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INK features:



7 | **POSTAL: PRC 10-YEAR RATE REVIEW**



13 | **ENTER NOW: SHARK BANK!**



17 | **TLI PROGRAMS: INVEST IN YOURSELF!**

INK departments:

- 4 | AFCP DIRECTORS
- 6 | EDITOR'S VIEWPOINT
- 9 | POSTAL UPDATE: WILL "CURE" KILL PATIENT?
- 10 | MEMBER PROFILE: HANK MCAFFEE
- 11 | ASSOCIATE MEMBER PROFILE: CUMMINGS PRINTING
- 12 | FEATURE STORY: GETTING TO KNOW JIM BUSCH
- 14 | CONFERENCE COMMITTEE UPDATE
- 15 | FROM THE TOP
- 19 | THE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE
- 21 | ASSOCIATION UPDATES
- 22 | RISING STARS: THE WIND IN YOUR SAILS
- 24 | SPOTLIGHT: ELAINE BUCKLEY
- 25 | ON THE HORIZON
- 26 | BUSINESS AND SERVICE DIRECTORY
- 28 | ASSOCIATION CONTACT INFORMATION
- 29 | CLASSIFIEDS

COMING
next
month

INK will examine the rising cost of newsprint and the impact it could have going forward. INK will also have a review of some of the specific opportunities on the schedule in Baltimore this May.

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Bring news and resources to the attention of the free paper industry by publishing a responsible quality magazine.

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All proceeds from the silent auction go the Bill Welsh Foundation to help provide scholarships for the Rising Stars to attend the AFCP annual conference.



Dave Neuharth

DAVE NEUHARTH
EDITOR

PAPERCHAIN Led to Free Paper **SRDS** Listings

PAPERCHAIN CHAIR DAN ALEXANDER notes that, "Promoting and branding our free community papers is near and dear to all of us whose livelihood is based in this industry. While some of us have been at this for years, our industry is still very much in its infancy.

"Unlike no other time in our history has the opportunity to assert our brand been as promising as it is today with daily newspapers experiencing dramatic losses in paid circulation and finding themselves seemingly unable to stop the erosion.

"Despite modest growth in electronic and digital models, nothing delivers like strong local print products.

"More members see growth in new areas once reserved for those paid products as a direct result of our free method of mass distribution and the need of marketers to reach local households with a proven product.

"The success of an industry is never achieved strictly by reaching a preconceived plateau and remaining quiet, but more so by the constant promotion of the readily accepted method that solves a problem and delivers the desired results.

"Free Community Papers have [delivered] and will continue to deliver the required local results marketers of brick and mortar facilities must have to succeed and meet their goals.

"Ensuring our individual and collective success continues to be strengthened and expanded, we are looking for project minded free community paper staff members to volunteer for short-term committee work and brain-storming discussions to generate new methods to promote the industry.

"Please consider supporting this effort by volunteering some time and encouraging co-workers to do the same. Call

your association executive director today and let him/her know we can count on your support."

Alexander is the owner and publisher of Denton Publications in New York. We can't thank him enough for his volunteer work with PaperChain.

In 2006 the announcement was made that the Standard Rate and Data Service (SRDS) agreed to list free paper listings on the SRDS website along with the daily newspapers.

SRDS was considered the Bible for major media buyers to use when placing ads for their clients.

It became a reality through the efforts of the PaperChain Committee and Tim Bingaman, the president of Circulation Verification Council (CVC).

When the agreement became a reality, the SRDS website was receiving over 26,000 hits each day. For 87 years the daily newspapers were alone on the site.

Since that agreement was made, when a media buyer goes to the SRDS website to look at a market, the information on daily newspapers will pop up along with the data on free papers in that market. Media buyers will be looking at the rates, demographics and distribution of the free paper industry.

The PaperChain Committee, despite eliminated revenue, has kept this ball rolling. Despite their own falling revenue, the free paper associations have provided enough revenue to keep the SRDS agreement intact. The Association of Free Community Papers (AFCP) has provided the lion's share of the revenue.

Thank you. **INK**

PRC 10-Year Rate Review

What does it mean for mailers?

by Donna Hanbery, Executive Director, Saturation Mailers Coalition

ON DECEMBER 1, 2017 ROBERT TAUB, Chairman of the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) held a press conference to announce the long awaited decision of the PRC in its ten-year rate review of the rate-making system that has been in place under the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA) since 2006. Although the Commission declined to eliminate the CPI price cap and to give the Postal Service the unfettered pricing discretion it had been seeking in the review, it found that there were problems with the current system.

In finding that changes needed to be made to restore the Postal Service to financial health and to deal with other problems or anomalies in the prior rate making process, the PRC announced the beginning of another regulatory proceeding, a rulemaking proceeding, that would give mailers and stake holders a chance to propose their own "fixes" or solutions to the problems and to comment on the proposal advanced by the PRC.

The decision and rulemaking is in two parts. In a lengthy determination, the PRC examined the rate cap system as it has operated for the past ten years, compared it to prior cost-of-service rate making before PAEA, and proceed to analyze whether or not the current system was working under the objectives and factors set forth in the law.

In general, the PRC made the following findings:

- The CPI rate cap system has worked to achieve the objectives of stable and predictable rates with regard to timing and magnitude. But the rate-making system had not increased pricing efficiency.

- That the Postal Service was in "poor health." Although it had generally achieved short-term financial stability, it was in poor financial health from the standpoint of medium- and long-term financial stability. The PRC acknowledges that much of this is

due to the Great Recession, the emergence of new technologies that hurt Postal Service volumes and revenues, and a unique period of deflation where the ability to raise rates under the CPI cap did not help the Postal Service.

- The current system jeopardizes the Postal Service's financial health because it is not able to raise the rates of "under water" products that are not covering their attributable costs. For example, the periodical class has historically had attributable costs below the prices that the Postal Service has

been able to charge under a rate cap system. Because the cap is applied to all periodicals as a class (and there are no profitable periodicals), the USPS has not been able to raise rates above the CPI for that class to cover costs.

- The Postal Service has not maintained high quality service standards.

Other findings of the PRC of significance included its determination that the plain language of PAEA gave the PRC "broad authority to engage in rulemaking in order to modify or replace the current rate making system. The scope of that authority is limited only

by what is necessary to achieve the PAEA's objectives." The PRC rejected arguments that it did not have the authority to change the rate cap.

On the more positive side, the PRC largely found that the rate cap system was working to achieve needed mailer concerns of predictability and stability; and that the current system, with a regular, known, cycle or rate adjustments, was more efficient and had eliminated many of the administrative burdens and costs and had improved transparency, than the rate system that existed before PAEA under the costs-of-service rate setting model.

The PRC's findings and determination runs 270
Continued on page 8

"The PRC largely found that the rate cap system was working to achieve needed mailer concerns of predictability and stability."





Continued from page 7

pages, with a detailed examination of the history and a discussion of each of the factors and objectives under the Act. In spite of finding that the rate cap system is widely supported by mailers and stakeholders and has helped the Postal Service and the industry have a system that all stakeholders seem to believe is considerably better than the prior cost-of-service method, the PRC also finds that the Postal Service's balance sheet and losses have grown under the system and "need to be fixed."

Although the PRC repeatedly acknowledges that most of these financial problems are largely due to the optimistic views of Congress in 2006 that volumes would continue to grow, the economy would be stable, and that the Postal Service would have the funds to pay a very aggressive schedule for prefunding Postal Service retiree health costs, the PRC is not willing to ignore those "big numbers" and "big losses." Notably, the accumulated deficit of the USPS is approximately 59.1 billion and the RHBF requirement accounts for 54.8 billion of that number. Although all the Commissioners seem to lament that Congress has not acted to change the RHBP requirement or to potentially forgive or reamortize these "losses," the Commission insists it can't ignore these numbers and must craft a proposal to improve the Postal Service's medium- and long-term financial health.

In announcing a proposed rulemaking, the PRC makes it clear that its proposed rule is "a suggestion only." The rulemaking proceeding launches a 90-day window of time for mailers and stakeholders to comment on the PRC rule or to make their own proposals. At the end of 90 days everyone will have a chance to reply to the submissions of other parties. At the end of the 120 days period, the PRC will then consider its own proposal and industry and Postal Service comments before issuing a final rule that would change and make modifications in the present system.

Here is what the PRC is suggesting in its proposed rule:

- Postal Service prices will still be tied to a price cap based on CPI, but the USPS will have the right to charge CPI plus 2% for each of the next five years for all classes of mail.

- In addition to the 2% "extra," the Postal Service could charge an additional 1% with .75% tied to certain operational efficiencies, and .25% tied to improvements in service quality.

- The Postal Service will be required to raise prices for underwater products (like periodicals and some standard flats.) For these products, the Postal Service will be "required" to raise prices an additional 2% over the allowable price change until prices achieve full cost coverage.

- The USPS will have new restrictions on work-sharing passthrough. The USPS should strive to have, as near as possible, 100 percent pass through of actual savings through worksharing. The fol-

lowing limits will be in place, however, subject to a three-year grace period for noncompliant passthroughs:

Periodicals: 75% – 125% of avoided costs;

All other classes: 85% – 115% of avoided costs.

The Commission Decision and Proposed Rule clearly finds that the PRC and industry must be "stuck" with the Postal Service's bad balance sheet. The PRC declined to follow suggestions made by many commentators that it should not accept as a "given" the big debt on the Postal Service's balance sheet caused by the unrealistic health-care funding, or that it should

also consider the Postal Service's undervalued assets like real estate, in determining its financial health. The PRC refused to accept any of those arguments and seems to say "we have to accept the numbers at face value." After doing this, the PRC decides it "must" give the USPS more flexibility to raise prices high enough to generate sufficient revenue to assure medium- and long-term financial stability.

At least some of the Commissioners in Supplemental Comments – and in the case of Tony Hammond, a dissent – expressed concern that the "fix" proposed by the PRC might be problematic but needed to be done because Congress had failed to act on reform. Both Commissioners Langley and Acton noted that the PRC's proposed rulemaking was "one approach to regulating market dominant rates," but invite other interested parties to propose alternate solutions.

Tony Hammond formally dissented with the majority, stating "the proposed changes elevate the

"The PRC also finds that the Postal Service's balance sheet and losses have grown under the system and 'need to be fixed.'"



objective of financial stability above the others.” Hammond writes, “I have concluded that a significant portion of the Postal Service’s financial instability results from an overly aggressive retiree health benefits pre-funding schedule – which warrants a legislative solution – and from the Postal Service’s decision in 2007 not to pursue the final cost of service rate increase authorized by the PAEA.”

Hammond states he would propose a onetime price increase that raises the Postal Service’s finances to the level needed to ensure stability absent those two factors, while leaving the price cap intact for future rate adjustments. Hammond warns that the changes proposed by the PRC could have a substantial negative impact on volumes.

Given the lengthy time the Commission took to issue this decision, and the conflicting views and uncertainty expressed in some of the individual opinions by three of the four Commissioners, it seems likely that the final order and decision of the Commission on the new rules and system may vary somewhat from what the Commission has proposed.

The initial industry reaction was grim, lamenting that this proposal, although preserving the “rate cap” in principle, would do little to improve USPS efficien-

cy and was certain to drive the USPS to raise prices to the full extent permitted over the five-year period. Several mailers and association leaders expressed grave fears that the PRC proposal would do lasting, potentially irreversible damage to the USPS and the mailing industry.

In the Postal Service’s response to the Decision, Postmaster General Megan Brennan, stated, “The Postal Service agrees with the conclusion of the Postal Regulatory Commission that the current CPI price cap does not work and needs to be changed.” She goes on to state, “We are analyzing the Commission’s alternative price cap proposal to determine the extent to which it advances this goal. We continue to believe that any price cap is unnecessary in the rapidly evolving market place.”

As of the writing of this article, it is uncertain whether or not any industry parties or the Postal Service will appeal the PRC decision or what actions or strategies may be pursued in the Postal Service rule making. The only thing that is certain, is that there will be some widely diverging views and comments in the rule making in the year to come.

Although it is not clear when any new, final, rate making rule may take effect, it seems unlikely that any change in rates will occur before early 2019. **INK**

Will the “Cure” Kill the Patient?

THE PRC FOUND THE POSTAL Service’s position is poor. Although most of the Commissioners and staff of the PRC seem to acknowledge that the “blame” for this problem lies largely with the unworkable retiree healthcare prefunding requirement, the PRC appears to think it is stuck with the cards it and the Postal Service have been dealt. But playing these cards for future rates changes is a dangerous game for mailers and the Postal Service.

You can’t fix a business that is suffering from lack of revenue by charging everyone more than the market will bear. In a good faith effort to “fix” the Postal Service’s poor finances, the PRC is recom-

mending too much too long to help the Postal Service get back to mid-term and long-term financial stability.

Make no mistake about it, this is like a year-over-year exigency increase that will drive many businesses from continued use of the Postal Service, and will exponentially drive the interest of current mailers to seek competitive alternatives for the profitable products the Postal Service wants to keep.

Even Congress, in trying to “make sausage” of competing interests in its discussions of postal reform, was not considering more than a CPI plus 1% markup for a limited period of time, or a one-time adjustment in rates.

The bottom line of this decision is that it puts an effort to restore the Postal Service’s financial health before all other objectives considered by the PRC. Although the PRC finds that the rate cap should be preserved, it effectively dismantles the cap for the next five years allowing year-over-year increases that may significantly outpace or even double the rate of inflation and will, sadly, result in the Postal Service still being saddled with high overhead, Congressional mandated prefunding requirements that everyone agrees would not have been passed by a Congress with a better crystal ball in 2006, and fewer customers. **INK**



Meet Hank McAfee of Tower Publications

HOW'S THIS FOR A JOB DESCRIPTION — Establish creative identity for each publication; schedule deadlines for all publications; design and layout editorial content; oversee editorial planning; direct photographers; design advertisements for clients; flat plan all publications; provide final approval for all publications; design sales tools and promotional items; manage and maintain asset library; administrate computer network; administrate project management software and provide staff IT support.

That job description belongs to Hank McAfee, the Associate Publisher and Creative Director for Tower Publications in Gainesville, Florida.

In the late 90's, he started doing design work for The Stuart News in Stuart, Florida. In 1998, he joined the Buyers' Guide in Gainesville — which was owned by Add Inc and managed by Charlie Delatorre. Delatorre later purchased the Buyers' Guide and in 2000 changed the business name to Tower Publications.

McAfee started out designing advertisements and moved into various positions until he was promoted to Associate Publisher.

McAfee said, "Great design should be easy. It can be insanely time-consuming and difficult, but the result should feel effortless. The hard part is limiting the complications and obstacles that keep projects from reaching their potential.

"To be honest, that's the work I love most – finding real solutions for the problems that get in the way of making something great."

McAfee has been active with the Association of Free Community Papers (AFCP). He enjoys the annual trade show and conference. "The Rising Stars program is something that I am proud to have been involved with and I'm looking forward to my continued growth within the association," he said.



McAfee is a native of Battle Creek, Michigan. He moved to Florida when he was four and now calls Gainesville his home.

From 1996-97 he studied graphic design at the Florida Schools of the Arts.

McAfee and his wife are big supporters of their local Humane Society, public radio and a small summer camp in Gainesville called "Girls Rock" where local female musicians teach young female campers how to play instruments in a band.

Married to Katrina, they love to travel. He enjoys playing the drums in a band with two close friends who have a blast making music together.

The couple shares their home with two pit bull rescue puppies and a large fluffy cat. **INK**

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Family-Run Cummings Printing

CUMMINGS PRINTING IS AN ASSOCIATE MEMBER of the Association of Free Community Papers (AFCP) with a long history.

Founded in 1914 by Lew A. Cummings and two employees, the small commercial printing company is now located in Hooksett, New Hampshire. Over the 100 years since its founding, the company has grown into one of the most successful printing companies in the country.

Cummings Printing has been a family-run publication printer since its inception, and the Cummings name continues to manage the operation.

Jack Cummings, the current owner and president of the company, has implemented a quality management system that involves every employee from customer service to shipping. Quality is a way of doing business at Cummings.

Cummings said "Printing is not dead, in fact we see just the opposite happening. It is growing and thriving in many categories, niche magazines being one of them. As is has been for over 100 years, our main objective is to use our experience of publication printing to partner with our clients and offer the best possible product and service in the industry."

Cummings started his career at the age of 16 when he began in the bindery department. From there he worked his way through the press room, layup, typesetting, customer service, and sales departments and in 1989, he was named president.

Since then he has guided the company through many changes from sheet-fed to half-web to 16 page presses, and now a 32-page web press. The operation provides hot lead typesetting to paper tape,



electronic typesetting, film stripping to completely digital image setting.

To accommodate these improvements, the company left their 33,000 square foot facility in Manchester for a newly-constructed 65,000 sq. ft. building in Hooksett, N.H., and today it operates under approximately 100,000 sq. ft.

During this time, Cummings' personal life grew as well. He was married and raised two sons, with one now in collage and the youngest in high school.

A sports fanatic, he follows the Boston pro teams, the local college and high school teams, and plays in a men's basketball and soft ball league. His greatest passion is fishing. When not in the office the probability is that he is near an ocean, lake or stream.

"It's been a great ride so far, both personally and professionally, and I'm looking forward to the future," Cummings said. **INK**



Getting to Know **Jim Busch**

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT ONE OF THE ASSOCIATION of Free Community Papers (AFCP) top volunteers' background is an eye opener.

We know that Jim Busch has been instrumental in transforming the level of professionalism and sales acumen of the free paper industry.

He has written the monthly Link & Learn message, has taught over 60 of The Leadership Institute classes to 1,000 students, has helped design dozens of TLI courses, and provides a quote that is distributed to the AFCP membership each week that helps get us off on the right foot every Monday.

Jim has been recognized for his volunteer work. In 2016 he was honored with the Gladys Van Drie Volunteer Award.

For Jim, it started when he chose to attend the University of Pittsburgh. He selected Pitt because it was close to his home and his work. During college he worked full time sometimes holding down two jobs. During his junior year he exacerbated his situation by getting married.

While in college he learned how to multitask and handle stress. He wasn't sure what he wanted to do with his life so he majored in Medieval/Renaissance Literature and History.

Following graduation this degree, coupled with the recession triggered by the Arab oil boycott, meant there were no jobs waiting for him. He decided to build a cabin on the edge of the Allegheny National Forest. He and his wife lived there for several years – without the benefit of plumbing or other modern conveniences.

When it came to employment, Jim said, "I didn't choose an advertising career as much as advertising chose me." He was working at a company that sold supplies to the steel industry. In the early 80's the mills were disappearing, so he took a job selling Yellow Page advertising.

Twelve years later he was assigned to handle the Pittsburgh Pennysaver's Yellow Page advertising. He made an impression on his client and soon became their classified sales manager.

In just four years, Jim tripled his department's revenue and was promoted to a district sales manager. In 2001, he became the Pennysaver's director of research and training. This role led to his invitation to join the AFCP's Leadership Institute and to write the Link and Learn features for PaperChain. When the Pennysaver was acquired by a local media organization, Jim was responsible for training 140 multi-media salespeople. At the end of 2016, Jim retired from Trib Total Media.

Busch has many fond memories of AFCP. He said, "I



have so many good memories of my association with the AFCP that it is hard to choose the best. I would have to say the two that stand out the most are the first TLI training sessions at the Doral Golf Resort and winning the Gladys Van Drie Award in San Diego. I was caught completely off guard and am very proud of this honor."

Jim told INK, "I believe that any success I had in my career can be attributed to my curiosity and creativity. I like collecting information and putting the bits back together in new and interesting ways. This is how I plan to spend my retirement. I have published a number of history articles, personal essays and short stories. I'm president of my local writer's group and teach a number of writing and creativity classes throughout the year. I just completed a 20' X 20' workshop/studio where I will pursue my interests in making art, woodwork and metal work. My grandson wants me to teach him woodcarving and blacksmithing. Most of all, I'm looking forward to spending more time with my wife. Due to the pressures of work and raising a family, in 45 years of marriage we've spent about 42 minutes together."

Jim plans to continue to take an active role in TLI and will continue to write for Free Paper INK. However, Jim is stepping away from writing Link & Learn. Jim remembers when Scott Patterson was president and asked him to write a "Couple of Short Pieces for PaperChain." After 12 years and over 275,000 words, Jim believes, "It is time to hear from some fresh voices in the industry." **INK**

Enter Your Idea **NOW!**

AFCP's New 3-Minute Idea Exchange

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND, WE WILL ONCE again hold the AFCP Idea Exchange at the 2018 AFCP & MACPA Conference in Baltimore! But this year with a bit of a twist...

Shark Bank!



This great new session will make idea sharing more fun than ever! Prompted by the popular hit TV series Shark Tank, we have created our own SHARK BANK which will play out live at the 2018 Conference in Baltimore! Participants will present their "3 minute" idea before a panel of five industry experts ("Sharks") who will question, critique and/or praise your ideas, with the goal of getting the Sharks and the audience to "invest" in your idea!

HERE'S THE IMPORTANT PART...We know you have those creative and innovative ideas that you have implemented at your own company, so why not share them with your peers and give yourself a chance to win some cold hard cash at the same time? To participate, submit your idea on the official entry form accompanied by any materials that you feel will help us understand your idea. The ideas will be evaluated

by "investors" at the session in Baltimore for distribution of the following prizes:

- 1st Place – \$500.00**
- 2nd Place – \$250.00**
- 3rd Place – \$100.00**

REMEMBER – an idea does not have to be original to be entered, but it does have to be something that was successfully implemented in your operation. Just remember – there are no bad ideas if they are making money!

Entry forms are available at www.afcp.org (look for the Shark Bank button on the right side).

Entry Deadline: March 1, 2018

Presenters Notified:

By March 31, 2018

Presentations:

**At the 2018 AFCP & MACPA
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This Baltimore Conference is all about **Learning!**

by Trevor Slette, 2018 Conference Committee Chair

ON BEHALF OF THE AFCP AND MACPA

Boards of Directors and staffs, it is my privilege to formally invite you to the 2018 Joint Conference and Trade Show. This annual event brings together the free community publication industry for what promises to be a fantastic conference in one of the East Coast's most historic and picturesque locations, Baltimore's Inner Harbor.

If you go to the AFCP website and download the brochure, you are going to see how much has been incorporated into this conference to provide attendees with content that will challenge and expand your thinking. The educational opportunities, presentations, networking functions and speakers are all geared to providing you with ideas to take home and utilize to build your business. That has become the cornerstone of AFCP Conferences along with the extensive networking opportunities attendees experience (not to overlook the fun and entertainment that conference includes)!

HERE ARE JUST A FEW HIGHLIGHTS:

- Marcus Sheridan – Opening Keynote Speaker
- The Industry's Largest Trade Show
- Hands-on Management Certificate Program

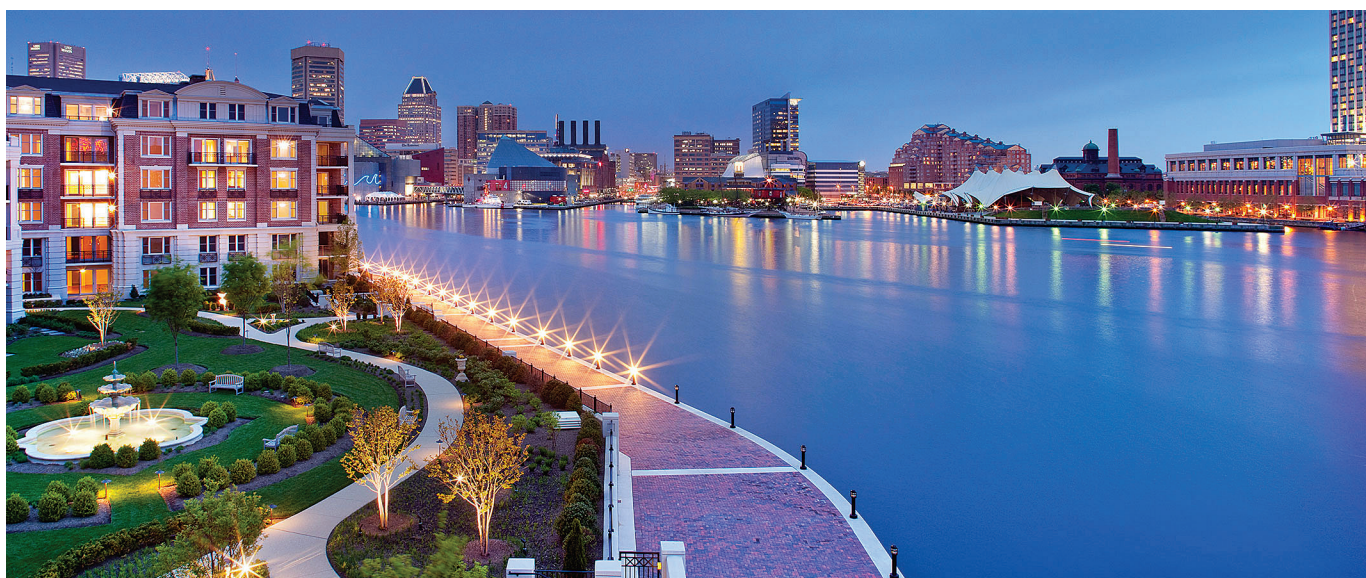
(limited seating)

- Engagement Selling Certificate Program (limited seating)
- The Leadership Institute (TLI) Classes
- Shark Bank – 3 Minute Idea Exchange Contest
- Baltimore's Inner Harbor location, restaurants and activities
- Community publication people from all over the country!

I encourage MACPA members and NANI participants to take advantage of the free conference registration cost. Yes, that's right, zero, zilch, nada! Additionally, NANI will pay \$50 toward each room night booked during the conference for up to four nights for participating NANI companies. There's no question that our annual conference and trade show provides everyone ideas to take home along with some fantastic memories!

This invitation includes my assurance that we will do everything in our power to make this a worthwhile, enjoyable and profitable experience. There's always fun to be had, but more importantly, so much to learn from one another. Make the commitment right now to ensure that 2018 will be the year that you and your team "Let Your Ideas Shine" and bring home a few more to help build your business.

See you at the Hyatt Regency in Baltimore! 



A view of the stunning Ritz-Carlton Residences luxury condos on Baltimore's Inner Harbor.

Photo credit: rcr-baltimore.com



The Value of Education

& the importance of continually investing in it

by Shane Goodman

MOST OF YOU

reading this belong to a variety of clubs and organizations in your community, your state and our nation. You write checks to pay to

belong to many of these, and, if you are like me, you often question the value that you receive from these important commitments of time and money.

The smartest people I know are continually committed to learning. They aren't spending their time binge-watching Netflix or posting what they had for breakfast on Facebook. They are reading. They are listening. They are enquiring. And they are soaking it all in from various levels of personal interaction with people. The simple fact that you are reading this magazine is a reflection of how you value the need to continually learn.

At AFCP, we appreciate your commitment to lifelong education and that's why we focus on providing opportunities for our members to learn through a variety of programs.

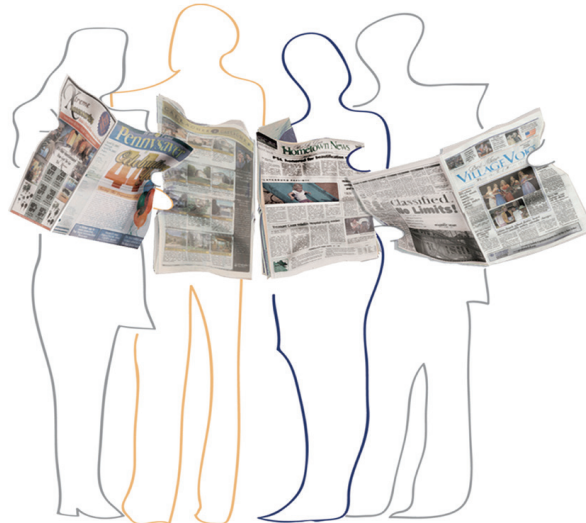
Without a doubt, successful

free paper publishers are among some of the smartest people I know. They value their AFCP membership, and they take full advantage of the learning opportunities. They personally enroll in the TLI courses, and they require their staff members to do the same. They work toward and earn their certificates, as they understand the value in finishing what they start. And they attend our annual conferences to expand their knowledge and offer what they can to teach others, too.

This all takes time and money, and the smartest people I know are quite stingy with both. That's why we take education seriously, and why we encourage you to take full advantage of the learning opportunities that AFCP provides to its members.

In this issue of INK, you will read about these focuses on education and how you and your free paper can benefit.

As always, thanks for reading.



SHANE GOODMAN
AFCP PRESIDENT
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(\$25.00 Registration Fee)

The Leadership Institute (TLI) and AFCP have put together this 6 class sequence designed to provide advertising sales professionals the key selling skills to master this Engagement Selling Program (ESP).

Successful completion of all 6 sessions and the competency evaluation at the Baltimore conference will earn participants a professional development certificate from The Leadership Institute as well as fulfillment of the core course requirement component for earning their Associate Advertising Executive (AAE) certification from AFCP.



**For More Information
or To Register Contact:**

AFCP at 877-203-2327

or email Loren Colburn at loren@afcp.org

Invest in Yourself ... Sign Up **NOW!**

IT'S TIME TO COMMIT TO YOUR FUTURE BY SIGNING up to participate in the latest professional development programs for the community publication industry. In an effort to provide conference attendees with an opportunity to gain industry-specific training certificates while in attendance, two new certificate programs have been developed for introduction in Baltimore this May.

Attendees will have the option to select from either of the two programs based on their educational needs. The Engagement Selling Program (ESP) will be offered as part of the TLI track for those looking to develop their sales skills. The Effective Hands-on Management Program will be offered for those looking to advance their effectiveness as a manager.

Both programs will be broken into six 70-minute sessions over the three days, and participants attending all six sessions will be awarded certificates of completion. These programs will also qualify for credits toward the AAE certification and the all new advanced level Certified Advertising Executive (CAE) certification.

The Engagement Selling Program (ESP) will walk participants through a six-session sequence relating to the skill and knowledge components required to become an advertising consultant as opposed to focusing on order taking. The program objectives focus on improving the effectiveness of the marketing plans developed for

clients through better needs assessment, advertising design and program planning. At the completion of all six classes, participants will be awarded a certificate of completion for the Engagement Selling Program.

The Effective Hands-on Management Certificate Program is developed around the IT'S OKAY TO BE THE BOSS - Management Workshop developed by Bruce Tulgan, author of the must-read business book Not Everyone Gets A Trophy. Skills and techniques required for building relationships, delegating, employee focus and performance modification will be presented over the six sessions. This program will provide attendees with practical applications they can put to use when they get back to the office as well as the professional distinction of being awarded their Professional Development Certificate for Effective Hands-on Management.

These programs will have limited seating and reservations will be handled on a first-come, first-serve basis. Both programs will require minimal registration fees to cover material costs and to reserve one of the limited number of seats. Fees are \$25 for the sales program and \$60 for the management program. Brochures for both classes and details on the AAE and CAE Professional Certifications are available for download on the AFCP website at www.afcp.org/member-benefits/the-leadership-institute-tli/. **INK**



Design the back of this year's conference shirt!



Save the Dates: May 3rd - 5th, 2018

Deadline: February, 15 2018

Send questions or design entries to **Alix: alix@afcp.org**

Your design must reference the AFCP 2018 Annual Conference and Trade Show in Baltimore. The conference logo does not have to be used in the design. The shirt color will be orange. No more than 4 spot colors can be used.



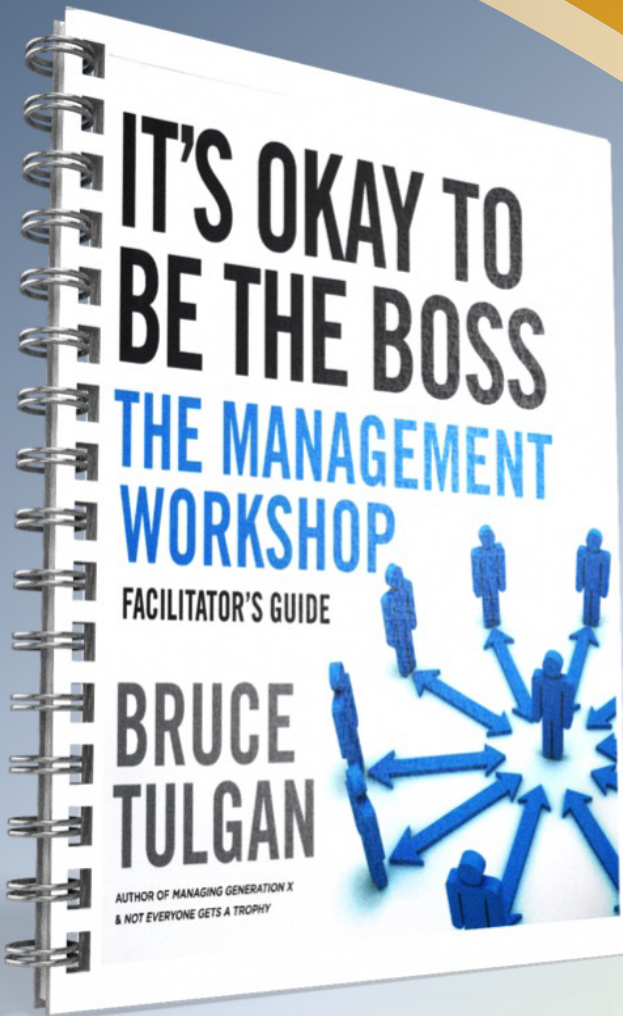
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TULGAN**

REGISTER NOW!
Limited Seating Available
(\$60.00 Materials & Registration Fee)

The Leadership Institute (TLI) and AFCP are offering this 6 class sequence designed to provide participants with the knowledge to be more effective hands-on managers.

Successful completion of all 6 sessions while at the Baltimore conference will earn participants a professional development certificate from The Leadership Institute as well as receiving credits toward obtaining the advanced certification from AFCP as a Certified Advertising Executive (CAE).



**For More Information or
To Register Contact:**

Association of Free Community Papers

877-203-2327

loren@afcp.org



The LEADERSHIP Institute

by Jim Busch

The Leadership Institute is a structured sales and sales management training program sponsored by the Association of Free Community Papers.



To date, 1,814 free paper professionals have attended classes at the AFCP, state and regional conferences, earning over 10,935 class credits in 66 different course curriculums. A total of 81 people have completed all the requirements and been certified as Associate Advertising Executives (AAE) by the AFCP Board!

"Spontaneity is an infinite number of rehearsed possibilities."

– Peter Drucker

MAKING A SALES CALL IS STRESSFUL. SALESPEOPLE HAVE to rapidly assess the situation and come up with a response that will engage the customer.

Success or failure hinges on coming up with just the right words to hold the customer's interest. Sometimes, sales people walk into an ambush and barely have a chance to introduce themselves before they have to respond to a stream of objections.

To survive, sales people have to learn to "think on their feet." They cannot afford to get flustered. I once read a definition of poetry as "the right words in the right order" and it immediately struck me that this phrase was also a great description of selling.

Watching a skilled salesperson is like watching a great athlete. In sports, and on sales calls, the players find themselves in a fluid environment. When the puck is dropped or the ball is snapped, things begin moving quickly and it is impossible to predict precisely what is going to happen next. It is at this point that experience and training kicks in and takes command.

Athletes spend many more hours training than they do facing an opponent. They run endless drills to build "muscle memory" until ball handling is second nature to them. They scrimmage with their teammates to enhance their observational skills, their situational awareness and to hone their reaction time to a razor's edge.

As "verbal athletes," salespeople also need to drill and practice to remain at the top of their game. Taking the time to write out a formal sales presentation for each of your products allows the salesperson to think about the best ways to describe them in a low pressure environment.

I don't recommend trying to use these "scripts" on a sales call as this would make your presentation stiff and awkward. The exercise of writing out your thoughts burns them permanently into your brain and you'll find these carefully crafted phrases flowing smoothly from your lips when the pressure is on.

Most salespeople hate roleplaying, but it is the best way to polish your presentation skills. Repeatedly practicing your presentation builds "mouth memory," which helps a salesperson to look and feel more confident when the pressure is on.

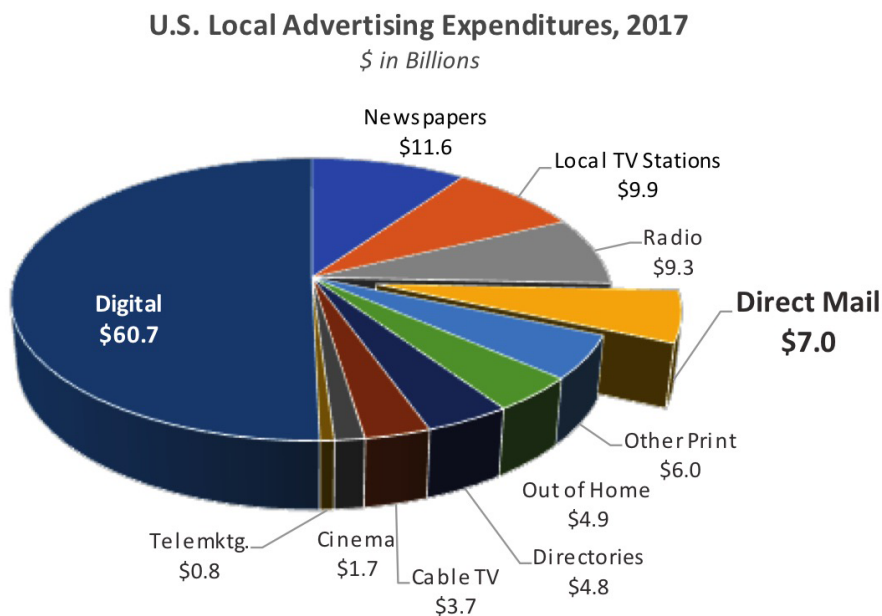
Champion athletes know that games are won or lost on the practice field. Champion sales people know this is also true in the selling game. **INK**

Direct Mail is 5th Largest Local Advertising Category



BORRELL

Tomorrow's Media, Understood Today



SOURCE: Borrell's Compass/adspending.com

In 2017, local businesses spent an estimated \$7 billion to advertise their products and services via Direct Mail. That gave it a 5.8% share of all local advertising, making it the 5th largest ad medium, behind digital, newspapers, TV, and radio.

Highlights

2017 Local Advertiser Survey | April-July 2017 | Direct Mail Deep Dive

- ◆ Nearly half of all advertisers use Direct Mail
- ◆ Those who do:
 - ✦ Invest more of their gross revenue into advertising
 - ✦ Spend \$1 out of \$10 from their ad budgets on Direct Mail
 - ✦ Think it's effective, but rate 7 media types more effective
 - ✦ Rely heavily on transactional data to determine success
 - ✦ Also tend to advertise in newspapers
 - ✦ Are highly likely to be increasing spending on digital ads
 - ✦ See the medium's greatest value not in gaining new customers, but in maintaining current business or reaching former customers

Results from Borrell's Survey of 1,640 Local Businesses that Buy Direct Mail.

December 2017



To obtain a full copy of this special industry paper or to sign up to receive notification of new reports, webinars and the latest in industry trends go to WWW.BORRELLASSOCIATES.COM.

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Associations IN the NEWS

LONGTIME MEMBER OF THE Community Papers of Michigan (CPM) board of directors, Terry Roby, has decided to resign effective at the end of 2017.

He served the association as president and vice president.

THE NORTH AMERICAN

Mature Publishers Association, Inc. (NAMPA), the only non-profit international association of boomer/senior publications in North America, will hold its 2018 National Convention at the Caribe Royale All-Suite Resort in Orlando, Florida from Sunday, October 7, 2018 to Wednesday, October 10, 2018.

THE MIDWEST FREE COMMUNITY PAPERS (MFCP) is accepting applications for its annual scholarship awards.

The Merle C. Been scholarship is for a high school graduating senior or a student who has never attended college. For the Joe

Sklenar Scholarship, the applicant must be a current college student or college graduate. And for the Kay Fox Scholarship, the applicant must be a current college student.

The deadline to apply for all three scholarships is February 19, 2018.

The 2018 NAMPA national convention will include many educational sessions as well as networking opportunities for publishers, editors, sales staff, and others to share their wealth of knowledge and experience. Numerous exhibitors and spon-

sors will be attending to offer the attendees information about their products and services.

On Monday evening, the top awards for publishing excellence from its member publications will be announced at a gala awards banquet.

To submit your "Associations in the News" story, contact Dave Neuharth at DJNeuharth@aol.com.

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The Wind in Your Sails

by Laura Bower, 2016 Rising Star from Kapp Advertising

FOR MANY OF US, EDUCATION IS A WORD THAT conjures a variety of thoughts. Some of those thoughts evoke memories, whether fond or not, of at least 12-13 years of our childhood. These memories may include friendships made and lost, a moment that forever changed the course of our lives, or maybe just memories of bleary-eyed mornings dreading the bus ride in the pre-dawn hours.

Other thoughts may revolve around the politics surrounding the school systems today. After all, the news is often filled with the arguments for and against a national standard and curriculum, the increasing difficulty in recruiting qualified teachers, or a myriad of other local and state issues that will impact our communities' schools.

Still other thoughts may be the hopes and fears for our children as they move through their education. We hope that they are successful, that their lives will be better and easier than ours, and we fear that they may fail in some way that we could have prevented.

And all of this is before we even begin to consider the subjects and curriculum of education. There's reading, writing, and arithmetic, the "Three R's" of traditional schooling. Add in a little history, maybe a science class or two, don't forget P.E., and we could be back in high school, all bright eyed and excited, just waiting to graduate so we can be off to the "real" world where we can make our mark in life.

Some of us went off to college where, to varying degrees, we continued our education past the traditional years. Semesters often flew by with too few hours to divide between the chosen track of studies and the preferred socializing. Some went out into the work force for a different sort of education, the school of life, where we landed jobs, moved out of our parents' homes, and started families of our own.

No matter the path taken to get to this last school,

it is one we have all eventually entered. We learn the importance of an income that is hopefully larger than at least our regular monthly expenses. We learn the meaning of work, responsibility, and endurance to a degree that school never could teach. And if we're lucky, we learn the real meaning of family, of friendship, of love. What we do from there with our education – simply peak with these life lessons or continue to seek knowledge and wisdom – is up to us.

Do we choose to simply live in the school of life, letting life's situations dictate the direction of our lives? Or do we choose to fuel our own fires, provide the wind for our sails, and lead a life of self-education? If we choose this latter course, where do we begin and where do we head once we have started?

Let's start with Webster. The New Webster's Dictionary of The English Language defines education as (hold your hats now) the process of being educated. That process, however, includes encouraging the development of the mental, aesthetic, physical, and/or moral facilities of a person. In general, this seems a more rounded approach that we often consider, but one that makes a lot of sense when thought about.

After all, many of the lessons we learn from the school of life and that we learned in our years of formal schooling are valuable lessons that help facilitate our decision to continue our education. For example, where would we be if hadn't learned to read and write and, just as importantly, if we hadn't learned to persevere through challenges? Ultimately, learning is often challenging especially when it comes time to put those lessons into practice, like when it comes time to get into shape or when you learn a new sales technique that is a bit awkward for your personality style.

So where do you go to continue your education? Do you have to go back to college, spend each night

“For those attending the Spring Conference in Baltimore, AFCP offers a great opportunity... to learn valuable skills and techniques to further their career and also their lives with a choice of several classes.”


reading some new book on sales techniques while trying to balance and maintain a solid and fruitful home life? That, of course, is one option. But for those attending the Spring Conference in Baltimore, AFCP offers a great opportunity for those who choose to learn valuable skills and techniques to further their career and also their lives with a choice of several classes.

Classes are offered for attendees of all skill levels and even varying professional tracks. They are led by leaders in the community publishing field, making them great resources and opportunities for all attendees. These classes can also count towards a certificate program. This certificate provides you, the recipient, with additional accolades and proves to your employers, or possibly even your employees, that you care not only about the necessary skills for making your company successful in the marketplace but the continued improvement and growth of yourself as a whole.

After leaving the conference, it is again up to us as to what we do with our new piece of education. After all, this will be when it is time to put your money where your mouth is, so to speak. Have you merely attended the conference to socialize or because your employer told you that you should? Or have you actually learned something that you can use to improve yourself? Can you and will you take your new skills and knowledge and grow as an individual and a professional and leader in your field? Can you persevere through the painful growth period of learning and practicing a new skill in order to arrive in a better place professionally and personally? Only you know the answer to that. But I hope, like me, you will find value in and the desire to implement the skills and techniques you learn while attending classes at the Spring AFCP Conference.

Each phase of our life provides us with opportunities for education. Some, like the school of life, leave the lessons to us. Our response to the situations we are presented with often determines the amount of growth that we get out of our life lessons.

On the other hand, some opportunities greet us in a more formal and traditional setting, settings that we have chosen to enter into. The teacher or mentor can do all that is in his or her power to pass on their wisdom, but it falls on our shoulders whether we decide to be guided by their insight or not. We can choose to be educated, to advance our mental, aesthetic, physical or moral development, or we can choose to stagnate. The power over the wind for our sails rests solely in our own hands.

As to where your education will take you, I hope you choose to sail further than you ever believed possible. 

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Changes are taking place All Over

ELAINE BUCKLEY HAS BEEN named the Vice President of Sales for My Living Magazines / Ocean Media Solutions headquartered in Stuart, Florida.

Buckley served Harte-Hanks Shoppers for over 35 years as the account executive for large national and major local accounts in a footprint of approximately seven million circulation in the Southern California area.

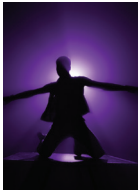
Over the years she has collected materials from senior reps, as well as her own first-hand experiences, and put together a comprehensive classroom-style sales training pro-

gram. She has conducted numerous training sessions for members of the free paper industry.

For the members of the Association of Free Community Papers (AFCP), she has long been involved as an instructor of The Leadership Institute (TLI).

Her competitive nature is revealed in one of her side activities. As an active card player, she has entered and won some poker tournaments.

Buckley plans to retain her Southern California home and will continue to provide TLI training sessions. **INK**



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mar.

ATLANTA, GA :
MARCH 2-3, 2018
Southeast Advertising Publishers Association (SAPA). Leadership Forum, the Le Meridien Hotel, Atlanta, Ga. For information contact Douglas Fry at info@sapatoday.com.

apr.

WISCONSIN DELLS, WI :
APRIL 6-7, 2018
Community Papers of Wisconsin (WCP). Annual Conference, Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin. For information contact Janelle Anderson at janderson@pdsadnet.com.

may

VIENNA, AUSTRIA :
MAY 3-4, 2018
International Classified Marketplace Association (ICMA). Spring Conference, Vienna, Austria. For information email icmaonline.org

BALTIMORE, MD :
MAY 3-5, 2018
Association of Free Community Papers (AFCP) and Mid-Atlantic Community Paper Association (MACPA). Joint Conference and Trade Show, the Baltimore Inner Harbor in Baltimore, Maryland. For information contact Loren Colburn (loren@afcp.org) or Alyse Mittten (info@macpa.net).

oct.

ORLANDO, FL :
OCTOBER 7-10, 2018
North American Mature Publishers Association (NAMPA). National Convention, Caribe Royale All-Suite Resort, Orlando, Florida. For information call Executive Director Gary Calligas at 877-466-2672 or email gary@maturepublishers.com. www.maturepublishers.com

To list your conference information in Free Paper INK, send it to:
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To list your conference information on the AFCP website, send it to:
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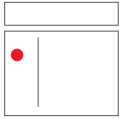
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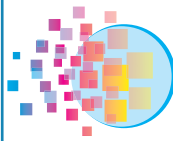


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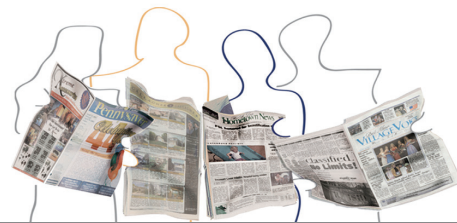
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