eventually resulted in the International Trade Commission terminating the duties being applied to uncoated groundwood.
- **USPS Rate Changes** – Our partnership with the Saturation Mailers Coalition helps us monitor changes within the USPS rates, processes and procedures as a critical aspect of many members extensive reliance on USPS delivery for their publications. Keeping members informed as well as coordinating a larger voice for our members is essential to the economic well-being of the industry.
- **USPS Available Discounts** – Coordinating the efforts and materials necessary to take advantage of discounts available with the Emerging and Advanced Technologies Promotion. By developing an augmented reality ad program centered around the “Buy Local” theme, members utilizing Marketing Mail can qualify for a 2% discount on their postage for a 5 month promotion period. A similar program is available for the Mobil Shopping Promotion that begins in August each year, also offering a 2% postage savings to qualifying publications.

These recent examples are just several of the many ways we represent and connect industry members with the national and state business worlds in the promotion of their interests and economic importance within their respective communities.



PUBLISH MAGAZINE

Publish, an ACP publication, is the free paper industry’s monthly magazine. *Publish* is distributed to all owners, publishers, general managers and community paper industry associates free of charge. Current circulation of about 1,700 copies monthly, assures you complete coverage for the community publishing industry.

Publish is your key to keeping up on the latest news, developments and opportunities throughout this rapidly changing industry. A monthly source of answers to your questions or solutions to common issues makes this an invaluable resource for our members.

- **Industry Specific News** – Keep track of the people, organizations and publishing companies who are making the news across the country.
- **Current Events** – Stay informed on all the industry events to ensure you take advantage of every opportunity to participate in helping shape your future.
- **Association Business** – *Publish* also serves as the ACP member newsletter with updates on member benefits, conference plans and all official notifications.
- **Educational Articles** – Content centered on industry related topics covering graphics, software, technology and other areas that apply to operations efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Delivery Developments** – From the USPS to the auditing firms that document our delivery, INK is a consistent source of this essential and ever changing component of the publishing process.

In addition, *Publish* helps keep the national business and supplier network informed on the community publication industry, it’s developments and current events. The quality of the publication and it’s content continually focus on promoting the member’s and the industry’s best image on the national stage.

RISING STARS PROGRAM



The ACP Rising Stars program is designed to honor individuals under the age of 36 who are emerging leaders in the community paper industry. This ongoing program recognizes

up to 7 individuals each year who represent the best of our up and coming industry professionals from nominees submitted by our member publications. These individuals exemplify good character, leadership, and professionalism not only at work, but in the communities they serve.

These young professionals demonstrate the promise of and a commitment to impacting their publications as well as the community publication industry in a positive manner through professional achievements. They not only perform their jobs to a high standard, but they also have a commitment to furthering their knowledge and abilities through participation in this national program.

Award recipients are recognized in *Publish*, the official publication of ACP and participate in an awards presentation program at the ACP Annual Conference and Trade Show. They are privileged to receive free conference registration, conference meal plans, specialized training sessions and up to \$500 in travel reimbursements as part of their ongoing active participation.

The ACP Rising Stars program does not end with this initial recognition program as Rising Stars are asked to assist the various initiatives of the association on an ongoing basis for up to two years as part of their commitment to the program. ACP recognizes that we have much to learn from these talented young people and desires to use their skills to help us shape the free paper industry going forward. In return for this participation in regularly scheduled conference calls and for volunteering their time to assist with all ACP initiatives, ACP provides additional leadership development training and the opportunity to attend a total of three conferences for additional professional development.

INDUSTRY FEATURE

ADVERTISING DISTRIBUTION SERVICES (ADS)

ADS is the largest classified and display advertising network available in North America, offering national exposure to advertisers at affordable pricing. Active participation in the ADS Network provides for significant reductions in the cost of membership dues, conference attendance discounts, a semi-annual rebate program and most importantly, the opportunity to sell network advertising at a significant profit.



guests in addition to lower negotiated rates for hotel rooms at our events.

- **Participation Rebates** – ADS participating companies share in a rebate

program that redistributes ADS revenues over and above our quarterly operating costs back among those participants who successfully pass their periodic advertising verification complete with verified circulation.

- **ADS Selling Opportunity** – ADS participants have the opportunity to sell ads into the ADS Network at a sales margin set by the selling member.

Suggested retail rates of \$895 for a national classified ad and \$1595 for a display ad with a circulation of over 7 million!

Start selling today and add profits to your long list of ACP Member Benefits!

NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

ACP continues to serve the industry by acting as a facilitator to connect member publications. Whether it's advice, answers to questions or sharing ideas, ACP plays a major role in establishing communication links and opportunities allowing industry participants to collaborate. Virtual and In-person Events, Share Groups, Weekly Open Discussions, Peer Groups, 3-Minute Idea Exchanges and almost any time we assemble members provides opportunities to exchange information.

The ability of community publishers to openly share trials, tribulations and success stories continues to be a trademark of the industry and ACP is proud to be the largest contributor to creating those sharing opportunities. This dissemination of ideas and learning experiences expedites knowledge based on real life experience to reduce the learning curve required by fellow publishers when developing similar programs. It is truly the glue that bonds us together.

There are more member benefits that are available and many more that will be developed with your input and help. We look forward to serving and expanding our membership since there is strength in numbers. It is part of our mission to expand those numbers as a means of increasing the knowledge base we all have to work with.



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NOW WHAT?



Well, we've done it. IFPA and AFCP have merged to become one unified voice as ACP (Association of Community Publishers). ACP is led by a forward thinking board of directors. Every decision they make is based on the framework of, "How will this help ACP membership be more profitable, efficient, and essential to their communities?"

The board selected Douglas Fry to be the Executive Director of ACP. Douglas said, "This is a great opportunity for us to establish what our new association will look like, how it will run, and how it will be of most benefit to our members. Most of all I look forward to working with long-time publishing friends, making new ones, and applying my love of the industry to help our members succeed."

The unification into ACP has been a project for lots of us lasting over two years. Since it is finally a reality what do we do now? There are three areas we will work on: Simplification, Communication, and Mentorship. Seems like we should call this last one "Mentorication" but that just doesn't work. So, let's look at each one of these to see how you benefit from these efforts.

First of all is Simplification. We will find ways to simplify our interaction with you and how the association itself works. Simplify doesn't mean cutting benefits but making things more direct, simpler. For example: since IFPA and AFCP merged we have lots of items that are duplicated. We have two Slack accounts, two marketing email system accounts (Mailchimp and Constant Contact), two accounting systems (one online, one on the desktop), three websites (ifpa.com, afc.org, and www.communitypublishers.com), two zoom accounts, multiple subscrip-

tions to services, you get the idea. In fact, every aspect of the merged association has duplicates of programs and processes.

As a result, we are working hard to find the best programs and systems that will allow the Association of Community Publishers the flexibility to foresee, change, and plan as the industry invariably advances. For example, you might notice a modification in the way you receive network classified and display ads from ADS (Advertising Distribution Services). The content will be consistent but the delivery or presentation may change a bit. If you see ways we can do this better, make it easier for you, or simply want to say "Good job!" we are always available. You'll find our email and contact information at the end of this article.

Next is Communication. ACP is already doing a great job of communicating what is happening in the industry and how you benefit from membership. We will expand our efforts by using Direct Text, Video Notifications, Podcasts, Chatbots on the website, Explainer Videos, and even the reliable telephone. Be watching for those new, unique ways of disseminating information. You may be inspired to try some of these methods in your own company.

One method mentioned above is Direct Text. You may already receive notices from ACP via text on your cell phone. The great things about text messages are that you might ignore

or put off an email but you always look at your phone when a text message comes through, text messages are more precise than other methods of communication, and text messages can be exactly timed to remind you of an upcoming event or call to action. We will ask for cell phone numbers and names of your people you want included. We promise to never share this information or misuse it. Your security is paramount.

Finally, after simplification and communication we will mentor all members. We want to be the source you turn to for sharing your successes, new ideas, solutions, and friendship. When the executive director, Douglas Fry, calls you it won't be to give you bad news, it will be to start the process of mentorship. If you have an area you stand out in we will gladly accept your help in that domain. As we build a network of people and areas of success we will be able to help everyone.

If someone calls ACP Headquarters and asks about Requester Mail options, for example, we would know who to recommend that is a pro at understanding and explaining the ins and outs of that topic. Imagine how helpful that will be to you as you have challenges and questions in all areas of the business.

Last of all, we will be available to you via just about every method available. Give us a call at 1-877-203-2327 and Cassey, Loren, and Douglas will be there for you. You can always email us at: cassey@communitypublishers.com, loren@communitypublishers.com, and douglas@communitypublishers.com. In fact, if you want to text Douglas his cell number is 931-446-5239. Now that's simple communication. See you as we move to the next level of "Now What?" ■



Need a Makeover?

To effectively compete in the world of 21st Century print media you've got to look your very best. Do your publications look the same as they did 10, 20 or even 30 years ago? Are you doing layout and production the same way from back in the day? How is that working for you? Circulation declining? Ads down? Just treading water? Wondering what you can do about it?

A bright, bold, attention-grabbing modern redesign is just the prescription for reader lethargy and advertiser apathy. Make yourself stand-out, make yourself a must-read. The best-looking publications are the ones thriving in this challenging environment for print media.

And how about your ads? Better looking ads mean more readership of your ads. More readership translates into more ad response for your advertisers. This leads to happier, more satisfied advertisers. Happier advertisers take more ads with you and spend more money with you.

At Design2Pro you can have your newspapers, magazines, ads and collateral materials produced for a fraction of the cost of in-house by some of the world's most talented graphic designers. And when you work with us, we can redesign your publications for no extra cost whatsoever – no hefty fees to fancy high-priced consultants. Save a bundle and look your best. More than 285 newspapers and magazines trust us every week and it's our 17th year serving the industry. Give us a call and see what we can do for you.

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BOB WRIGHT SCHOLARSHIPS FOR 2021

BY DEBORAH PHILLIPS, BOB WRIGHT MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP CHAIRPERSON



SAMANTHA BIRKETT



REAGAN LONDON



REGAN HOLLAR



CHARLIE DELATORRE



LEAH JEFFERS

This year we received 9 applications for the Bob Wright Memorial Scholarship. We had only \$6,100 to award. The hard part is that this isn't the easiest scholarship for which to apply. There are a lot of pieces that need to be pulled together for the application. So, when we cannot award everyone \$1,000 towards education, it is always a difficult decision. We came down to seven recipients, so the committee made the decision to award \$1,000 each to five recipients and \$550 each to two recipients.

The 2021 recipients are Samantha Birkett, Reagan London, Regan Hollar, Charlie Delatorre, Leah Jeffers, Tyler Adams, and Brittany Brown.

- **Samantha Birkett** of Durango, Iowa is a 2021 graduate of Hempstead High School. She is planning on graduating from Iowa State. Samantha received numerous awards, including the President's Award for Educational Excellence. She participated in band for seven years, and did tennis, swimming, track and polar bear club. She was also a member of Rotary Interact Club, National Honor Society, and Student Support Foundation. Her father, Greg Birkett, is the co-owner of the Dubuque Advertiser in Dubuque, Iowa.
- **Reagan London** of Albion, New York is a 2021 graduate of LA Webber/Lyndonville High School.

Many factors in her life encouraged her to study nursing. Reagan was involved in 4-H H.O.R.S.E Club and was reserve champion at various local horse shows. She also participated in dance for 11 years, soccer, chorus, musicals and National Honor Society. Reagan's father, Brad London, is employed at Lake County Media in Albion, New York.

- **Regan Hollar** of Shippensburg, PA graduated from Shippensburg Area Senior High School in 2020. She is attending Indiana University of Pennsylvania and is studying psychology with a minor in child development and family relations. She is currently working at a daycare. She has been active in her church and involved in teaching swimming, as well as other school activities and sports. Her father, Mark Hollar, is employed at the Franklin Shopper in Chambersburg, PA.
- **Charlie Delatorre** of Newberry, Florida is a 2021 graduate of Oak Hall School. He plans on studying filmmaking at the Savannah College of Art and Design. He was the 2019 winner of the 15-second Horror Film Challenge and a finalist in the 2018 Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival and London International Comedy Festival. Charlie participated in Key Club, Spanish Club, Yearbook and ACP Theatre. His father and mother are

employed at Tower Publications in Gainesville, Florida.

- **Leah Jeffers** of Secane, PA is a 2021 graduate of Ridley High School. She plans to attend Ursinus College, a private liberal arts college in Collegeville, PA and study psychology. In high school she did indoor/outdoor track and cheerleading. She received the Distinguished Honor Roll award. She is the granddaughter of Ellen Hazelwood, who is employed at Delaware County Magazine in Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania.
- **Tyler Adams** of Arnolds Park, Iowa is a 2020 graduate of Okoboji High School. He attends Wartburg College and is majoring in Business Administration. In high school he was involved in football, basketball, baseball, and golf. He also participated in FFA, Key Club and National Honor Society. His father, John Adams, is the co-owner of Lakes News Shopper in Milford, Iowa.
- **Brittany Brown** of Cumming, Georgia is a 2019 graduate of West Forsyth High School. She is attending Kennesaw State University and is studying Hospitality Management. She has maintained a 4.0 GPA and in high school participated in baseball, basketball, gymnastics, summer church youth trips and culinary trip to Europe. Her father, David Brown, is employed at Appen Media Group in Alpharetta, Georgia. ■

MEET THE ACP BOARD



JOHN DRAPER – President

John Draper is the Publisher of Pipestone Publishing Co., a small community shopper and weekly newspaper in Pipestone, Minnesota. John has worked in all aspects of the organization, from production, to sales, to management. The impact that free papers have on a community, its businesses, and its readers has been and will continue to be a driving factor. His industry experience includes serving on the Minnesota Free Paper Association (MFPA) board and 2 years as MFPA's President, numerous years in officer positions with PaperChain and the last 13 years on the AFCP board in a variety of capacities culminating in his term as President.

John has been the driving force behind the AFCP and now ACP Rising Stars program

since its inception in 2008. The program provides opportunity for involving young professionals in the association's initiatives. This program and John's involvement with annual conferences, association management and being AFCP's point person for the merger discussions and successful merger of AFCP and IFPA demonstrate the level of commitment and passion he brings to ACP. When asked what John sees as the biggest opportunity for this newly unified association, John said, "As a strong believer in the power of community publications for the readers and businesses we serve, I believe ACP can be the driving force that recognizes the needs of its members then works relentlessly to serve those needs so that together we can grow our publications, the association and the industry."

RICK WAMRE – Past President

Rick Wamre is the Founder and Chief Revenue Officer of Advocate Media in Dallas, Texas. Advocate Media publishes 5 hyper-local, editorial based publications with a monthly circulation of 80,000. Founded in 1991, the company has established itself as the trusted news source in the high-income Dallas neighborhoods they circulate by integrating a print and digital strategy that drives over 4.8 million page views annually in addition to their printed circulation.

Rick's industry involvement has been as a member of both AFCP and IFPA, in addition to involvement as an IFPA board member and recent term as IFPA President and point person in the merger with AFCP. Rick was instrumental in obtaining pro bono legal representation for both associations to oversee the technicalities involved with merging two nonprofit entities. When asked what the biggest opportunity for ACP moving forward, Rick said "The business is getting tougher. We need an industry group to help make our job as publishers more fulfilling and more profitable. ACP is that group."



MANUEL KARAM – First Vice President

Manuel Karam is the Director of Advertising Sales for Genesee Valley Publications covering 85,000 circulation in central upstate New York around the Rochester area. Prior to joining his wife's family's business in 2017, Manuel was an attorney practicing law in the insurance and investments sectors in Baltimore, Maryland. President of GVPS Steve Harrison (his father-in-law) gave him the opportunity to make a career change and lead the sales effort at the company headquartered in Avon, New York that has been operating since 1948. He currently manages a team of 12 sales professionals and 4 staff members serving 4 counties.

In 2018 Manuel was asked to join the board of directors of the Independent Free Papers of America (IFPA) where he worked on a number of conference planning committees including

both in-person and digital-only events. Manuel was honored to be asked to serve on the newly formed board of ACP. His response to the biggest opportunity created through the unified association, "Community Publications are essential to the health of any region. Unfortunately, due to a variety of factors including the rise of consumer spending online, advertising dollars shifting to digital media giants, and of course Covid, we've had to be creative and resilient as an industry in order to continue to produce the quality publications our readers and advertisers know and love. But there's a silver lining. Those publications that have made it through to today have an opportunity to reset, grow and redefine their businesses for years to come. ACP's role will be to help facilitate this renaissance for our industry and ensure our members have all the tools and resources they need to get the job done."



JOYCE FRERICKS – Second Vice President

Joyce Frericks is the Publisher / Business Manager at Star Publications LLC in Sauk Centre, Minnesota. Star Publications produces 7 publications with a total circulation of 59,000 that are a mix of free circulation, subscription, and requestor in central Minnesota. Joyce joined the firm's bookkeeping department in 1999 and has progressed through sales, sales management, and business management roles over her 22 years with the company.

Joyce joined the IFPA Board of Directors in 2017 and had achieved the position of Vice President at the time of the merger with ACP at which point she transitioned to Second Vice

President of ACP. Joyce is also an active participant on the MFCP Board of Directors since 2019. She recently has presented presentations on her experience converting publications to requestor status with both IFPA and ACP to help fellow publishers better understand the opportunities that exist to reduce costs.

When asked what she thought the biggest opportunity presented by the unified association, she replied, "ACP has the opportunity to provide members with the resources they need to succeed in the free publication industry. Where in the past publications needed to be members of two groups, they will now receive the full benefits package from one organization. ACP is in a position to provide training, networking and inspiration to lead our industry."

FARRIS ROBINSON – Secretary

Farris Robinson is the President of Hometown News Media Group, a 15 publication community newspaper group servicing the Eastern Coast of Florida from Stuart up to Daytona Beach with a circulation of over 155,000. Hometown News was established in 2002 with the goal of providing readers with in-depth reporting of the events and issues that shape their daily lives in their neighborhoods and providing advertisers with the ability to micro-target with a single edition or cover all 5 counties with a single buy. Farris has spent the last 11 years of his 22 years in the industry at Hometown Media Group.

Farris has significant community publication association experience having served a number of years on the Florida Media Association board including serving as the current Vice President as well as having served as its President. He joined the AFCP board in 2015 and immediately became active with the Membership Committee. He was also serving as one of the Vice Presidents through the merger

process and progressed into the Secretary role with ACP through the merger.

When asked what the biggest opportunity provided by the unified national association, Farris said, "I believe that our biggest opportunity is strength in numbers and by that, I mean instead of two associations pushing against one another, we now have the strength of two national associations pushing in the same direction. This will not only help members streamline their process but will provide a much stronger selling presentation with the increase in circulation. I also believe that now is the time to expand our ADS Network (NANI, CADNET) to include a digital platform to enhance the buy. The world as we know has changed forever and there is no looking back except to learn from the past (but not to repeat it). With the joined forces and talents from the two associations, the board is comprised of a vast amount of diversity, knowledge, and experience from across the country. It will be their imperative to push the association into the future while assisting members to push forward into the new world ahead."



GREG BIRKETT – Treasurer

Greg Birkett is the Vice President / General Manager of the Dubuque Advertiser, a weekly shopper publication distributed to over 36,000 homes in and around Dubuque, Iowa. Greg's passion and dedication to his community is exceeded only by his passion and dedication to the community publication industry, which is evident by having received AFCP's Publisher of the Year and Craig S. McMullin Distinguished Service Award, IFPA's Ben Hammack Award and MFCP's Distinguished Service Award.

Greg's extensive experience of over 19 years on the AFCP board has included terms in a variety of officer positions including President and Secretary/Treasurer at the time of the merger and subsequent appointment as ACP

Treasurer. His impact on AFCP conferences is unparalleled having served the past 11 years as Conference Committee Chair. Greg has also served many years on the MFCP board in a variety of officer roles including its current Treasurer and over 12 years on the Paper-Chain Committee as Chair and at different times representing both MFCP and AFCP.

Asked what Greg thought was the biggest opportunity created by the merger of the two national associations, Greg said, "The biggest opportunity for ACP is to bring our members together to share ideas, best practices and help each other through these tough times. I believe ACP also can do a lot to help us promote the use of free papers. Our publications deliver results, we just have to be able to tell our story."

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS



CHARLIE DELATORRE – At-Large Director

Charlie Delatorre is the President of Tower Publications, producers of a bi-monthly community lifestyle magazine titled *Our Town*, a quarterly active retirement magazine servicing North-Central Florida titled *Senior Times*, and an annual student resource magazine for the University of Florida and Santa Fe College communities in Gainesville, Florida. In addition to these magazines, Tower also offers a national advertising placement service for lead generation in classified, display, radio and web advertising through a separate division called 4400 Media Group.

Charlie has been active with the AFCP Board since 2009 serving in a variety of officer positions including 2 years as President. In addition

to his officer rolls, he has chaired the Education Committee which directs the activities of The Leadership Institute of which he continues to be one of the faculty members and spent 3 years in the conference chairs rotation concluding as Conference Chair of the 2014 AFCP Orlando Conference. Charlie served over 16 years on the Community Papers of Florida, now Florida Media Association Board of Directors including President from 2010-2012.

When asked what he felt was the biggest opportunity created by the unification of the national associations, Charlie said, “It allows us to work together for the betterment of our industry. With limited budgets and more importantly limited time, we now have one association that can pool its collective resources to help us as members address the ever-changing media business.”

SHANE GOODMAN – At-Large Board Member

Shane Goodman is the Publisher of Big Green Umbrella Media, a diverse publishing group in Des Moines, Iowa offering over 20 publications with a total circulation of 200,000. Shane founded the company in 2003 and had a variety of experience with metro dailies, community dailies, weekly paid newspapers, free newspapers, shoppers, niche publications, city magazines, alternative newspapers, websites, and commercial printing before founding Big Green Umbrella Media. From his beginnings at the Des Moines Register as a sales representative in 1990, through an number of diverse publishing companies and all the way founding Big Green Umbrella Media, Shane has demonstrated his ability to

grow a variety of community publication types through a combination of strategic acquisition and consistent innovation.

In addition to his broad publishing experience, Shane also has extensive industry association experience having served as a board member, secretary, vice president and president of MFCP; past board member, vice president and president of AFCP; past board member of IFPA. His involvement with both in-person and virtual conferences with all three groups has allowed him to share his innovations and business experience with a broad range of thankful community publishers. When asked about the biggest opportunity for the newly unified association, Shane said, “The unification provides an opportunity for members to be exposed to more ideas that will help us all be more successful.”



LISA MILLER – At-Large Board Member

Lisa Miller is General Manager at New Century Press (NCP), an independently-owned group of 21 weekly publications covering communities in Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota and South Dakota. Lisa has experience in a variety of roles including circulation, production and management and is currently overseeing operations for 4 free-circulation community publications for NCP. As a manager, she respects working with a great team and starting new projects while continuing to grow core products.

Lisa’s 20 years of community publication experience provided an opportunity to get

involved with the MFCP board culminating with her term as President which just concluded. Lisa was elected as a director to the AFCP board in 2020 and subsequently as an at-large director with the ACP board. Lisa believes her involvement with strong community paper associations has been instrumental in helping her face the challenges created by the ongoing changes taking place within the industry. When asked what the greatest opportunity created by the creation of one unified association, Lisa said, “I am a solid believer that we are stronger together. We must challenge ourselves to unite and better the industry with open minds.”

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS



JOE NICASTRO - At-Large Board Member

Joe Nicastro is the Publisher of My Life Publications in Flanders, NJ, publishers of 14 publications with a circulation over 115,000 in Northern New Jersey. In his over 34 years in the industry, Joe has started and sold companies, created the first online program (Cooler Ads) that allowed publishers to have their print display ads transport to their websites with enhanced functions that enhance their digital presence and continually published community papers.

Joe association involvement has been extensive having served as IFPA President and long-time board member and transitioned with the AFCP / IFPA merger into an at-large director position with ACP. Joe also is a established participant with MACP, having served as Pres-

ident and currently serving as Vice President. His committee participation with both organizations has been wide ranging and always focused toward providing benefits to members with every opportunity.

When asked what he saw as the largest opportunity presented by the unification of the two associations into ACP, Joe replied, "By combining both associations, we have an opportunity to make our industry stronger than ever. I believe now more than ever community papers of the strongest they have been in many years. By merging we can bring both resources together and can offer members more opportunities to increase revenues, improve sales training, introduce new programs to make us all more efficient. This opportunity allows for a larger base of publishers as well as all departments within the papers to exchange ideas and learn from each other."

BARB PERRY - At-Large Board Member

Barb Perry is Sales Manager for Reminder Publishing, publishers of 6 weekly newspapers serving the people and businesses in 14 local Western Massachusetts communities in the greater Springfield area. Barb oversees a team of 15 sales representatives while participating in the company's aggressive growth initiative involving both acquisitions and new startup publications. In her 26 years in newspaper sales, Barb has had the opportunity to assist in launching a media buying company, an advertising agency and the transition of the original publications to new ownership.

Barb was an active board member with IFPA for many years and assisted on several IFPA conferences during that time. She got involved with the AFCP conference committee and was soon elected to the AFCP board of directors. In addition to being a recipient of IFPA's Distinguished Service Award and the Ben Hammack Award, Barb is a past president of two chamber groups, sits on the board and is a Phyncon Trustee and past president with the Ad Club of Western Mass and has done a TED Talk! When asked what she believes will be the biggest benefit created by the merged national associations, Barb said, "I believe in community newspapers and I believe a unified effort and voice is a critical component to the growth and success of this industry."



JANE QUAIROLI - At-Large Board Member

Jane Quairola is the Administrative Coordinator for Kapp Advertising Services in Lebanon, Pennsylvania. Kapp Advertising publishes 9 separate editions of the *Merchandiser* with 224,000 circulation and a 12,000 circulation monthly magazine, *Enjoy Local Living*. In Jane's 36 years with Kapp Advertising Services, she has progressed through a variety of sales, sales management, and administrative rolls. Jane has completed an abundance of coursework with The Leadership Institute (TLI), receiving her Associate Advertising Executive (AAE) Certification in the TLI class of 2018 in Baltimore.

Jane has been on the IFPA Board since 2018 and transitioned with the merger into an At-Large ACP Board Member position. In addition to her industry involvement, Jane has extensive community volunteer experience including being a Councilor on the Palmyra Borough Council, a Director for the Palmyra Public Library, a Commissioner for the Palmyra Area Recreation and Parks, a Director for the Lebanon County Builders Association and a Director for the Palmyra Area Heritage Association. Her answer to the biggest opportunity for ACP as a unified industry association, "ACP is in a position to help members navigate through changes (actual or perceived) in our industry. The consolidation to one organization will help streamline the sharing of revenue ideas, training, networking and so much more."

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS



DEBORAH PHILLIPS – ADS Board Member

Deborah Phillips is Vice President of The World, a 10,000 circulation weekly newspaper providing the best source for community news to the central Vermont community. The World first published in 1972 and Deb started there a short time later having completed 47 years with the publication. During that time Deb has helped guide the publication to maintain its lead position as a locally owned, independent newspaper providing community news that attracts quality readership and generates positive conversations that strengthen Vermont's community connections.

In addition to her role with The World, Deborah has also participated in a variety of positions dedicated to providing for the betterment of her fellow publishers. She has been active for over 30 years with IFPA, having served a President on two separate occasions, Treasurer and conference chair. She has also been active with Community Papers of New England for over 30 years including serving as CPNE's President and current Treasurer and currently serves as the Treasurer of the Vermont Press Association. When queried on the biggest opportunity presented by the ACP unification, Deb commented, "This presents the opportunity for all the members to gain CVC circulation audits."

MICHAEL VANSTRY – ADS Board Member

Michael VanStry is the Publisher and co-founder of Coastal View News, a 6,500 circulation weekly newspaper serving Carpinteria, California. They also publish Carpinteria Magazine, a bi-annual glossy magazine in the same market. Michael's 27 years has provided the opportunity to work hands-on in all aspects of the operation as well as community involvement.

Michael joined the AFCP Board in 2008 and has been active with the NANI board as well since 2010. Michael provided a unique perspective to both boards having been the NANI National Sales Champion in 2009 and pro-

ducer of over \$5.4 million in NANI revenues since 2003. He also has chaired the Marketing Committee for AFCP over the last 6 years and has served on an assortment of other AFCP committees during his tenure. His contributions to the association were honored with Michael being named the AFCP Publisher of the Year in 2013 when he chaired the AFCP Conference in Denver.

When asked what he saw as the biggest opportunity for ACP as the unified association representing the community Publishing Industry, Michael said, "I'm looking forward to the added benefits of the combined membership, most importantly, having twice the members to network with and learn from at upcoming conferences."



DOUGLAS FRY – Executive Director

Douglas Fry is the newly appointed Executive Director of the Association of Community Publishers, Inc. Douglas brings to the position broad level of experience on both the publishing side of the spectrum as well as the association management side. His publishing experience includes starting as a Display Ad Sales Representative and progressing to Publisher of Ad-Pak in Wilmington, NC, Assistant to the Publisher at Exchange, Inc. in Fayetteville, TN, Pre-Press Supervisor at Pulaski Web in Pulaski, TN, and the Startup Architect at Tennessee Home and farm in Columbia, TN.

Douglas also brings with him extensive association experience starting with serving on the SAPA Board in 1984 and serving terms as Treasurer, Vice President and President before becoming the Executive Director. In addition

to serving as Executive Director for IFPA since 2014, Douglas has served as Executive Director of TCNA and a variety of officer roles with PaperChain, LLC over the years. He has been honored with SAPA's Heb Campbell Award, Lifetime Achievement Award and Honorary Lifetime Membership as well as IFPA's Ben Hammack Volunteer Award and Distinguished Service Award.

When asked what the biggest opportunity for ACP as the unified association representing the community Publishing Industry, Douglas responded, "The biggest opportunity for ACP is found in combining our separate activities into one. ACP replaces two boards, two dues payments, two sets of network ads, two events and conferences, two of everything with ONE. One isn't the loneliest number, it is the smartest way to work. As a unified voice we can more quickly adapt to the needs of publishers and help everyone succeed."

FREE PAPERS REPRESENT

BY DONNA HANBERY, SATURATION MAILERS COALITION EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The steering committee for the saturation mailers coalition (SMC) had an opportunity to meet with Postmaster General, Louis DeJoy to talk about the Postal Service's 10-year plan and discuss the concerns of saturation shared mailers.

There were seven (7) companies represented and eight (8) different speakers. The Free Paper industry was well represented by John Hemperly the Publishing Operations Manager for Engle Printing & Publishing from Mount Joy, PA. Hemperly also spoke on behalf of the Mid-Atlantic Community Paper Association (MACPA) and the Association of Community Publishers (ACP).

With John's permission, I am including the remarks he made to the PMG about the business of free papers, and the opportunities for mutual growth if the USPS could provide reasonable rates and predictable pricing.

I want to thank you for making time to talk to us about the Plan and giving us some time to talk about our businesses and how we work to promote the Mail and the UNITED STATES POSTAL SYSTEM. Importantly I want to thank you and the almost half million Postal employees who have delivered the US Mail 6 days a week, week in and week out with special appreciation for their essential services during the challenges of the past 13 months.

My name is John Hemperly with Engle Printing & Publishing from Mount Joy PA. where I work as the Publishing Operations Manager. I also am the President of the Mid Atlantic Community Paper Association, and past vice president of American Free Papers Association -these are regional and national trade associations that represent the free paper industry.

For over 65 years our family-owned business has been delivering free

community papers on a weekly basis to south central Pennsylvania. Our papers are sent using saturation mail to every home in our market area. We publish under different banners or titles providing hyper local news to every home in our market. Our papers help our readers follow their local High School Sports, learn about the Spring Musical, and promote the fund raiser for the local volunteer fire company - all at no charge to them.

Our papers are supported by the sale of advertising on our pages and by free standing flyers - also called inserts or preprints. - that our advertisers or our company can print to be delivered with the paper. From time to time our outside sales team sells a Detached Marketing Label that gets delivered with our paper - and brings added revenue to our company - and to you as well.

Most of our advertising customers are the locally owned independent Mom & Pop shops and tradesman providing essential services to our community. Our sales force helps these entrepreneurs develop advertising campaigns to boost their business. They appreciate the reliability of our publications being mailed. We print and enter our papers into the mail-stream in carrier route sequence, at a weekly scheduled time. Roughly 85% are taken to the DDU by our trucks thereby saving trucking costs and wear and tear on the Post Office's fleet. I've been told and witnessed our papers act as a sort of wrap for each boxes' mail the day of delivery.

Together we have been able to provide a cost-effective advertising vehicle to help local business spread the word about their products and services.

Today I am speaking for our 16 zoned weekly papers. But I also want to mention the business opportunities for the Postal Service to

distribute and partner with the free paper industry nationwide. As the Daily papers lose circulation - the demand and relevance of local papers like mine increases. Nationwide, publications like ours known as Pennysavers, Shoppers or Bargain Sheets probably number 35 million copies weekly circulation. Yet less than 38% are utilizing the USPS for distribution. The remaining 62% are an area of potential growth for the Postal System. We hope to have more opportunities like this to talk about our business and do more together as business partners. Saturation mail and free papers are different from all other marketing mail - we are 'all in' -every box on a letter carrier's' route on a routine and predictable cycle. We believe this could be a source of growth for the USPS. I know Donna will hope for the chance to talk to you and your team more about that in the future.

We hope we can share a bright future - but this has been a tough time for our industry and our customers. Last fall due to the hardships from COVID and loss of advertising revenue - we made the painful decision to cut 197,000 pieces from the mail each week. We did not turn our back on the mail or cut by choice. We continued to cover all our markets - but had to cut our frequency from every week to every other week. We want to come back and hope that the USPS works its plan in a way that helps us do that. We hear you that you are losing pieces along with carrier counts and this is not sustainable. But if the USPS can work with free papers that want to be weekly saturation mail customers, we can bring business back to the mail.

We'd like to increase our presence in the mail this fall. Adding count and possibly exploring new markets. But getting advertisers back will be

POSTAL UPDATE

hard work. Many of our advertising customers set their budgets on a calendar year basis so a mid-year rate adjustment would be detrimental to growth. Some of our big traditional customers - like grocers - have had strong business in spite of cutting their ad spend. We will need to win them back. Many are still struggling with uncertain inventory - or moved their advertising dollars to other areas. They will not come back especially if we need to increase our rates. But we are here to tell you we want to fight for that business and hope you will help us do that.

Together we are facing many of the same customer challenges. Advertisers these days are quick to jump on the digital band wagon for their marketing needs. We don't feel this method is as effective as the printed message that arrives in the consumer's mailbox each week. Merchants are seduced by the lower cost of digital - regardless of the track record for the printed word. The combined losses due to Covid and digital make it harder to win back customers that we have lost - or where portions of their advertising budgets have been moved to other media. But we are big believers in print and mail. We hope you see our company and the free paper industry as in this together with the USPS.

We, and publishers like us around the country have a dedicated sales force of outside salespeople and customer service reps that promote how our products utilize the US Mail every week for distribution. We'd like to get more businesses using the mail and bolstering their bottom line which is good for them, their employees, and our neighborhoods at large.

I want to continue to tell my readers and advertisers that we are in the mail, every mailbox, every week. Please help us bring back the nearly 10 Million pieces a year we had to cut due to Covid and work with us - and our industry - this year and in the years ahead.

The PMG was intrigued by John's comments about the use of the Postal Service for delivery. John mentioned that a recent survey conducted by a free paper association showed that only 38% of papers were using the mail. DeJoy asked where that figure came from. John explained that some associations do audit their combined members' circulation and periodically survey papers' distribution methods, and that this was a recent survey result. DeJoy asked if the rest of the distribution was digital. John explained that the other distribution was predominantly carrier delivery or demand. He mentioned that free papers are predominantly "all in"

for print. DeJoy seemed intrigued by these opportunities for future mail growth. He indicated that he would be asking John about that survey. Thanks to the good coverage on survey and industry information about publishers, I have already taken the liberty of making a copy of the portion of this survey that showed this results from the April 2021 issue of Publish and have forwarded the survey report to the Postmaster General.

Other SMC Steering Committee members also represent the free paper industry. I want to extend thanks to Dan Alexander, Steve Harrison, Shari Rapone and Carol Toomey, for participating in our meetings. Harrison and Alexander were particularly helpful in coaching our speakers during a pre meeting rehearsal call and in helping me draft and edit out follow up thank you and "Where do we go from Here" letter to Postmaster DeJoy.

Personally - I have missed the opportunity to see - network - and have fun with many of our Publisher friends and the 'usual' April annual conference events. But I have not lost my faith and confidence in the free paper industry and am grateful for such passionate and dedicated publishers helping me on our SMC Steering Committee and with other postal issues. ■

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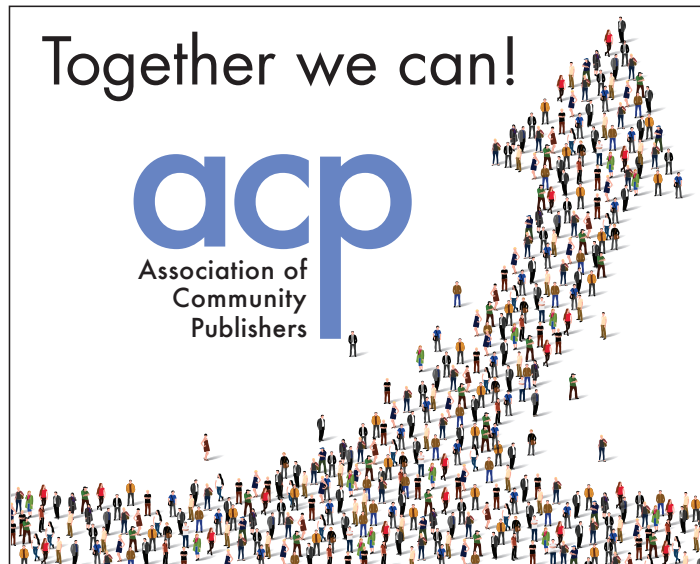
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MINNESOTA'S STAR PUBLICATIONS

BY BARBARA HOLMES

The four weekly hometown newspapers, shopper and two niche publications that comprise Minnesota's Star Publications LLC have a long history, one that covers community news and events all the way back to 1854 at the founding of the Sauk Rapids Herald.

The Sauk Centre Herald was established in 1867, and this is where the story of the current ownership begins.

With his journalism degree from the University of Minnesota and his photography skills developed in the Army, David Simpkins created a successful career as a newspaper publisher. He purchased the then 121-year-old Sauk Centre Herald in 1988 and launched the Dairy Star in 1999. The Dairy Star's motto – "All dairy, all the time" – aptly describes the semi-monthly content delivered to dairy farms throughout Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa and Wisconsin, with additional limited coverage in Illinois and Michigan.

Simpkins strongly believed in his employees and demonstrated that belief by forming business partnerships with them. In 2001 Simpkins, Mark Klaphake (who was hired as a reporter for the Sauk Centre Herald in 1992) and Jeff Weyer (who was hired as a sales rep for the Star Shopper and Dairy Star in 1998) created a separate corporate partnership for the Dairy Star.

In 2007 Joyce Frericks (who was hired as a bookkeeper in 1999) joined Simpkins in the Sauk Centre Herald partnership, which later merged with the Dairy Star corporation in 2010 to create Star Publications. The new company's first action was to purchase the Melrose Beacon

Benton County NEWS

The Star Post
Melrose Beacon ★ Albany Enterprise

classyCanary

DAIRY STAR

Sauk Centre
Herald

Sauk Rapids
HERALD

★ **SHOPPER**

Country Acres

and The Albany Enterprise from Sun Newspapers.

Additional expansion included the launching of the Country Acres in 2013, the purchase of the 161-year-old Sauk Rapids Herald in 2015, and the Benton County News in 2018.

To keep everything running smoothly over such a vast coverage area, Star Publications maintains offices in five communities and employs 50 people in five different states. The in-house reporters, office workers and production staff are housed in Sauk Centre. Each satellite location houses an office managed by reporters. Ten of the 50 employees work from home, mainly in sales and writing for the Dairy Star.

"We have the best employees!" said Frericks. "They are loyal and have been with us a long time. A handful have even been here longer than any of the partners."

Though the impact from the COVID-19 pandemic was difficult, Star Publications was adamant that it would not lay off any of its workers. Though communication means changed and some employees worked from home, the impact wasn't as bad for rural Minnesota as it was for larger cities. The company's combined 60,000 circulation has remained relatively stable through it all.

Though Simpkins passed away in 2018, his legacy lives on with the remaining partners. Star Publications currently has six partners, each of whom brings special talents to the table that complement the remaining partners. Mark Klaphake serves as the General Manager; Jeff Weyer was Sales Manager for the Dairy Star until his retirement in 2020; and Joyce Frericks as the Business Manager and Dairy Star Sales Manager. Missy Traeger (who was hired as a sales rep in 2011) became a partner in 2016 and serves as the Sales Manager for all publications except the Dairy Star. Natasha Barber (who was hired as the editor of the Sauk Rapids Herald in 2015) became a partner in 2019 and serves as the Editor for the Sauk Rapids Herald, Benton County News and The Star Post. Nancy Powell (who was hired as a graphic designer in 2008) joined the partnership in 2021 and serves as the Production Manager.

"The partners meet once a month for planning purposes," said Frericks, "and we're always looking for new adventures. Dave [Simpkins] was a good role model." ■

HEARST AND THE HISTORY OF COMICS

There might have been newspaper comics without William Randolph Hearst, but it's hard to imagine what they'd have been like. With Hearst's aggressive support, and his founding of King Features Syndicate, the "funnies" thrived through the tumultuous early years and evolved into one of this country's few indigenous art forms. It was the publishing magnate Hearst who grasped the potential of the earliest "Sunday funnies" and turned them into a big, booming, modern business enterprise eventually syndicating them from New York City into America's hamlets and valleys, opening the gates for the great parade of comic stars to come. In the process, Hearst pioneered the art of promoting pen-and-ink personalities and furthered the careers of many brilliant cartoonists, while largely shaping the popular tastes of several generations of comics fans. Since 1895 when Hearst first set his sights on the Yellow Kid, the comics have reflected and contributed to our language and culture. They've also sold a lot of newspapers. Today, more than 60 years after Hearst's death, the comics claim an estimated 113 million loyal readers in the United States and millions more worldwide—and that's just on Sundays.

In the early days of American journalism, smaller newspapers did not have the facilities to reproduce artwork or generate much coverage except local reports; and many larger newspapers found it difficult to maintain staffs of artists, writers, cartoonists, fiction authors and columnists who could offer diversity in their pages. As early as the 1840s some urban newspapers composed preset pages of general news and humor for sale to rural newspapers and, in the 1880s, S.S. McClure contracted with writers such as Robert Louis Stevenson to offer their



works a chapter at a time to a list of subscribing newspapers. William Randolph Hearst burst upon the newspaper scene in 1887, turning The San Francisco Examiner into the West Coast's largest, most controversial and most interesting newspaper. Hearst spanned the continent and established The New York Journal in 1895. It was in Joseph Pulitzer's New York World that cartoonist Richard Outcault's legendary Yellow Kid made his newspaper debut in 1895, but it was Hearst's New York Journal that cannily snatched the Kid away from the rival sheet in 1896 and deployed him as a key weapon in the historic newspaper circulation wars. With Hearst's encouragement, Outcault developed The Yellow Kid from its beginnings as a simple gag panel into the first true example of the comic strip. Pulitzer fought back hard by hiring another artist to draw Outcault's character for the World. The publishers' fierce battle over the bald urchin in the yellow nightshirt led bystanders to refer to sensational, screaming-headline newspaper combat as "yellow journalism." The popularity of that expression tainted the early comics as a less-than-genteel entertainment, but it also made it clear that the "funnies" had become serious business, seemingly overnight.

KING FEATURES TODAY

Today, over 100 years later, Hearst's King Features remains the world's premier distributor of comics, columns, editorial cartoons, puzzles and games, distributing in print and digital formats some 150 features to nearly 5,000 daily, Sunday, weekly and online newspapers and other publishers around the globe.

The company's most beloved comic properties include popular classics like Beetle Bailey, Blondie, Dennis the Menace and Family Circus, as well as a growing variety of newer hits that draw on increasingly diverse and varied perspectives, including Curtis, Rhymes with Orange, Arctic Circle, Macanudo and Zits. In recent years, King Features has significantly expanded its content offering to include a broad array of games, puzzles, columns, as well as a variety of turnkey digital solutions to meet publishers' evolving needs.

In keeping with its mission to make the highest quality content available to all, King Features offers unique solutions for community papers.

Each week, King Features gives smaller papers the opportunity to run the greatest variety of vetted, engaging content for minimal cost, packaging and delivering more than 75 comics, games and columns. These are provided in .txt and .tif formats as well as (for columns) camera-ready .pdf layouts (SAU column size). Additionally, four pages of paginated comics and puzzles are included. These features are professionally written, edited and proofread, ensuring that readers of community papers get top-quality content every week.

King Features Weekly Service is a great way for weeklies and monthlies to increase ad revenue, reduce freelance writing costs and free up staff to work on local projects. Special rates are available for newspaper groups and monthly newspapers.

King Features also provides a wide array of pagination and colorization services through its sister company, RBMA. ■

For more information, please contact Randy Noble at rnoble@hearst.com or 319-329-2693 or visit the King Features website (<http://www.kingfeatures.com>).

THE POWER OF IMPLICATION



BY JOHN FOUST
RALEIGH, NC

Randall oversees the advertising department of a mid-size newspaper. “Implication is one of the most important concepts in selling,” he told me. “It’s covered in a lot of sales seminars and books, but I’m surprised that so many sales people don’t realize how it can drive marketing decisions.”

What is implication? It’s a simple concept that explores how A impacts B and how B impacts C. There is a strong emphasis on the future. Let’s say one of your tires has low air pressure. Whether you choose to ignore it or do something about it, there are long-term implications. If you ignore it, you could end up with an even bigger problem, a flat tire.

If you decide to take action, the implication is that your car will be safer and you’ll get improved gas mileage.

College football coaching legend Lou Holtz once said, “Things never stay the same. They either get better or they get worse.” In other words, one thing leads to another.

“A lot of ad departments have tunnel vision,” Randall said. “They tell their prospects, ‘Here’s what my paper can do for your business right now.’ That approach might produce a sale, but it doesn’t drill down to what the prospect really wants – long-range stability and success. I encourage our sales team to take prospects down a different road. It’s all a matter of asking the right questions.”

HERE’S HOW IMPLICATION QUESTIONS CAN REDIRECT A PROSPECT’S THINKING:

Advertiser: *I don’t need to change my advertising.*

Sales person: *How long has your current campaign been running?*

Advertiser: *About two years.*

Sales person: *Are the ads working as well as they did in the beginning?*

Advertiser: *Actually they’re not. We’re getting fewer ad responses than we did then.*

“Ideally a sales conversation will include a progression of implication questions. Each one can lead you closer to a sale.”

Sales person: *What do you think will happen to your sales numbers if you keep running the same ads? (Implication question.)*

RESULT: The client realizes that business could continue to slide if there’s not a change in the advertising. That could have a negative impact on his plans to expand the business. He agrees to consider some new marketing ideas.

HERE’S ANOTHER EXAMPLE:

Advertiser: *My new ad campaign is working pretty well.*

Sales person: *That’s great news. It shows that you’re targeting the right audience with the right message.*

Advertiser: *Right.*

Sales person: *Let’s think for a moment about what could happen if your business increased even more. What kinds of things could you do? (Implication question.)*

Advertiser: *In the long run, I could add to the staff and maybe even upgrade the showroom.*

Sales person: *Why don’t we take advantage of the positive momentum you’ve built? Right now, you’re running a quarter page ad every week. Let’s move that up to a half page, which will give you even more visibility.*

RESULT: The advertiser sees the benefits and agrees to increase her advertising investment.

“Ideally,” Randall said, “a sales conversation will include a progression of implication questions. Each one can lead you closer to a sale.” ■

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John Foust has conducted training programs for thousands of newspaper advertising professionals. Many ad departments are using his training videos to save time and get quick results from in-house training. E-mail for information: john@johnfoust.com

HIRE SALESPeOPLE WHO ARE MARKETING PROS



BY BOB BERTING,
BERTING
COMMUNICATIONS

The advertising salesperson has to become a trusted advisor to the client and have the ability to not only get the client involved in the planning and content of the advertising campaigns, but to demonstrate that he or she is a **marketing pro** that knows layout design, can write good copy, knows type faces, and can create long range ad campaigns. It is obvious that this type of salesperson has to have these skills when hired. The optimal word here is control. The salesperson has to take charge of the creative situation with every client—similar to an ad agency approach.

ORGANIZATION OF ROUGH LAYOUT WITH THE CLIENT

The content has to be organized so that the client can see and approve the format. This format includes selection of headlines, art work, suggested copy and overall ad design. The idea here is to find the customer's ego hot buttons and work them into the ad ideas.

THE NEXT CRITICAL ACTION

Here is the final action with the customer. Say these words: "We want to tell the story of your business in our publication but we can't do this all in one ad. We want to know the reasons why people come to you, what benefits they can receive. We will take those reasons and build an ad campaign using a different reason for each ad as the headlines of the ads." After learning the reasons, the ad salesperson can then discuss an ad campaign and tell the customer that they will bring some comprehensive layout ideas on the next visit. It is imperative that the customer fully agree to this arrangement and give permission to do so.

NEXT STEP: THE LAYOUT ARTIST

Keep in mind the salesperson knows, as a good marketing pro, what image is to be projected, what hot buttons to hit

and how the campaign is to flow. Any rough layouts with the customer are given to the layout artist who proceeds to develop one comprehensive kick off ad and a campaign of 2-3 comprehensive follow up ads. It is imperative that the artist and the salesperson carefully go over the comprehensive spec layouts before taking them to the customer.

THE LAYOUT AND PLAN TO THE CUSTOMER

Obviously there should be a plan to show the advertising program customized to the customer's needs but it is important that the spec layouts are shown first. This ties in with the adage, "You sell with emotion and justify with facts." It is important to show how the layouts tell the story of their business and are designed to get quick readership. The reader's scanning pattern for the ads is defined so that the customer understands that every attention has been given to that critical aspect. The plan is then presented. If the salesperson has done his or her job in earlier discussion, the plan will accurately display the program needed for the customer.

THE HAPPY ENDING

If all the groundwork has been laid by the account salesperson, if the spec layouts really sizzle, and if the customer has complete trust and belief in the publication as the key player in their media mix, they will buy the advertising plan and authorize the spec layouts to be converted into a strong advertising campaign. ■

Bob is the author of 4 e-books for the newspaper industry, available on www.bobberting.com. Bob is a professional speaker, advertising sales trainer, publisher marketing consultant and columnist in many national and regional newspaper trade association publications. He can be reached at bob@bobberting.com or 317-849-5408.

Graphic Hooks

By Ellen Hanrahan

hanrahan.in@att.net ©2021

Patriotic or County Fair... was the decision I had to make for this month's article. After attending the April 14th Conference session ("5 Special Sections"), I was ready to demonstrate our annual County Fair section. However July was closer, with its patriotic ads (lots of ads with a flag theme), I had to decide. So the Flag in advertising comes first followed by a County Fair special section next month! It's not often that I have two ideas for articles!

A little history-mine

I taught high school art, but moved to graphic design in the 80's, at **The Booster**, a free paper in Wisconsin. Graphic designers were experiencing a massive change... from a separate design station, a typesetting station, a paste-up station and finally, pagination—by hand. A mere six or seven years later, all the "stations" were beginning to merge. The technology that rocketed us into a maze of hardware, software, peripherals and what-not became more complex. Technology can be taught, but design skills need development. Good design comes from the understanding of the building blocks of graphic design and using them appropriately. Designing an ad is simply organizing the information and the graphic material into the most readable and coherent manner possible.

The concept of design is simple—good design is good design... period. But the tools of the trade have been subjected to a radical redesign. The idea of desktop publishing had been embraced by the industry and impacted the very process of how we created advertising. The designer was no longer a part of the process, but actually controlled the process... from page layout, graphics, photos, art, to the final output.

Now we have a lot more responsibility—we've become writer, designer, typesetter, color separator, and trouble-shooter. Where there used to be skilled individuals to handle each of these aspects, technology blurred the lines between these fields.

The good news is that it has also opened up a whole different, and powerful, set of tools for me to use—and the responsibility to make myself a more informed individual in a number of graphic areas—including appropriate use of the Flag! It takes time, but with each application, I have, in fact, come a long way. Some skills just take longer to master than others.

A little history-flag use

It doesn't seem possible that the year is almost half over... this is our June issue already! Next month we go patriotic and advertisers want flags and fireworks and all things associated with the festive 4th. As you can see in the next column, use of the flag has some pretty strict rules. Go ahead, just Google "flag in advertising" and see what you get.

But since I am a big fan of vector art (it allows for best and multiple uses of the artwork), I have included various patriotic art that I downloaded from various graphic services. Most art services offer a myriad of similar art to choose from and I can always fit these patriotic themes into a lot of different types of ads without including a graphic of the flag itself.



THE US FLAG IN ADVERTISING

The American flag has been used on everything from coffee cups to underwear, and seeing people wearing it or in TV commercials has become a common occurrence.

What many may not know is that the use of the flag in such contexts is expressly forbidden in official US Flag Code. Yep, wearing the flag as a lapel pin might be fine, but bumper stickers, T-shirts, etc. is definitely not acceptable! Check it out here:

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/4/8>

According to the subset of US Code which deals with proper care and use of the American flag, "The flag should never be used for advertising purposes in any manner whatsoever. It should not be embroidered on such articles as cushions or handkerchiefs and the like, printed or otherwise impressed on paper napkins or boxes or anything that is designed for temporary use and discard."

The code, which was drawn up at the first National Flag Conference in Washington in 1923 and adopted in 1942, states, "No part of the flag should ever be used as a costume or athletic uniform."

The code however, is not enforced, nor is it enforceable. It is merely a set of guidelines, letting Americans know what to do—and what not to do—with our red, white and blue national emblem.

I normally do not use a direct representation of the flag because there are so many other ways to signify the flag... or patriotic approach... so keep that in mind



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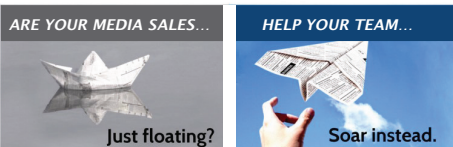


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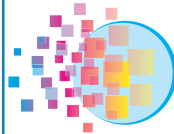


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