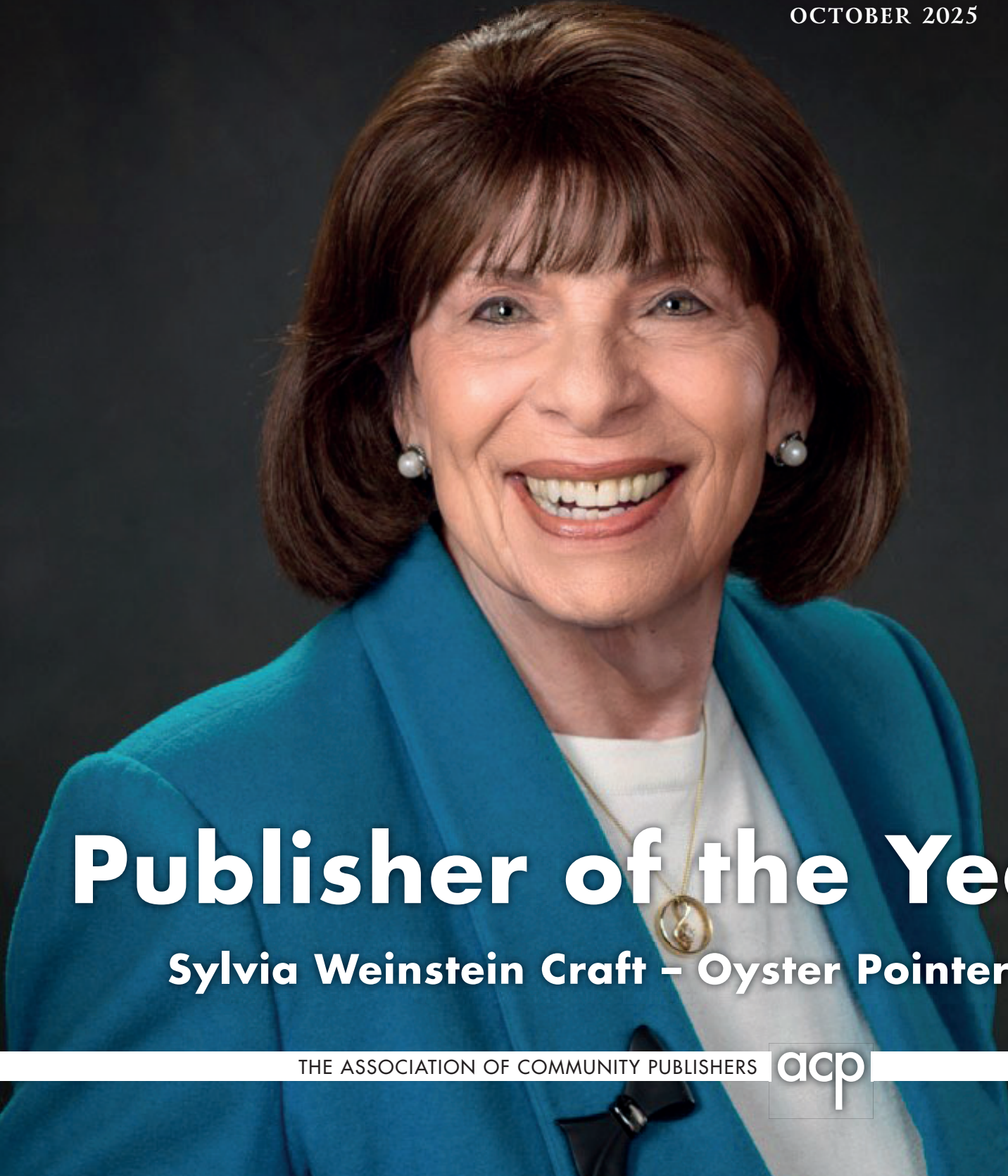


Publish

OCTOBER 2025

A portrait of Sylvia Weinstein Craft, a woman with short brown hair and bangs, smiling. She is wearing a teal blazer over a white top, a gold necklace with a circular pendant, and pearl earrings.

Publisher of the Year

Sylvia Weinstein Craft – Oyster Pointer

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COMING NEXT MONTH

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- ✓ **Scott Greene** – Reminder Publishing, East Longmeadow, MA
- ✓ **Carol Toomey** – Action Unlimited, Concord, MA
- ✓ **Michael VanStry** – Coastal View News, Carpinteria, CA

The above nominees are presented for the ACP Board of Director positions whose 2-year terms will commence on January 1, 2026. The official ballots will be sent via email to the designated contact person at each member publication on Wednesday, October 1, 2025 and must be returned by Wednesday, October 15, 2025. Election results will be announced no later than Monday, November 3, 2025 by email and in the November Publish.

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BY CAROL TOOMEY –
PUBLISHER AT ACTION
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PEOPLE BEING WITH PEOPLE

It seems only a little while ago that we were unable to safely meet in person. The dreaded Covid-19 virus was a real threat. No one wanted to catch it, so we all lived very different lives. Having meetings - such as board meetings or conferences - were just not done in person. If you wanted to meet, you had to meet by Zoom.

Zoom had been around for a while. It was started in 2011 by Eric Yuan, a former Cisco executive. His goal was to create a superior user-friendly video conference experience. The Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 caused exponential growth, making Zoom the tool for remote work, education, and social connection. In fact, the Covid-19 pandemic led to a 30-fold increase in daily meeting participants.

Zoom became a household name for remote collaboration. It became a high-quality, reliable product that users genuinely loved; Zoom was constantly improving its features and performance. The company continued to be innovative. In addition, the users became resourceful as well.

Missing family members, some of us came up with novel ways to share. My favorite was having dinner by Zoom with family members who were hours away. Our first family dinner was a delicious lasagna dinner. I cooked lasagna for my husband, and we Zoomed with my son

and his friend who had also made lasagna. It wasn't the same as a family dinner in person, but it was a great alternative as we shared conversation over a favorite meal.

Business meetings were similar. Everyone joined at a designated time as the meeting was called to order. There were definite advantages to a Zoom meeting, such as no driving time to participate in the gathering. People from all over the country could meet without flights and hotel rooms.

This method of meeting did work, but there was also a missing element.

In September, I traveled for an entire day to get to a newspaper meeting in Mobile, Alabama. It was great to see my fellow publishers from all over the country.

We went to dinner together, attended meetings together, and shared memories of past meetings and stories of publishers who contributed to the industry.

We also got to

see and share with vendors who have products both new and old that help our industry progress.

It may be difficult to get to these meetings, but there is something delightful about seeing old friends in person and attending educational seminars one might not sit through by Zoom.

People being with people. There really is no real substitute for that. ■

“ Zoom meeting, such as no driving time to participate in the gathering. People from all over the country could meet without flights and hotel rooms.

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NEVER STOP LEARNING



BY CASSEY RECORE

Welcome home from Mobile! Let me start off by saying **congratulations** to our 2025 award winners: **Sylvia Weinstein of Oyster Pointer**, honored as Publisher of the Year; **Shane Goodman of Big Green Umbrella Media**, recipient of the Distinguished Service Award; and **Greg Birkett of The Dubuque Advertiser**, recognized with the Volunteer Award. As I look at those three names, one common thread stands out - these well-deserving icons of our industry are people who never stop learning.

Having just returned from the Mobile, AL conference last week, I was reminded how eager we all are to absorb knowledge. Walking through the sessions and classrooms, I saw a sea of faces focused intently on each presenter, soaking in every word. That eagerness carries back into our members' offices as well, evidenced by the spike in requests for access to the On Demand Training Center in the days following the conference.

Education is a cornerstone of ACP's mission. It's our responsibility to provide members with learn-

ing opportunities in every format. From conference speakers, online sales training, to virtual events, and roundtables for idea sharing, both in-person and remote. We work hard to keep programs fresh across all these channels, and as a member, I encourage you to take advantage of them often.

I'm especially excited about new opportunities on the horizon. At the Mobile conference, we announced an additional certification level within The Leadership Institute training program: the **Senior Advertising Executive (SAE)** certification. To achieve SAE, mem-

bers will need to complete the AAE, CAE, and PSU certifications first. This is a valuable step forward in professional growth, and I encourage you to reach out to the office or visit our education page at communitypublishers.com to learn how you can pursue this benefit.

As mentioned previously, our **monthly roundtable calls** will be relaunched in a refreshed format with each month featuring a topical discussion while still allowing time for open-ended conversations about challenges members are currently facing. We've also heard your feedback about increasing the amount of **virtual training** available. Since many members cannot send as many staff to in-person events, we're committed to offering multiple educational opportunities throughout the year that are accessible for your entire team.

The Professional Development Committee has also made strong progress on the creation of our **Cer-**

tified Master Publisher Program, which we aim to launch in 2026.

Based on where we are today, I believe we're on track to meet that goal.

While nothing replaces in-person interaction, we are committed to providing "something for everyone" through a range of formats. In today's digital age, when everyone

is doing more with fewer resources, we must leverage every tool available to extend education as widely as possible.

The enthusiasm for learning I witnessed in Mobile was inspiring. Seeing our members come together to learn from each other, engage with

speakers, and share experiences reinforced that education is central to ACP's mission and makes us stronger as an industry. Of the many positive comments I heard, one attendee's words stood out:

“Just that one little thing I learned in this session paid for my entire trip to this conference and then some.”

“Just that one little thing I learned in this session paid for my entire trip to this conference and then some.”

I invite you to participate in ACP's events and educational programs, and I encourage you to give your staff the chance to grow through the resources we provide. If you're not yet a member, I urge you to join and take advantage of these benefits. As that attendee said above, the return on investment speaks for itself - you can't afford not to.

For those who participated in the 2025 conference, I thank you for taking the time to join us. I truly appreciate your support and look forward to seeing you again soon! ■

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THE UNIQUE VALUE OF IN-PERSON EVENTS



BY LOREN COLBURN

I'm home and settled after spending 6 days in Mobile putting on this year's ACP Conference and Trade Show. Although it is an exhausting event, I can't express how energizing and uplifting an experience it is. The program, the place and the people are the most important components of a successful conference. This event was outstanding on all three!

The program was focused on solutions and opportunities. Guy Tasaka outlined ways to leverage digital growth through the strengths of your print products. Ross Furukawa offered technical solutions for putting AI to work in streamlining publication information gathering. Liza and Jay Graves detailed how to design an email strategy that would drive audience engagement while building advertiser relationships. Dr. Jeanne Maes and Dr. Jennifer Zoghby addressed real-world communication issues with teams, hiring, firing and managing employees and freelancers.

The educational portion of the program was just as solid. The Leadership Institute provided useful insights into everyday publishing and sales issues. From using long-term

contracts to secure exceptional value and customer loyalty all the way to a checklist for today's entrepreneurial startups, the sales solutions were broad ranging. For the technical sales side, leveraging the value of your circulation audit, transforming your rate card into a strategic tool to drive revenue and showcase value, and exploring how publications can evolve into a full-service media company were all presented to provide long-term revenue gains.

The place was amazing. Downtown Mobile provided the perfect backdrop to experience the warm charms of southern hospitality, the excitement of Mardi Gras and food venues that were amazing. The Renaissance Mobile Riverview Plaza Hotel was exceptional! The food, the staff and the facility drew more positive comments than any facility we have used in the last 15 years. The acid test for me is, would I go back there again? The answer for both the city and the property is actually, "I can't wait to go back!"

Now for the people. I know I have said this before, but every time I spend a couple days face-to-face with the people associated with the community publishing industry, I can't get over how open, honest and sharing the collaborations are. People don't hold back ideas, solutions or problems from each other. They are truly excited to share their stories to the benefit of their fellow publications. This energy and sincere desire to see industry peers succeed is a characteristic that is both unique to our industry and the immense value in attending face-to-face events.

The business world seems to be reducing the number of industry related business interaction opportunities these days. I came through an era when newsprint companies and ink companies facilitated frequent "outings" where you collaborated

with people doing what you do, people from broad geographic areas. Trade associations were available on the local, state, regional and national levels to facilitate industry connections for community publications. There are fewer opportunities today than ever before in my 48 years in the industry. Some might argue that there are more, with the inclusion of Zoom meetings, webinars and virtual events. I think these can all be valuable tools – but none of them can come even close to replacing the value of face-to-face time spent with groups of fellow industry professionals. That in-person communication builds friendships, trust, shared experiences and a bond that strengthens attendees' belief in their product and their future. Something that a digital connection just can't seem to replicate. When I asked Google AI the difference between virtual and in-person events, the response was "in-person events provide deeper personal connection, enhanced networking, and more immersive experiences."

If you want to experience this bonding firsthand, there is a Leadership Summit coming up in February 2026 in Orlando. It is an excellent opportunity to enjoy some warm sunshine, a beautiful tropical setting and loads of open, honest discussion on industry issues. Plan your calendar now to make sure you "build your bottom line as well as your tan lines!" After all, what's a better way to spend a few days than to share them with people who understand, "Print's not dead... it's READ!" ■



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SYLVIA WEINSTEIN CRAFT HONORED AS 2025 ACP PUBLISHER OF THE YEAR

For Sylvia Weinstein Craft, publishing has never just been about putting ink on paper. It's been about people—telling their stories, lifting them up, and giving a community something positive to gather around. That's why the Association of Community Publishers has named her the **2025 Publisher of the Year**.

Craft's journey in communications spans more than 45 years, but her reputation was built on much more than professional know-how in advertising, marketing, and public relations. She has always been the kind of leader who rolls up her sleeves and gets involved, whether it's serving on local boards, mentoring students, or cheering on the small businesses that make her hometown of Newport News thrive.

Education has always been close to her heart. She has served on the Virginia Council on Vocational Education and a Blue-Ribbon Task Force of the State Board of Education, and for 10 years she gave her time and expertise to Christopher Newport University's School of Business. From 2006 to 2012, she extended that passion to the youngest learners, publishing Kidsville News!—a free educational newspaper distributed in schools throughout Newport News, York County, and James City County-Williamsburg. For countless children, it was their first introduction to the joy of reading the news.

Her commitment hasn't gone unnoticed. Along with numerous community and professional leadership awards, Craft has twice been honored by the U.S. Small Business Administration with its **Women in Business Advocate Award**. Those who know her, though, will tell you that recognition was never the point. Her drive has always been about helping people succeed.

That spirit is at the heart of her proudest creation—**Oyster Pointer**. More than 38 years ago, Craft recognized something was missing: a local paper that focused not on problems, but on possibilities. She wanted to highlight

the “sunny side of business” and share stories that made people smile. Today, Oyster Pointer is still doing just that, filling its pages with the good news of neighbors and businesses that keep the commu-

nity strong. Its design and content have repeatedly earned national recognition in the Best of the Best Publication Awards contest, but its heartbeat remains has always remained deeply local.

“Sylvia represents everything this award is about,” said ACP Executive Director Cassey Recore. “She has built a publication that not only informs, but uplifts. Her commitment



to community, education, and positive storytelling has inspired publishers throughout our industry. We are proud to honor her as Publisher of the Year.”

Even now, Craft is right where she's happiest—out in the community, meeting business owners, listening to their journeys, and turning those conversations into stories that celebrate the best of Newport News.

As she accepts the 2025 ACP Publisher of the Year award, Sylvia Weinstein Craft is being honored not just for her publishing achievements, but for her unwavering belief that positive stories can change a community. For 38 years and counting, she has proven that good news is worth sharing—and that's the kind of legacy that lasts. ■

SHANE GOODMAN HONORED WITH 2025 ACP Distinguished Service Award

The Association of Community Publishers (ACP) has announced Shane Goodman as the 2025 recipient of its Distinguished Service Award, honoring his decades of leadership, mentorship, and unwavering dedication to community publishing.

For those who know him, the recognition comes as no surprise. Goodman's career began humbly with his high school newspaper, but his passion for publishing quickly grew. From advertising sales to automotive magazine publishing, to leading a group of 12 weekly newspapers, he steadily built a reputation as a tireless innovator. Eventually, he struck out on his own, creating a thriving portfolio of lifestyle magazines, websites, events, and niche publications.

But ask anyone in the industry what sets Goodman apart, and the answer isn't just his professional success—it's his generosity. Colleagues recall how he has always been willing to share his knowledge, whether from the stage at a national conference or in a one-on-one conversation with a fellow publisher looking for advice.

From 2006 to 2020, Goodman poured his energy into the Association of Free Community Papers (AFCP), serving in nearly every capacity imaginable: Trade Show Chair, Awards Chair, Conference Chair, a decade as an officer, and President from 2016 to 2018. His dedication carried forward when he joined the International Free Paper Association (IFPA) Board of Directors in 2019, playing a key role in the historic merger that created today's ACP. Those who worked alongside him credit his thoughtful leadership—and his willingness to ask the tough

questions—with helping shape the organization's future.

Beyond boardrooms and titles, Goodman has been a familiar face at conferences and workshops, leading sessions with candor and humor. He has never shied away from sharing both the triumphs and the missteps of his career, knowing that others could learn from them.

As Goodman prepares to step down from board leadership at the end of this year, ACP members are taking time to reflect on his impact. "Shane has been a mentor, a leader, and a friend to so many of us," said one longtime colleague. "His contributions go far beyond strategy and structure—he's helped build the sense of community that defines our industry."

While his official service may be winding down, Goodman's

influence will continue to guide community publishers for years to come. The 2025 Distinguished Service Award is not just a recognition of past achievements, but a celebration of the countless lives and careers he has touched along the way. ■



Shane Goodman Receiving his award from ACP President, Joyce Frericks.

FROM PAPERBOY TO PUBLISHER: Greg Birkett Named ACP's 2025 Volunteer of the Year

For Greg Birkett, the newspaper business has never been just a job – it's been a lifelong calling. That passion and commitment were recognized this year as the Association of Community Publishers (ACP) honored him with its 2025 Volunteer of the Year Award.

Birkett's publishing journey began humbly across the street from his childhood home in Dubuque, Iowa. At just 10 years old, he would hang around the local paper until someone put him to work sweep-ing up string and inserting ads. By 14, he had already earned the title of assistant circulation manager. By 22, he was running circulation altogether – a trajectory that soon propelled him into leadership roles as vice president, general manager, and eventually publisher. He also served as vice president of DA Printing, the paper's commercial print operation.

That early start laid the foundation for a remarkable career. On January 1, 2024, Birkett and his wife, Sherri, became sole owners of The Dubuque Advertiser and DA Printing, marking a new chapter in a journey that began with nothing more than a broom and a stack of inserts.

But Birkett's influence has stretched far beyond his own newspaper. For more than 25 years, he has been a fixture in state, regional, and national publishing associations, often taking on the behind-the-scenes volunteer work that keeps the industry moving forward. He chaired ACP's Conference Committee for more than 15 years, served on revenue and awards committees, and led the organization as president from 2014 to 2016. Today, he continues as ACP's treasurer, ensuring the organization's

stability well into the future.

His dedication has not gone unnoticed. Over the years, Birkett has earned some of the industry's highest honors, including the ACP Publisher of the Year Award in 2009 and the Craig S. McMullen Distinguished Service Award in 2012. The Midwest Free Community Papers named him its President's Memorial Award for Distinguished Service recipient back in 1998, recognizing his leadership long before he became a household name in publishing circles. He has also served with the Independent Free Papers of America, the American Advertising Federation, and PaperChain.

Even with his deep industry involvement, Birkett has never forgotten his roots in community. At home in Dubuque, he has served on the boards of Sertoma, the Jaycees, the Dubuque County Fair Association, Hospice of Dubuque, Knights of Columbus Council 510, and the Hillcrest Lights Festival. Whether it's a neighborhood project, a charity fundraiser, or an industry initiative, colleagues say Birkett is always the first to volunteer his time.

Those who know him best describe him as a whirlwind of energy – constantly on his way to a meeting, lending a hand to a neighbor, or brainstorming ways to strengthen the community publishing industry.

"Greg has a remarkable ability to give 100 percent to everything he does," ACP leaders said when announcing the award. "His energy, his professionalism, and his generosity have lifted up not only his community but also publishers across the country."

Birkett and Sherri live on 12 acres in Richardsville, Iowa, and are the proud parents of two grown children, Ben and Samantha.

For someone who started in newspapers by picking up string off the floor, Birkett has left a mark that stretches far beyond circulation numbers. With the Volunteer of the Year Award, ACP celebrates not just his decades of service, but the spirit of dedication and community that has defined his entire career. ■



Greg Birkett receiving his award from ACP President, Joyce Frericks.

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LESSONS FROM ANOTHER LEGEND...

BY LOREN COLBURN



BARB PERRY – 2023 ACP DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENT

On September 10, our industry lost one of its legends. Barb Perry was the kind of person who lit up every room she walked into. For more than 30 years, she worked to make the people around her better, happier, and more excited about the industry we all love. That was Barb—and we all couldn't wait to be around her.

As with anyone whose impact reached so widely, it's hard to imagine a world without her presence. Yet it's even more powerful to think about how much poorer the world would have been if she hadn't been part of it. Barb's influence on the communities she served, the people she mentored, and the community publishing industry was both remarkable and far-reaching.

Her story began in the 1990s, when Barb was looking for something to keep her busy while her children were young. She started out as an overqualified telemarketer. Whenever she spotted ways to improve things, she'd share her ideas with her boss—who usually replied, “How about YOU do that?” Before long, Barb had taken on more and more responsibilities, eventually becoming Sales Manager.

She had an extraordinary gift for building consensus, whether with clients or colleagues. Everyone loved working with Barb. When her company launched an agency to handle both print and digital, she became a driving force behind the print side's success, giving others the space to focus on digital growth.

Over the decades, Barb immersed herself in every level of community publishing—local, state, regional, and national. Her enthusiasm, boundless energy, and “first-to-volunteer” spirit became a source of strength for every group fortunate enough to work with her. She served on the boards of IFPA and AFCP before joining the merged ACP board, where she played key roles on conference committees and was recognized repeatedly for her contributions.

As ACP's 2023 conference chair, Barb poured countless hours into planning and inspiring her team to match her dedication and attention to detail. That same year, she received the ACP Distinguished Service Award—one of many honors she earned during her career.

Beyond publishing, Barb gave her time generously to her community. She served as president of two chambers of commerce, was a Pynchon Trustee and past president of the Ad Club of Western Massachusetts, and even delivered her own TED Talk: “Mass Media and the Tale of the Little Newspaper.”

Through Barb Perry's service, our industry and its people are stronger, better, and more successful than we ever could have been without her. Personally, I carry with me several lessons I learned from Barb:

- The importance of being a true team player. All for one, and one for all.
- That a smile and calm, thoughtful approach can ease



BARB PERRY IN HER ROLE AS CONFERENCE CHAIR OF THE 2023 CHARLOTTE CONFERENCE.

tension and open the door to meaningful conversation.

- That those who dedicate themselves to helping others, rather than advancing themselves, earn the deepest respect and admiration.
- That people accomplish more when leaders lead by example. Barb was always first to volunteer and gave 100% every time.
- That the greatest gift you can give is friendship. Barb extended it freely to everyone, and in return, she was always welcomed, loved, and embraced.

We will deeply miss the brightness Barb brought to every gathering. But her light continues to shine—in the lives she touched, in the lessons she taught, and in the community publishing industry she helped strengthen for decades to come.

Rest in peace, Barb Perry. And thank you for brightening our lives. ■

CONFERENCE PICTURES

NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES



Jocelyn Engle, Cory Regnier, Tim Bingaman and John Draper at the Wednesday welcome Reception.



Manuel Karam and Tami Meador discuss ideas between sessions.



Thursday Speed Networking session.



Greg Birkett and Steve Harrison at the Thursday Mardi Gras dinner.



Steve Harrison talks to Dee Evans in the Trade Show.



Jocelyn Engle and Colleen Sperry celebrate their team win in the bead toss competition.



Ross Furukawa and Greg Booras at the closing reception.



Joyce Frericks, Julia Thompson, Lisa Miller, Sherri Birkett, Kylee Miller, Carol Toomey and Lori Vergith at the closing reception



Manuel Karam networks with Caitlin Neeland, Kaitlin Donnan and Joyce Frericks.



Breakfast Networking Session!

CONFERENCE PICTURES

CONFERENCE SESSIONS



ACP President, Joyce Frericks opens the conference.



Conference Chair, Manuel Karam gets into the Mardi Gras spirit.



Guy Tasaka presents Local Media 3.0 session.



Ross Furukawa opens his session on Lead Generation Tactics and First Party Data



Jay and Liza Graves present their session on Digital Publishing and Email.



Dr. Jeanne Maes presents Communicating at the Top of Your Game.



Attendees taking advantage of the Trade Show opportunity



Our Idea Exchange participants awaiting voting results.



Scott Greene with his first place idea and winnings!



Natalie Bruno and Taylor Sides at the January Spring Breakfast Roundtable



Kara Iverson presenting TLI 260 – Taking a Walk in an Entrepreneur's Shoes



Kenny Katzgrau presents TLI 261 – How to Sell Advertising in 2025 With AI.



Mark Pettus and Colleen Sperry focus in on one of the sessions.

CONFERENCE PICTURES

AWARD WINNERS



2025 Rising Star – Jacob Dukeman



2025 Rising Star – Trevor Romero



2025 Rising Star – Evelyn Spence



2023 Rising Star – Kaitlin Donnan



2022 Rising Star – Kara Iverson



2023 Rising Star – Jayde Vogeler



John Draper with Rising Stars Shelby Palmer, Kara Iverson, Caitlin Neeland, Kailin Donnan, Evelyn Spence, Jacob Dukeman, Trevor Romero and JaydeVogeler.



Cassey Recore crowning John Draper Mardi Gras King!



Sherri Birlett, Greg Birket (2025 Volunteer Award Winner), Shane Goodman (Distinguished Service Award Winner), and Jolene Goodman following the awards presentations.



Julia Thompson crowned Mardi Gras Queen!

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SCS AND SIGNIX ANNOUNCE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP, bringing notarization automation to SCS's advertising solution

SCS is proud to announce a strategic partnership with SIGNiX, a leading innovator in digital signature and remote online notarization technology, marking a significant step forward in delivering secure, seamless, and modern document solutions.

SIGNiX's fast, secure and fully digital affidavit notarization will now be available in SCS's Community Advertising System, making it easy for publishing teams to process legal notices without printing, stamping, or scanning.

With this integration, newspapers can use their in-house notaries to batch notarize dozens or even hundreds of affidavits in a single session. The result is a faster, simpler, and more scalable workflow for handling proof of publication. Early adopters are already seeing improvements in

turnaround time, labor savings, and consistency across teams.

KEY BENEFITS FOR NEWSPAPERS INCLUDE:

- Eliminate paper-based steps like printing, stamping, and scanning
- Notarize Proof of Publication Affidavits in bulk
- Complete digital audit trails for internal recordkeeping and legal validation
- Dramatically reduced turnaround times and labor costs
- Streamlined workflow from affidavit creation to notarization

"This partnership gives newspaper teams a faster and simpler way to handle affidavits," said Jay Jumper, SIGNiX CEO. "Local publishers do

important work, and they deserve tools that save time and fit naturally into the systems they already use."

About SCS:

SCS offers an extensive line of publishing-related applications, including Layout-8000™. More than 500 sites producing over 16,000 publications in 10 countries in 5 languages use SCS mission-critical software every day. SCS also resells award-winning digital asset management software from FotoWare based in Oslo, Norway. SCS is privately owned by Kurt Jackson. Learn more at www.newspapersystems.com.

About SIGNiX:

SIGNiX provides secure, legally compliant digital notarization and e-signature tools trusted by regulated industries across the U.S. Learn more at www.signix.com.

ACP TRADE SHOW TESTIMONIALS

I always tell my vendor friends that the ACP group is one of the best groups of people. They tend to view vendors as partners and are genuinely interested in the solutions we provide.



If you only do 5 or 6 shows a year, I would put this one on my list.



acp
Association of
Community
Publishers

2025 Mobile Trade Show Participants

KEEPING COMMUNITY



BY SHELBY PALMER

Community is at the heart of everything we do. As community papers, as publishers, and as marketing partners for local businesses, we are already deeply woven into the fabric of our regions. But “being part of the community” is not something you accomplish once, it’s something you do daily.

In 2025, the Exchange has been intentional about seeking out new opportunities to connect. Whether through regional events, fundraisers, or professional organizations, we’ve learned that showing up makes a difference. Not only in our credibility, but in the depth of the relationships we build in our communities.

Genuine growth doesn’t come only from textbooks or webinars. Some of the most valuable lessons come from engaging with others, we’re listening, sharing, and being open to new ideas. Attending events like advertising association panels or joining local chapters of design organizations

has been energizing. These gatherings bring together people who love creativity, marketing, and design, and provide space to share challenges, celebrate wins, and learn from one another. And that’s just events I’ve personally been involved with. Our publisher and our sales team have attended & sponsored multiple chamber of commerce luncheons, realtor association events, museum foundation fundraisers, charity auctions, and so much more.

When we participate, we’re reminded that mentorship isn’t limited to formal programs. Sometimes it’s as simple as asking questions, offering encouragement, or sharing a different perspective with someone within your own organization. Mentorship and community go hand in hand, creating a cycle of support that strengthens everyone involved.

Every community faces familiar challenges: raising funds, promoting events, telling their story. What changes is how we approach these challenges. By collaborating with local organizations, we’ve been able to help bring fresh ideas to established traditions.

For example, through partnerships with realtor associations, museum foundations, and other fundraising efforts, we’ve been able to lend our skills in marketing materials, sponsorships, and event support. These efforts not only provide valuable exposure for the causes themselves, but also demonstrate that we are credible, capable, and invested. It’s

not just about advertising. It’s about being there, rolling up our sleeves, and showing we care.

It’s easy to overlook the importance of presence. Chamber luncheons, community events, and fundraisers may look like “just another meeting” on the calendar, but every one of them is an opportunity. Each time we attend, we build trust. Each time we participate, we demonstrate that we’re not just a business in the community, we’re a business for the community.

And these moments are worth capturing. Pictures of events, casual snapshots, and behind-the-scenes glimpses all tell the story of involvement. They remind people that local business is more than transactions; it’s relationships.

“Mentorship and community go hand in hand, creating a cycle of support that strengthens everyone involved.”

Whether it’s through professional associations, design groups, or local fundraisers, the consistent theme is clear: engagement builds strength. As individuals and as organizations, we

should all seek out ways to create connections, because the more we participate, the stronger our communities become.

Keeping community is not passive. It’s about being intentional. It’s about stepping out, showing up, and contributing where you can. As individuals, as teams, and as organizations, we can always do more to engage. And in doing so, we not only lift up those around us, but we grow ourselves. ■

2025 RISING STAR PROFILE



Name: Jacob Dukeman
Age: 27 (this past Tuesday)
Publishing Company or Publication: Engle Printing & Publishing
Job Title: Advertising Sales Representative
Job Responsibilities: Run on Paper Advertising Sales, Magazine ad sales, Digital advertising sales
Year you became a Rising Star: 2025
How long have you worked in this industry? 3 Years

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS:

1. What is one significant take-away you hope to gain from being part

of the Rising Stars program?

I hope to glean of my peers thought processes, understand how others experience growth and success in the industry, more education and training, and mentoring.

2. What do you think the future looks like for the community paper industry?

I don't know...I ask that question of myself daily as it feels like its daily changing.....That being said, in regards to advertising as a whole, everyone needs to be in every form of "media" to be successful...so print still has its place. ■

The following Rising Star profile was omitted in error while putting together the September issue of Publish.

About ACP rising stars

The ACP Rising Stars program is designed to honor individuals under the age of 36 who are emerging leaders in the publishing industry. This annual program will recognize up to 7 individuals who represent the best of our up and coming industry professionals. These individuals exemplify good character, leadership, and professionalism not only at work, but in the communities they serve.

Nominee qualifications

These individuals should show the promise of and a commitment to impacting their publication and the industry in a positive manner through

professional achievement. Nominees must also show they not only perform their jobs to a high standard, but they also have a commitment to furthering their knowledge and abilities. Nominees must actively work in the community publishing industry for a member or associate of ACP and are required to have been employed for more than a year. Nominees must not be 36 prior to December 31st of nomination year.

Recognition program

Award recipients will be recognized in *Publish Magazine*, the official publication of ACP.

An awards presentation program will be conducted during the next national in-person conference celebrating the participants and their contributions to the program. All of the individuals participating are awarded free room,

registration, meal plan, specialized training sessions and up to \$500 in travel reimbursements to the next in-person conference.

Ongoing Opportunity

The ACP Rising Stars program does not end with the recognition program. Rising Stars will be asked to assist the various initiatives of the association on an ongoing basis for up to three years. ACP recognizes that we have much to learn from these talented young people and desires to use their skills to help us lead the publishing industry. In return for participation in regularly scheduled conference calls and for volunteering some time to assist with ACP initiatives, ACP will provide additional leadership development opportunities and the opportunity to attend future conferences for even more training.

For more information about the ACP Rising Star program, go to:
<https://www.communitypublishers.com/rising-stars>

ONE WAY TO MAKE PRESENTATIONS MORE MEMORABLE

BY JAMES A. BAKER – FOUNDER, BAKER COMMUNICATIONS



BY JOHN FOUST
GREENSBORO, NC

Samuel, the ad manager at a community paper, told me about a simple technique his sales team uses at the end of meetings with prospects and clients.

"I once read that people remember only about 25 percent of what they hear," he said. "That's a harsh reality, because we focus our client conversations on things we think are memorable. It's painful to walk away from a meeting knowing that the person on the other side of the desk might forget three quarters of the discussion. Of course, we use ad examples, charts and coverage maps to add visual elements to presentations, but they still forget a large percentage of what we talk about.

"We've learned that one way to deal with this problem is to summarize at the end of a meeting," he said. "It's an easy way to repeat the important points in a conversation. And a lot of times, we find out the other person has completely missed a key fact. A summary helps us clar-

ify things and make presentations a little easier to remember."

SAMUEL'S PROCESS HAS THREE STEPS:

1. Restate briefly. For example, a member of Samuel's team might say, "Thank you for meeting with me today. To make sure we're on the same page, let me recap what we've talked about. First, we looked at the target audience for your new Widget product,

"I once read that people remember only about 25 percent of what they hear," he said. "That's a harsh reality, because we focus our client conversations on things we think are memorable.

then you gave me a list of the most important features and benefits, then we talked about some special offers that could appeal to your customers."

Notice how this brief statement hits the highlights in a logical sequence. There's no need to go into great depth about everything which was discussed.

2. Confirm the information and ask for input. After the summary, it helps to nail it down by asking, "Does this cover everything?"

Even though it's short, this is a crucial question. It is designed to give the other person permission

to say they missed something which was covered – or even to say they would like to know something else. If something has been misunderstood, it's better to find out now.

3. Include an action item. For instance, "My next step is to start on that market report you want and get it to you by Monday. Will that work?"

This is the time to get some kind of agreement and advance the sale. If the other person is not yet ready to finalize things and sign on the dotted line, this keeps the dialogue going in a helpful, low-key way.

"An action step can make a conversation stick in the mind," Samuel explained. "It gives the salesperson a specific reason to get back in touch. It lets the other person know to expect a call by a certain day. When someone is waiting for information, an action step reduces the chances that an email or a voice mail message will be ignored."

It's all about creating memorable presentations. When advertisers and prospects remember the key points, they are more likely to buy. ■

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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.

✉ Email for information:
john@johnfoust.com

6 DESIGN MISTAKES THAT MAKE YOUR ADS HARD TO TRUST

Have you ever scrolled past an ad because it just looked suspicious? Some ad designs instantly give off a scammy or spammy vibe—even before you read a single word. If your ads aren't building trust, they're not converting. That's why avoiding these common graphic design mistakes is key to creating high-converting and trustworthy ad designs.

HERE ARE SIX DESIGN ISSUES THAT MAKE YOUR ADS HARD TO TRUST—AND WHAT TO DO INSTEAD.

1. USING THE WRONG TYPEFACE



Your choice of font has a major impact on how people perceive your brand. Using a horror-style font for a travel ad? That instantly sends the wrong message.

Tip: Choose a professional, on-brand typeface and stick to it. Your font should reflect your tone and industry—not distract from it.

2. USING TOO MANY FONTS

Mixing several typefaces in one design looks messy and unprofession-



al. It breaks visual consistency and makes your content hard to follow.

Tip: Limit your design to just **one or two fonts**. This keeps your layout clean and helps build brand recognition across all your graphics.

3. USING LOW-QUALITY IMAGES



Blurry, pixelated, or poorly cropped photos make it seem like

your business lacks the budget or care to present itself well. That damages your credibility.

Tip: Use **high-quality images** that match your message and brand style. There are plenty of free and paid stock photo websites that offer professional visuals.

4. USING CLASHING OR OFF-BRAND COLORS



Colors that don't complement each other—or don't match your brand—can make your ad feel loud, unbalanced, and amateurish.

Tip: Stick to your **brand color palette**. Consistent use of colors improves brand recognition and makes your designs feel more polished and intentional.

5. OVERCROWDING THE LAYOUT



Too much text, too many graphics, and not enough breathing room? That's a fast way to lose your viewer's attention. People won't bother trying to read a chaotic ad.

Tip: Apply **visual hierarchy** and leave **white space** to make your design easier to scan. Every element should have a clear purpose and place.

6. OVERLOADING WITH CALL-TO-ACTIONS (CTAS)

Multiple CTAs fighting for attention just confuse the user and make the ad feel pushy or desperate.

Tip: Focus on **one clear, compelling call-to-action**. Make it easy for people to understand what to do next—without feeling overwhelmed.



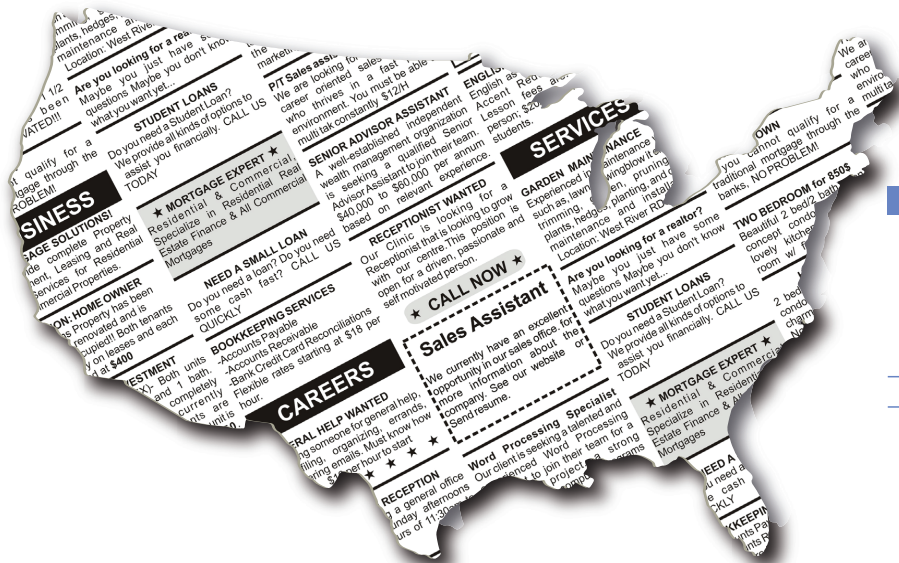
FINAL THOUGHTS: DESIGN WITH TRUST IN MIND

Many of these mistakes happen when you try too hard to convince the viewer to take action—without thinking about how your design makes them feel. A well-thought-out **brand guide** can help you avoid these issues by keeping your visuals consistent, professional, and trustworthy. ■

At Pugo Design Studio, we help businesses like yours create goal-driven, brand-aligned marketing designs that not only look good but work. Need help making your ad designs feel more polished and trustworthy?

Original article: <https://pugodesigns.com/blog/6-design-mistakes-that-makes-your-ads-hard-to-trust/>

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CHANGE ISN'T EASY!

BY SHANE GOODMAN – PRESIDENT & PUBLISHER, BIG GREEN UMBRELLA MEDIA, INC.

A few decades ago, I was hired to manage a commercial printing plant in rural Nebraska. The company was flush with revenue and had about 80 employees, but it struggled to show a consistent and predictable profit. Before I arrived, one of the owners of the company implemented an employee attitude survey, and the results were quite clear. Employees felt the company was overstaffed with many people not pulling their weight, and those who were working as they should felt they were underpaid. Other issues were uncovered as well, but staffing levels and compensation were the big ones.

I was handed a copy of the results and instructed to fix it. I knew I couldn't do it on my own, so I pulled in a group of employees, and we created teams to measure our performance by department, set realistic expectations and suggest changes. As part of that process, I met with every employee and asked them to explain what they did for the company. More than 20 could not come up with more than a couple hours of tasks they were doing each week. This surprised me. It did not surprise most of the other employees.

I let 20 people go that week. It wasn't easy, and those who were dismissed were not happy. I am sure my name was mud in their circles in the community. I promised the remaining staff members that their tasks and compensation would be evaluated and would be adjusted to get them to regional averages. Fortunately, most of them trusted me, and they received significant raises and proved to be valuable and loyal employees.

Not surprisingly, our revenues grew, our quality of work improved, most of our remaining employees were happier, and our profits increased. In short, the company was on solid ground. Was it perfect? Far from it, but we made a great deal of progress in a short amount of time by simply digging in, asking questions and implementing change.

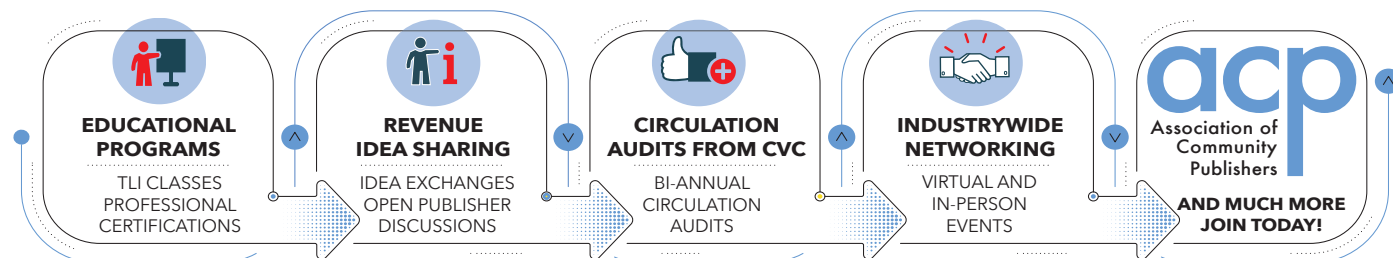
This process isn't groundbreaking. Good managers of private companies across our nation do this every day, continually questioning where every penny is spent and making tough decisions to ensure the companies will be operating for years to come.

This basic management process is now being implemented in our federal government, and it is long past due. Those whose work — or lack thereof — is being questioned are not happy about it. Those who have been let go are downright mad. Change isn't easy, and, unfortunately, this has become a politically divided issue with much hatred and angst aimed at the people uncovering the tax-funded waste instead of the tax-funded waste itself. Yes, the process seems forced and fast, although it is easy to judge from the outside — just like many did to me a few decades ago.

Maybe those working in the federal government should participate in an employee attitude survey? And maybe key government employees should be involved in the process of creating and implementing the solutions? The findings may be just as surprising as the ones I discovered in rural Nebraska a few decades ago. ■

Originally published in the Daily Umbrella on February 26, 2025 in response to the initial days of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE).

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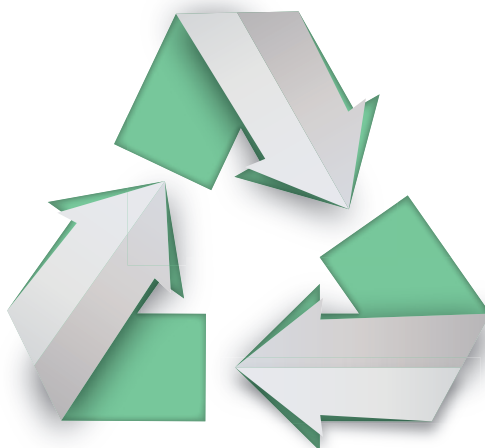
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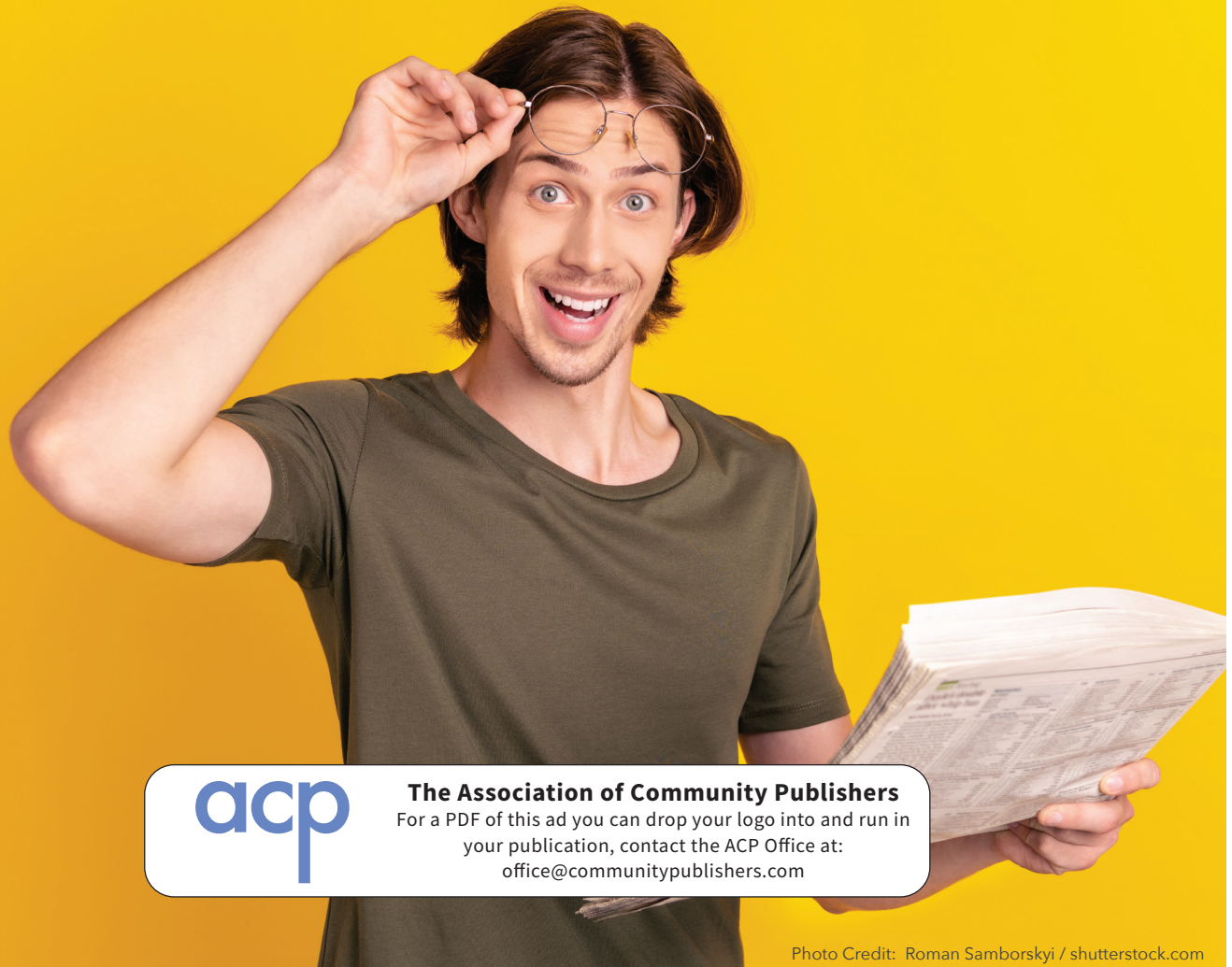


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Publish is a monthly magazine produced by the Association of Community Publishers.

The mission of *Publish* is to cover the people, companies and events that shape the community media industry - one issue at a time.

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