

NCPA awards announced at Winter Newspaper Institute

Journalists from around the state were on hand to accept honors at the NCPA News, Editorial & Photo-journalism Contest Awards Banquet on Thursday, Feb. 23 at the Sheraton Imperial Hotel and Convention Center in Research Triangle Park/Durham as part of the N.C. Press Association's Winter Institute. The banquet attracted almost 500 people from newspapers across the state.

The previously unannounced winners in the category of general excellence went to the following papers:

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UNC-Chapel Hill's *The Daily Tar Heel* was among the first place winners in sports photography. See a full listing of winners and photos at www.ncpress.com.



Paul Jones, clinical associate professor and director of ibiblio.org at UNC-Chapel Hill, spoke during the "Newspaper Technology - Interacting with Readers in New Ways" session at the Winter Newspaper Institute. The program, jointly sponsored by UNC-Chapel Hill and Duke University, was among the many well-received new training sessions at this year's Institute. The new location and awards banquet also were popular changes. See more Institute photos on page 13.



NCPF silent auction raises almost \$3,000

The North Carolina Press Foundation's Silent Auction raised \$2,923 to benefit First Amendment and Newspaper in Education causes. The auction was held during the Winter Institute in February. Thank you to all who donated and bid on the wide range of items. A complete list of auction donors is below:

Les & James High, *The News Reporter*, Whiteville

Mitchell Oakley, *The Times-Leader*, Grifton

Sue Wilson, *The Associated Press*, Raleigh

Jennie Lambert, *The Star*, Shelby
Natural-Salt-Lamps.com/Solay Inc.
The UNC School of Journalism and
Mass Communication

Sandy Cook, N.C. NIE

Jock Lauterer, Carolina Community
Media Project

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We've all seen those movies like "Matrix" where the action occurs in slow-motion to show how fast the characters are moving. With recent developments at NCPA, I feel like just the opposite where the action is moving so fast and I'm moving so slowly I can't catch up. Of course I can't move that fast anyway because I'm not 30, 40 or even, well never mind.



Agency was going to move the Wachovia ad account elsewhere, either to private business or the Florida Press Association. NCPS

The same day, Beth called Dean Ridings at FPA to tell him of our decision and willingness to work with them if they win the account.

Kathy said we've had a long association with FPA, working with them on Wachovia, SunTrust and many other ad buys. Having

A fast-paced year ahead

By *Rip Washlin*
NCPA President and Publisher, Rocky Mount Telegram

Marketing Director Kathy Vitale, who will be leaving at month-end, spends more than 60 hours a week on the Wachovia account. Two staff members devote 20-30 percent of their week to the account, as well.

another press association handle the account is obviously preferable to a commercial placement agency getting it, she said.

With the expansion of Wachovia's ad buys into other states, Vitale said NCPS would have to devote two people to the account fulltime. That means expanding the staff by at least one person and likely two. The board didn't feel that expense was worth the potential return since we earn less than 1 percent on Wachovia. The consensus was that the marketing director and staff should be developing new business for NCPA members rather than spending all their time on one or two big accounts that would adversely impact our internal financial situation if lost.

After our winter meeting, four NCPA directors along with two senior staff members interviewed a top candidate for the marketing director's job. An offer to Lindsay Jones Webster was made and accepted. Lindsay worked nine years for NCPS before spending the past two as the Southern Region Account Manager for Standard Rate & Data Service. She is exceptionally well qualified to succeed Kathy as our marketing manager. With her arrival later this month, NCPS will concentrate on bringing in new business for its members, the most urgent of which is the N.C. Educational Lottery.

NCPA Controller Bobby Bracy assured us we are in good financial shape and will certainly be able to "pay the bills" without the Wachovia account. Following directions from the board, Executive Director Beth Grace called our contact at Mullen on Feb. 27 to give notice that NCPS cannot service the account after March 30. Beth said her conversation with Doug Atkinson was cordial and he was pleased that we had given them a month's notice; apparently the courtesy of a notice is not usually given in the agency industry. She also endorsed the proposal by Florida Press Association to take over the Wachovia account, pledging to make the transition as smooth as possible.

With the exception of Virginia, lotteries in our region advertise almost exclusively on television. Kathy has been preparing for the lottery since it became apparent a bill would pass the legislature. In addition, the staff will meet with a lottery expert and some senior newspaper advertising executives developing a strategy to earn some of the lottery advertising.

From her agency contacts, Kathy said the lottery will spend \$1.2 million on advertising through the end of the state's fiscal year on June 30. Next year the figure will grow to \$8 million. We can expect a TV blitz in the coming weeks to kick off the

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THE NORTH CAROLINA PRESS

Beth Grace Publisher
Kim Grissom Editor
Sabrina Davis Managing Editor
Kathy Vitale NCPS Marketing Director
Leta Pope NCPS Classified Advertising Manager

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North Carolina Press Association Mission Statement

- To protect First Amendment freedoms; to keep public meetings and public records open; to keep the entire state government process accessible to the public.
- To promote thorough communications among members and to encourage membership growth and activity.
- To maintain high industry standards.
- To represent the business interests of North Carolina newspapers.
- To promote literacy throughout the state.

North Carolina Press Services Mission Statement

- To maintain an innovative, profitable sales and marketing program that promotes and enhances the total newspaper industry.

NCPA Web Address:
www.ncpress.com

Change.

Change is hard. Change is challenging. Change is occasionally frightening.

But change is ALWAYS inevitable.

There have been many, many changes at the North Carolina Press Association and Press Services in the past couple of years.



top candidate chosen from a field of about 60 by an NCPS board search committee, and comes highly recommended by NCPA members

An exciting new era

By Beth Grace

NCPA Executive Director

and clients alike.

Lindsay is well-qualified to take on the challenges ahead. She will develop a business plan designed to restructure our staffing to help us invoice faster and more efficiently, and organize her team to land clients that will return more revenue to our member newspapers. This is an exciting new beginning for NCPS, and we're looking forward to sharing our progress with you.

But even as we renew NCPS, more changes are coming.

Our next challenge is to find a new member services director. Kim Grissom is leaving us, planning to take some time after 12 ½ years of outstanding service to the NCPA and its members to investigate new opportunities and see what comes next in life.

If anyone understands that kind of change, I do. I did very much the same thing a year ago. I left The Associated Press, just shy of my 20th anniversary, to take some time off, smell those roses everyone always talks about, and give full attention to what would come next in my own

life. I can say, without hesitation, that it was the best decision I ever made. And I have learned that change can be a wonderful thing.

Kim will not be an easy act to follow. Her professionalism, energy, dedication to member service and absolutely

awesome organizational skills set the bar very, very high. She has countless fans among our membership and staff, who are all sorry to say goodbye. But we all wish Kim the best and hope that she finds that change is, indeed, a wonderful thing.

As I said before, change can be hard. But it's also exciting. We're entering an exciting new era in the NCPA and NCPS and I invite you to come along.

I'm one of them. Since I came on board Sept. 1, the staff and the boards of NCPA and NCPS have spent many hours studying what works and what doesn't, discussing options and challenges, and working hard to make sure that all of the steps we have taken in tandem meet the only test that counts: Will this benefit the members of this association?

Some of the changes have been difficult ones to make; other changes have come upon us because even as circumstances change, people and their needs do, too.

The most important changes you will see in NCPS and NCPA in the months and years ahead will come in our leadership. As you already know, Kathy Vitale has decided to step down as NCPS marketing director after 20 years.

I am delighted to tell you that Lindsay Jones Webster, a regional account manager for Standard Rate and Data Service and an NCPS senior account executive from 1995-2004, will join us April 4 as our new marketing director. Lindsay was the

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To blog or not to blog; that is the question. At least it is for many newspapers calling the NCPA Hotline. There is another question – coming mostly from non-newspaper callers to the Hotline: Who is a journalist? Just those who are employed by the media? People who contribute regularly to newspapers or television stations? Any person with a keyboard and an AOL account? With divisions blurring, definitions disappearing and computers becoming modern day printing presses, many of us are struggling to define or redefine ourselves – some looking to be more exclusive, some more inclusive.



So how do you make the decision of how far to wade into the online pool? Do you simply put your print content online? Do you host chat rooms or blogs? If so, do you allow your reporters to blog? I was recently at a national conference with lawyers from some heavy hitters of the journalism and online worlds – *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, Google – and these were the topics under discussion and debate. Here are a few of the things to consider.

In 1996, Congress passed the Communications Decency Act (“the CDA”). The statute recognizes several public policies, including the desire to “promote the continued development” of the Internet and to preserve “the vibrant and competitive free market” of the Internet. Balanced against those interests are the interests in encouraging technologies that “maximize user control over what information is received by individuals, families, and schools” and removing disincentives for the development of filtering. A final

stated policy interest is the “vigorous enforcement of Federal criminal laws to deter and punish trafficking in obscenity, stalking, and harassment

the post. If the blog is about school redistricting and someone posts a scandal in the local police department, you can remove it. Similarly, if

Blogging: Thoughts about weighing the risks v. possibilities

By C. Amanda Martin
NCPA General Counsel

by means of computer.”

With these findings and policies in mind, Congress created immunity for those who operate Internet-based sites and discussion groups: “No provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider.” In plain English: If you host an online site that serves as a forum for *others* to communicate, you cannot be held liable for the content of those communications.

The analogy is to a bookseller. You certainly hold James Frey responsible for the fraud of *A Million Little Pieces*. You maybe even hold Doubleday accountable. But you don’t go complain to the clerk at Barnes & Noble that he sold you a bogus book. Likewise, if all your newspaper is doing is providing the town square – the shelves on which people can put their ideas for public consumption – your paper will not be held legally accountable if one of those ideas is legally faulty.

How do you maintain that distance, though; that neutrality? Do you even review what goes on your paper’s Web site? Can you set standards for posting? The answer is that you can exercise *some* level of control without forfeiting your protections. You certainly can establish standards – both for the subject matter of the postings and for the nature of the posts. If you have a policy prohibiting profanity, and someone ignores it, you can remove

it comes to your attention that something on a blog is outright false, you can remove it. It’s like graffiti.

A bar owner probably isn’t liable for defamatory slurs scribbled on the bathroom walls, but he *might* bear some responsibility if he knows about them and leaves them there. By contrast, if you get in and tinker with what is posted – either by editing the content or by selecting what gets posted and what does not – then you may have converted your site to a high-tech letters to the editor page for which you are legally responsible.

Finally, the decision of who to let into the town square. Just the public? Can your reporters participate? Certainly the cleanest, surest, safest way to protect yourself is to keep it public only. Don’t let reporters blog. Though allowing blogging has the advantage of allowing your readers to develop more personal attachments to your reports, there are some valid reasons to limit your reporters. As one lawyer for the *New York Times* pointed out, blogging by journalists gives the world a view of that reporter that we otherwise might not have.

It boggles the mind what some people post online, either forgetting that the whole world can be reading or holding a false sense of security from a “screenname.” Having both sent subpoenas to Yahoo! and fought to keep an anonymous poster anonymous, I can tell you that given the right circumstances, our courts are prepared to pull back the veil of secrecy and identify people using pseudonyms to chat online. The outcomes in court so far have been

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I have never met Tom Silvestri, but I would like to. He is the publisher of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, and his Media General friends tell me he is enamored of all things newspaper.

When I saw a quote of his in a trade publication, I added it to a list of quotes that I draw from for use as a personal and

professional mission statement. I have two I lean on a great deal: "Hope is not a strategy", and a JFK quote, "Some people see things as they are and ask why, I see things as they might be and ask why not."

As I close out 19.5 years at the N.C. Press Association, I feel privileged to have worked for a firm that allowed me to "see things as they might be and ask why not." I have had the great fortune to flourish in an entrepreneurial environment that has fostered dynamic growth for the N.C. Press Association and N.C. Press Services.

Fred Crisp, former publisher of *Raleigh's News & Observer*, once told me that I had THE BEST job in the industry. How right he was. Fred was on the Operations Committee that hired me in 1986 along with Gayle Smith, Rick Stewart, Bob Lindsay, and 10 other advertising and marketing types.

I am grateful that CALLER I.D. was not available in 1986 because I lived on the phone to the Operations Committee that entire year. Some of them still run even today when they see me coming.

Today, I placed side by side the first NCPS audit conducted in 1986 and the 2005 audit. The 2005 audit contains a few more zeroes. In 1986 the display advertising division generated gross sales of \$158,698 and classified advertising income was \$102,242.00. After expenses, the retained deficit was -\$29,385. Gross display sales in the 2005 audit

report were \$30,490,933 and classified advertising gross revenue was \$1,997,785. Hope was not a strategy. N.C. Press Services has provided

Hope is not a strategy

– Tom Silvestri

By Kathy Vitale
NCPS Marketing Director

me with a remarkable education in many areas, but especially in how small details can impact advertising revenues in a positive or negative way. When you are with a press services organization, you experience the newspaper landscape exactly like advertising clients experience it because you work with hundreds of newspapers throughout the U.S. every day. Here are some observations that many of clients have shared with me over the years:

1) The person that answers the main number of your newspaper is THE most important person at the newspaper. The relationship between the client and your newspaper begins with that person. They set the tempo whether positive or negative. Have business associates call your newspaper with some regularity. Weigh their evaluations. Anything less than an "extremely pleased that you called us" experience points toward a critical problem.

2) "THANK YOU" are two of the most powerful words in the marketing relationship. Our industry cannot say those two words enough to clients. Be as creative and imaginative as you can be in expressing THANK YOU for the business.

3) Send your rate card to key retailers, ad agencies and other selected clients for feedback on how to make it more user-friendly. Believe it or not, the cost of advertising often is not the major issue clients have with rate cards.

4) Make certain ALL client phone calls or e-mails are returned the same day. This issue not only leads the list of client complaints, it

will cost you business. Just ask the *Dallas Morning News*. They will be glad to share their experiences and solutions.

Come spend a day at YOUR

press services. You will extract a wealth of information from the staff about the client's perspective on newspapers, plus you will get quick exposure to some best practices that newspapers throughout the U.S. have implemented. The NCPS staff would welcome the interaction with you.

THANK YOU, the newspapers of North Carolina for your long term and loyal support of NCPS. Newspaper advertisers are equally appreciative of your visionary thinking in creating a single portal in which to reach multiple newspaper markets.

Finally, I want you to know that you are well represented by the NCPA/NCPS staff. A group of people who arrive at work every day with a single mission: to maintain that BEST press association in the United States!

Here's to you Megan Dew, Cherie Grant, Stephanie Longpre, Leta Pope, Christa Townley, BJ Cahoon, Sandra Lewis, Laurie Seals, Holly Johnson, Martha Fletcher, Kim Grissom, Candace Bridgers and Theresa Barbour.

The best is yet to come !





New dean named to lead UNC-Chapel Hill's School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Dr. Jean Folkerts, professor of honors and of media and public affairs at George Washington University, has been selected to become the next dean of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Journalism and Mass Communication.



Folkerts

The appointment, effective July 1, remains subject to final approval by the UNC Board of Trustees. Folkerts also would hold the title Distinguished Alumni Professor in recognition of career accomplishments to date.

"Jean has demonstrated a broad depth of knowledge about the rapidly changing field of journalism and mass communications, especially the role that electronic media will continue to play in informing key audiences," said Chancellor James Moeser said.

Folkerts would succeed Interim Dean Tom Bowers, who took over on July 1, 2005, after Richard Cole stepped down after 26 years as dean to return to the faculty. Folkerts was among three finalists.

Folkerts joined George Washington's Media and Public Affairs program in 1990 and served various terms as director of the School of Media and Public Affairs, interim dean of Columbian College of Arts and

Sciences and associate vice president of special academic initiatives.

Before entering higher education, Folkerts was a general assignment reporter for *The Topeka Capital-Journal*, editor of a health foundation magazine and assistant press secretary to the governor of Kansas. She wrote freelance articles for magazines such as *Chicago Today* and *Modern Bride*.

She earned a Ph.D. in American studies from the University of Kansas and bachelor's and master's degrees from Kansas State University. She taught at the University of Texas at Austin and was associate professor and director of the department of communications at Mount Vernon College before moving to George Washington.

Production focus of May conference

The N.C. Newspaper Production Conference will be held on May 5-6, 2005 at the Sheraton Imperial Hotel in Research Triangle Park. The meeting features a popular golf tournament as well as a full day of sessions and a vendor marketplace.

One of the featured speakers for the conference will be Kevin Conner, quality assurance manager for *The Washington Post*. Conner will share his thoughts on "Lightweight Newsprint: Implications for Advertisers and Readers, Printing and Packaging."

Visit www.ncproduction.org for more information and registration materials.

Ad Conference set

Business planning, creative strategy and leadership will be the focus of the 2006 NCPA Advertising Conference, planned for June 15-16 at Sheraton Imperial Hotel and Convention Center in Research Triangle Park.

The conference begins Thursday, June 15 with a 5 p.m. reception. Friday begins with a talk by keynote speaker Eloise Owens, CEO of the Momentum Company. Lunch will feature Lisbeth Leddin, an entrepreneur and Fayetteville Community College instructor. A business planning session with Owens will follow. Concurrent sessions are planned for three personnel categories: creative and sales, management and classified.

2006 Best Ad Contest awards ceremony will end the day. More details about the conference will be announced on the NCPA Web site.

2006 Newspaper Academy features topics old and new

This year's Newspaper Academy includes both new sessions and old favorites covering important basic skills.

This fifth annual event is cosponsored by NCPA and the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Journalism and Mass Communication and will take place May 12 in Carroll Hall on the UNC Campus.

The academy will include two tracks for reporters and two tracks for editors, based on responsibilities and experience. Managers will have their own course of study.

Libel, basic writing and reporting, beat coverage will be featured in the

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Register now for this month's Editorial Writer's Conference

The 2006 N.C. Editorial Writers Conference will be held Friday, April 21, at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Journalism and Mass Communication. The conference is open to publishers, editors, editorial writers and columnists. This year's conference will examine a variety of topics in the news and of critical importance to North Carolina.

The daylong program will begin with a presentation by Matt West, vice president for business operations for the Carolina Hurricanes, who will discuss sports as big business in North Carolina. Two panel discussions will follow, one examining problems associated with the state's effort to reform mental health services, and the other look-

ing at potential changes to our system of judicial elections.

Panelists discussing mental health reform will include Michael Moseley, head of the state Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse; N.C. Rep. Verla Insko of Chapel Hill, who co-chairs a legislative oversight committee on mental health; and Ben Staples, executive director of the North Carolina chapter of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill.

The panel on judicial elections will include former N.C. Chief Justice Burley Mitchell; former state Supreme Court Justice Robert Orr; Hank Van Hoy, past president of the N.C. Bar Association; Chris Heagarty, executive director of the N.C. Center for Voter Education; and Dick Taylor, executive director of the N.C. Academy of Trial Lawyers.

The luncheon speaker will be North Carolina's new lottery director Tom Shaheen. The program will conclude with a discussion on the future of the editorial page in an age of Internet blogs and cable television talking heads. Panelists include national columnist and former Carter administration official Hodding Carter III; *Greensboro News & Record* editor John Robinson; and Ferrel Guillory of the Program on Southern Politics, Media and Public Life.

There also will be an informal, dutch-treat dinner in downtown Chapel Hill Thursday evening.

The registration fee is \$65, which includes breakfast and lunch. Reserved parking is available for an additional \$12. All sessions will be held in 305 Carroll Hall on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus. For more information or to register, visit the calendar section of ncpress.com.

Help judge W.Va. Editorial Contest

Our seemingly never ending thirst for contest judges continues. NCPA will assist the West Virginia Press Association with their Better Newspaper Contest in the coming weeks and we'll need your help.

The good news with this contest is that it is mail out. Instead of coming to a central location, judges will be able to judge at home and mail back the winning entries and comments. Entries will be mailed in May but the NCPA needs a commitment from 40 editorial and photography judges by late April.

This is part of a reciprocal agreement. The West Virginia Press Association will judge the N.C. Press Association contest next fall.

Sign up at www.ncpress.com.

Credit and Collections Workshop set to cover critical business issues

The NCPA Credit and Collections Workshop, planned for Thursday, May 11 at NCPA headquarters in Raleigh, is an opportunity for business managers, credit managers, controllers and advertising directors to update their knowledge with the latest information on topics of critical importance to newspaper business departments.

Program topics include: electronic tearsheeting, privacy protection, credit scoring models, bankruptcy reform, effective collecting, and the impact credit professionals will have on the future success of newspaper companies. Also included on the program will be roundtable sessions for attendees to discuss other topics of interest.

The registration fee for the workshop is \$39 and includes tuition, workshop materials, breaks and lunch.

Watch for program updates on www.ncpress.com. Registration and program materials were mailed to members in late March.



Improve your newspaper writing by reading novels

By Jim Stasiowski



Don't read this column.

I'm serious. Skip this one. If you really are interested in improving your

writing, I recommend you read something else right now: a novel.

"What novel?" you ask.

Any novel.

I recently had a revelation. A high-school journalism teacher invited me to speak to her class.

The teacher asked, "What journalism Web sites do you regularly read?"

I stood there speechless, and finally said, "None."

That stunned the teacher.

I happen to know some really excellent journalism and newspaper-oriented Web sites and blogs are out there. But I rarely visit them.

Why do I stay away?

Because I think we journalists already talk to each other way too much. I think we often get so caught up in talking about our occupation – its problems, its traditions, its blunders, its clouded future – that we neglect the world at large.

Here's an example of what I mean.

In that class I visited, one of the comments I heard was about the spate of plagiarism, deception and outright lying we've all witnessed in newspapers and magazines. The students had discussed at length such ethical lapses.

I recognize the seriousness of those lapses, and I'm glad the students know the consequences of

lying. But when I talk to students, I emphasize storytelling, the need to keep their eyes open for stories that others see as just the daily humdrum.

To me, good writing means being aware of the world outside the insularity of the classroom, the newsroom and the Internet. It means being the sharp-eyed observer, the only one in the crowd who spots the contradiction or who howls in protest at the collective wisdom.

A friend who has no connection to newspapers except as a reader told me this story. In his local paper, he read an editorial with a serious factual error, so he wrote a letter to the editor.

Almost immediately, an editor called and interrogated him. Instead of responsibly considering that my friend had something meaningful to offer, the editor lamely defended the paper's error.

That editor is so caught up in the internal workings of his newspaper, he has lost his grasp on the world outside his big brick building. Instead of worrying about how the paper relates to its readers, he is petrified by how his bosses will view a mistake. He needs to get out more.

I love newspapers. I talk to reporters and editors all the time. I spend my professional life talking about how we well-meaning journalists can make newspapers better.

But I treasure my escapes from those big brick buildings. I love reading novels. I learn from novels. I see how to create moods and limn characters. I see creative ways to use words so that when I am writing, I will explore possibilities outside the usual boundaries.

Writing a novel requires planning, pacing, discipline and the development of a conflict.

Sound familiar? Those are precisely the qualities of a well-written news story.

I have saved a 1996 *Newsweek* story about Hunter S. Thompson, the brilliant, mercurial writer who taught a generation of journalists to challenge the mundane, to blow up the mundane, actually. Early in his life, the *Newsweek* story says, Thompson "used to type pages from Hemingway and Faulkner to absorb their rhythms and style. He soon developed his own."

A recommendation: Read any of Martin Cruz Smith's novels about a Russian cop named Arkady Renko. The first was a masterpiece, "Gorky Park." Renko is a flawed, worn-down but oddly intrepid detective. The world Smith creates is both dark and luminous, dark because of the dreary life in Russia, but luminous in the way Smith shines a light on places I've never been.

Right now, I'm reading "Wolves Eat Dogs," another Renko novel. I love Smith's descriptions. On Page 45, Smith says that when the Soviet Union broke apart, unemployed KGB agents went looking for work and "prospered, moving like crows to new trees." On Page 161, Smith wrote that the raindrops "dimpled" the surface of a lake.

I'll wager no journalism Web site has ever used crows in a simile.

Contact writing coach Jim Stasiowski at (410) 247-4600 or 5812 Heron Drive, Baltimore, Md. 21227.



Good information equals good advertising

By John Foust



Josh got a call from a real estate agent who wanted to run a series of ads to promote herself. They made an appointment, and a few days

later he met with her to learn about her business.

The instant he sat down in her office and opened his legal pad, she said, "Let's hear your ideas."

"My ideas?"

"What do you think I should put in my ads? I want to hear ideas."

"First," he said, "I'd like to learn about you and your business. That's where the ideas will come from."

"I'm too busy for that. I thought you were coming in here with ideas."

Josh told me about the advertising that resulted from the encounter. "They were generic ads that could have described any other real estate agent in town. 'Call me because I'm really good and I'll work really hard for you and by the way take a look at these pictures of my latest listings.'

That was a shame, because there was a lot we could have said – if we had only known more about her. She was new in the business and it was obvious that she had big plans. It would have been nice to find out what made her tick."

Sir Francis Bacon wrote, "Knowledge is power." Of course, any old knowledge won't work. It has to be the right kind. And it has to be applied in the right way.

Engineers have a saying: "Garbage in, garbage out." It's the same in advertising. Good information equals good advertising. And bad information equals bad advertising.

I like to visualize a Big Ad Machine. At the top, there's a funnel where we put information about an advertiser. That information runs through the system – across wires, tubes and conveyor belts – where it is examined from every angle and molded into an idea. And on the side, there's a slot where an idea pops out.

Sales people can't manufacture information. They have to get it from somewhere – or from someone – and

that's usually their client. Let's examine some categories for your information-gathering questions:

1. History. How did the company start? What obstacles had to be overcome? How has their business evolved? What is their business philosophy?

2. Customers. Here's where you learn about the audience they want to reach. What types of customers do they have now? What types do they want in the future?

3. New products, services or locations. Can your paper be their primary promotional vehicle?

4. Features and benefits. Communicate relevant benefits – and readers will pay attention. People don't buy features, they buy benefits.

5. Competitors. Figure out what the other guys are doing. What are their strengths? Where are they vulnerable?

6. Points of differentiation. Seek the unique, and you won't end up with "me too" advertising that gets lost in the crowd.

Here's the bottom line: If an advertiser provides you with the right kind of information, you might end up with what Josh's frantic real estate client was looking for – a great idea.

Video training for your ad team

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Phone: 919-848-2401, Email: jfoust@mindspring.com

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Two new products improve on existing technology

By Kevin Slimp



My desk has been piling up with new and updated products I've been meaning to review. So here's a look at two.

Extensis Suitcase Fusion

I've been living on the edge the past two years. For several years I had been using Extensis Suitcase for font management. A couple of years ago, I loaded Diamondsoft (now Extensis) Font Reserve so I could review it for a column. Before I knew it, I was running two font management utilities at the same time! When you demonstrate newspaper technology in front of live audiences for a living, the last thing you can afford is a font that doesn't load when needed. After installing the second font management utility, I found that both Suitcase and Font Reserve had to be running for fonts to load correctly. Aarg!

It was with much anticipation that I read a press release from Extensis concerning Suitcase Fusion, a font utility that merged Suitcase and Font Reserve into one application. My big question was "Will it work?" I would soon find out.

I began by installing Suitcase Fusion, instructing the installer to import the information from my previous version of Suitcase. Next, I ran a utility to import my Font Reserve databases into Suitcase Fusion. After installation, I ran into several issues. Most notable was the tendency of InDesign to crash without warning.

After a couple of days spent restarting InDesign, I contacted the Extensis product support area found at Extensis.com. It was a pleasant surprise when I received a response a short time later instructing me to clear the Font Vault in Suitcase Fusion and recreate my font list. Sure enough, Suitcase Fusion has worked perfectly since making the necessary changes.

Suitcase Fusion's Font Sense technology ensures a smooth workflow by locating and activating the exact fonts used in a document. This enables Suitcase Fusion to successfully manage multiple fonts with the same name while enhancing the capability of an application to activate the exact version of a font. Font Sense works in all Suitcase Fusion plug-ins and allows for true font identification within QuarkXPress, InDesign and Illustrator documents.

Currently available only on the Mac platform, Suitcase Fusion retails for \$99. An upgrade from Suitcase or Font Reserve is available for \$49. System requirements are considerable. They include a Mac with OS X 10.3.9 or higher, a G4 processor running at 1GHz or faster and 256MB RAM (512MB recommended). A free 30-day trial version can be downloaded from www.extensis.com.

Genuine Fractals Print Pro 4.1

Speaking of Extensis, they sold several of their Photoshop plug-ins to onOne Software recently. In addition, onOne picked up some other nice Photoshop plug-ins to add to its suite of products. The last time I reviewed Genuine Fractals, it was a product of LizardTech Software. Now up to version 4.1, Genuine Fractals Print Pro

deserves another look.

Genuine Fractals enables photographers and designers to create print-ready enlargements from image files of any size or resolution. In previous versions there were some issues with Genuine Fractals that kept me from including it in my list of recommended products. For instance, I wasn't too crazy about the idea of having to save all my files in STN format. Now, Genuine Fractals works as a Photoshop plug-in, meaning I can save my files in any format I desire. Basically, Photoshop users select File>Automate>Genuine Fractals PrintPro and a window appears on the screen. The user is asked to determine the size and resolution of the final image.

Does this mean you can simply increase the size of a small image to make it print perfectly at a larger size? No. But it does mean you can increase the size of images with far better results than using Photoshop's bicubic resampling. You will find Genuine Fractals Print Pro a valuable tool for increasing the size of screen images that need to be printed at an 85 or 100 line screen. It's also nice for those low-resolution images, sent by readers, taken with inexpensive digital cameras.

Genuine Fractals Print Pro is available on both Windows and Mac platforms. System requirements include Windows 2000 or XP, Adobe Photoshop 7, 8 (CS) or 9 (CS2) and 512MB RAM. The Mac version requires

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Kevin Slimp is director of the Institute of Newspaper Technology at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. Past columns can be found at www.kevinslimp.com.



Four questions for reporters

By Doug Fisher



In the past I have recommended six questions for editors: Who cares? So what? What does it mean? How do

we know that? Do I understand what is being said? Does this make sense?

Those are good questions for all journalists, but four others can help reporters focus their efforts still further at a time when increasing deadlines too often can make such things an afterthought.

Why do I care about this story?

If you don't have passion about the story, how can your readers? A little of you goes into every word you write. As Ring Lardner once said: "How can you write if you can't cry?" And as Red Smith observed: "There's nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and open a vein."

It's hard to get passionate about that three-hour county council meeting discussing the intricacies of some arcane budget line, and it's OK to say, "I care about this because my boss told me to care about it." But acknowledge that and then fight against letting that boredom creep into your writing. Find something to care about.

Why should the readers care about this story?

One of the most important things you can do is invest a moment to reflect on this before you begin writing. If you can't answer this – and then tell readers that

answer in your story – why should they invest the time in you? Stories change based on reporting, so the answer may change, too. But by the time it comes to writing, the answer should be clear.

If your answer to the first question is "the boss is making me do it," then it's even more critical to ask this question going into the reporting. Failing to engage yourself and the readers unfailingly produces copy that sends people fleeing to the other myriad things competing for their time. Even worse, that copy too often tends to shade to cynicism instead of skeptical observation.

The answer may be as simple as "The council is spending your money" or "I think you'd like to know about this so you can go." Or it may be as weighty as "This could change the face of our town forever."

The answer may also be different for different audiences, an important consideration in these fragmented times.

But if you can't answer this at all, what usually comes out of the keyboard is a string of loosely related facts, not a story, and the results are uniformly unsatisfying.

What is the key source I must have to make this a story?

This sounds like one of those "special project" questions. But while it's critical as you embark on a major endeavor, I've also seen too many great ideas at 10 a.m. turn into mush and recriminations by 3 p.m. because everyone, not just the reporter, failed to ask this.

Our "constantly connected" society actually can make a reporter's

job more difficult. While I always knew the mayor would be in his office from 9-10 a.m. and right after lunch (and probably around 4 p.m. as well), now that everyone is "mobile," and as security at public buildings is tighter, you can't always track people down just by showing up if they won't take your calls.

As much as our electronic world helps us do our jobs, I've found it risky to assume that means you'll be able to get people or documents on a moment's notice.

If I can't get that key source, what is my fallback position?

What can we write, or what other sources can we get, if we can't get that key source? Or are we going to end up with a hole we have to fill with something else?

When an editor is badgering you for the story is no time to ask this question. Prevent hard feelings and Maalox moments and settle on the answer early in the process.

Four deceptively simple questions and four potentially complex answers, but all are important to our success in an increasingly competitive and fragmented world.

Doug Fisher, a former AP news editor, teaches journalism at the University of South Carolina and can be reached at dfisher@sc.edu or (803) 777-3315. Past issues of Common Sense Journalism can be found at www.jour.sc.edu/news/cs/index.html.

NCPA awards

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Community Division

Division A, Circulation under 3,500

Havelock News, Havelock

1st, Staff

Crossroads Chronicle, Cashiers

2nd, Staff

The Clemmons Courier, Clemmons

3rd, Staff

Division B, Circulation 3,500 -10,000

The State Port Pilot, Southport

1st, Staff

The Wake Weekly, Wake Forest

2nd, Staff

The Cherokee Scout, Murphy

3rd, Staff

Division C, Circulation over 10,000

The Cary News, Cary

1st, Staff

Huntersville Herald, Huntersville

2nd, Staff

The Chapel Hill News, Chapel Hill

3rd, Staff

Specialty Division

Street & Smith's SportsBusiness

Journal, Charlotte

1st, Staff

Triangle Business Journal, Raleigh

2nd, Staff

NASCAR Scene, Charlotte

3rd, Staff

Daily Division

Division D, Circulation under 15,000

Kinston Free Press, Kinston

1st, Staff

Rocky Mount Telegram, Rocky Mount

2nd, Staff

The News Herald, Morganton

3rd, Staff

Division E, Circulation 15,000 - 34,999

Hickory Daily Record, Hickory

1st, Staff

High Point Enterprise, High Point

2nd, Staff

Salisbury Post, Salisbury

3rd, Staff

Division F, Circulation over 35,000

The Fayetteville Observer, Fayetteville

1st, Staff

The News & Observer, Raleigh

2nd, Staff

The Charlotte Observer, Charlotte

3rd, Staff

Among the 67 winning community newspapers, the top winners were the *Havelock News* of Division A

with 17, including nine first-place awards; *The State Port Pilot* of Division B with 15, including eight first-place awards; and *The Wake Weekly* of Division B with twelve awards. The top winners in Division C with nine awards each were *The Cary News* and *The Chapel Hill News*.

Among the 38 daily newspaper winners, the top winner was *The Charlotte Observer* of Division F, which won an amazing 23 awards, including 12 first-place honors, followed closely by *The News & Observer* with 22 awards. The *Salisbury Post* of Division E brought in 21 awards. In Division D, *The Star* in Shelby and the *Rocky Mount Telegram* each won 15 awards.

A complete list of winners is available at ncpress.com. Additionally, photos from the awards ceremony also are posted on the Web site. *The Washington Daily News*-produced awards tab, containing the winners, as well as judges comments, can be obtained by contacting NCPA at (919) 787-7443.

A fast-paced year

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state's first game. In April, we will get a chance to convince lottery officials that newspaper should be part of the media buy.

In addition to Kathy, Member Services Director Kim Grissom is leaving NCPA after 12 ½ years. Her work has never been short of stellar and her willingness to tackle any assignment has made her invaluable. The membership owes Kim substan-

tial thanks for helping NCPA get through the tough time several years ago. While we all hate to see her go, we understand Kim's desire to try something different at this stage of her life.

Despite Kim's departure, Beth is bringing strong leadership to NCPA. Bobby Bracy has our financial books in order, a fact certified by a clean audit last month from the Holden-Moss accounting firm. We have confidence that Lindsay Webster will

lead the marketing department to new successes, leaving only the vacancy in member services to be filled. It's going to be a good but fast-paced year.

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Winter Institute photos

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At right: Jock Lauterer, director of the Carolina Community Media Project, gave a program titled "Photography: How to Get the Picture that Tells the Story." Lauterer recently returned from India and is showing some of his photos from that trip.



At left: Rep. Stephen LaRoque (R-District 10) speaks during the Free Press Rights & the Legislature session on Friday.

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NCPF silent auction

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Morgan Dickerman III, *The Wilson Daily Times*

Gayle Stroupe, *The Charlotte Observer*

Robert Gruber, *Star-News*,

Wilmington
Brownie and Susan Futrell, *Washington Daily News*
Publishing Group of America –

American Profile
Winston-Salem Journal
BellSouth
John Edmondson, *The Homes News*,
Marshville
Freedom ENC Communications –
Jacksonville Daily News, *Kinston Free Press* and *New Bern Sun Journal*
Carolina Hurricanes and Equipment
Manager Wally Tatomir
D.K. Clay Pottery, Don Hudson and
Bill Horner III, *The Sanford Herald*
Salisbury Post
Mark Brincefield, well-known
cartoonist and artist at the
Salisbury Post

NORTH CAROLINA PRESS ASSOCIATION FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

Did you know employees of newspapers (and their families) who are members of the NC Press Association and not served by their own newspaper Credit Union are eligible for membership at the NCPA Credit Union?

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Call or drop in the local branch of SECU to obtain more information about YOUR Credit Union!

Blogging

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mixed, but I wouldn't bet my retirement savings on staying anonymous online.

Depending upon what your reporter writes about and how personal he gets, this extra window into his soul carries the added risk of increasing liability in other areas. He might reveal biases or prejudices that color his work as a reporter. Or worse yet, something he writes might come back to haunt you in a libel trial.

Something about prohibiting reporters from blogging doesn't sit well with some newspapers, though. It smacks of censorship. So if you are going to allow it, develop some

guidelines, knowing for better or worse that whether your reporters are using a pen name or using their own name, their writings will lead back to you. A lawyer for one newspaper group said their reporters are prohibited from having independent blogs on topics that are also the subject of their reporting. One television network lawyer reported having a conflicts of interest policy in place for journalist-bloggers.

You can expect to avoid liability for postings by your readers, but like anything, it is worth spending some time thinking through these issues *before* problems arise. In some ways, the issue of blogging raises the age-

old tension between the news side and business side. Editors rightly are reluctant to impinge on reporters' exercise of First Amendment rights, but the exec who pays the insurance premium might not be eager to take on added liability for the WWW – the wild and wacky web. No doubt these decisions will become easier to make as more and more cases are litigated, but we're still in fairly uncharted waters. So sit down; think it through; and chart your path. The risks can be a bit intimidating, but the possibilities are endless. That's what makes this new universe so exciting.

2006 Newspaper Academy

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Reporter I track.

Reporter II track sessions will include "Breaching Legal Walls," "Making the Most of your First Years" and "Digital Photography for Dummies."

The Editor I track will cover libel, copyediting, page design and editorial writing.

"How to Deal with Goofs and Crooks," "Diversity in the Newsroom" and "Your Virtual Newsroom," will be among the sessions for Editor II track participants.

The management track will feature "Management 101," "Innovative Ideas for Your Newspaper," and "Thinking Big on a Small Budget."

The daylong seminar, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., will include a boxed lunch. The registration fee will be \$40 for the first registrant from each newspaper and \$35 for each additional person.

Look online under "calendar" at ncpress.com for a full listing of sessions and registration information.

Two new products

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OS 10.2 or higher, Photoshop 7, 8 or 9 and 512MB RAM. Genuine Fractals Print Pro retails for \$299. Upgrades from previous versions are \$99. OnOne also offers Genuine Fractals 4.1 (not Print Pro version) for \$159. This version works with RGB images, but not CMYK. Download a 30-day trial version of Genuine Fractals or Genuine Fractals Print Pro at www.ononesoftware.com.

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Calendar

April 21, 2006

UNC Editorial Writers Conference
Carroll Hall, UNC-Chapel Hill

May 5-6, 2006

NC Newspaper Production Conference
Sheraton Imperial Hotel
& Convention Center, RTP/Durham

May 6-12, 2006

UNC Multimedia Bootcamp
Carroll Hall, UNC-Chapel Hill

May 11, 2006

NCPA Credit & Collections Workshop
NCPA Headquarters, Raleigh

May 12, 2006

2006 Newspaper Academy
Carroll Hall, UNC-Chapel Hill

June 15-16, 2006

NCPA Ad Conference & Awards
Sheraton Imperial Hotel
& Convention Center, RTP/Durham

June 21-22, 2006

The State and Future of
Business Journalism
Carroll Hall, UNC-Chapel Hill

July 13-16, 2006

NCPA Annual Convention
Holiday Inn Sunspree Resort
Wrightsville Beach

NCPA Job Bank

Visit the NCPA Job Bank at
ncpress.com to view full descriptions
of the ads below and new listings.
This list was current as of March 14.

EDITORIAL/ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS

Photographer: Send resume, cover letter, references and portfolio (CD preferred) to Jeff Melton, Photo Editor, *The Star*, PO Box 48, Shelby, NC 28151. Questions to Jeff_Melton@link.freedom.com.

Graphic Designer: E-mail twiceproduction@charter.net or fax resume to (910) 270-9315.

Reporter: Send resume and work samples to Editor Charles Williams at wilkesjp@charter.net or at *Wilkes Journal-Patriot*, PO Box 70, North Wilkesboro, NC, 28659.

Graphic Artist: E-mail cover letter, salary requirements and resumes to Abritt@thelakepaper.com.

Reporter: Send resume and salary requirements to Gary Stewart, *The Herald*, PO Box 769, Kings Mountain, NC 28086 or gstewart@kingsmountainherald.com.

Reporter: Send a resume and clips to Barry Merrill at the *News-Leader*, PO Box 597, Princeton NC 27569 or e-mail newsleader@earthlink.net.

Photographer: Part-time at *The Enquirer-Journal*. Contact Stan Hojnacki, Managing Editor, at 500 W. Jefferson Street, PO Box 5040, Monroe, N.C., 28111, or (704) 261-2220 or shojnacki@theej.com.

Copy Editor: 20-hour, three-day work week. Email resumes to news@wschronicle.com.

Reporter: Send resume and samples to Mike Dart, editor of the *Four Oaks-Benson News in Review*, by e-mail to mld1sp@aol.com or by mail to PO Box 9, Benson, NC 27504.

Community Editor: Send resume, cover letter and five samples of page design to Angela Evans, News Editor, 1921 Vance St. Reidsville, NC 27320.

ADVERTISING POSITIONS

Retail Sales Manager: Send resume, cover letter, references and salary requirements to Dwaine Menscer, Media General, 1100 Park Place, 11th Avenue Blvd. SE, Hickory, NC 28602. E-mail to aplatt@hickoryrecord.com.

Advertising Sales: Call Lori at *Moore County Independent*: (910) 947-2217.

Circulation Director: Send resume, cover letter and salary history to *The Times News*, General Manager, PO Box 481, Burlington, NC 27216 or via e-mail to mike_little@link.freedom.com or fax (336) 229-2466.

Advertising Sales: Send resume and references to Advertising Director, PO Box 808, Mount Airy, NC 27030.



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800.223.1600

Copyhook

Tim Dalton has been named editor of the *Mebane Enterprise*, moving from Gretna, Va.

The Daily Advance, Elizabeth City, announced the following promotions: **Gene Fowler** is the new director of sales and marketing, **Terri Harrell** is now sales and marketing coordinator, **Rick Easley** is circulation director/facilities manager, **Jerry Blair** is now assistant news editor, and **Robert Kelly-Goss** is the new Albemarle Life editor.

Ken Harty is the new advertising director for the Roanoke Rapids *Daily Herald*, moving from *The Daily Iberian*, New Iberia, La.

Dennis Hill has been promoted from city editor to managing editor of the *Goldsboro News-Argus*.

Sandra Hurley is the new publisher of *The Sampson Independent*, Clinton; coming from the *Williamson Daily News*, Williamson, W.Va. She promoted editor **Sherry Matthews** to general manager.

Chad Killebrew has been promoted from managing editor to executive editor of the *Lexington Dispatch*.

Eric Lusk, recent editor of N.C. State's *Wolfpacker*, is now sports editor at *The Yadkin Ripple*.

Ralph Morris is leaving as publisher of *The Franklin Press* to become general manager of Cashiers

Printing Inc.

Steven Smith is the new vice president of sales and marketing at the *Winston-Salem Journal* and Media General North Carolina Community Newspapers. He comes from Community Newspaper Holdings Inc.

Tom Spargur has been promoted from group publisher of Womack Publishing's N.C. newspapers to corporate director of advertising.

Bob Williams, a roving editor for the *Smoky Mountain Sentinel*, has taken over as editor after Hannah McLamb left for other interests.

The Daily Reflector, Greenville, has announced the following promotions: **Betty Williams** is now display advertising director, **Elizabeth Semple** is the new director of marketing, business development and customer care, **Priscilla Melchoir** has been named Web editor for Cox North Carolina, and **Cherie Speller** is now readership and community editor.

CNN Anchor **Judy Woodruff** and *New York Times* columnist **David Brooks** will join Duke University's Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy next fall to conduct seminars focusing on the intersection of media, politics and political ideology.

Obituaries

Gary Gooder, founder of *The Macon County News & Shopping Guide*, died in February. He was 70.

Lib Griffin, a longtime *Durham Morning Herald* columnist, died in January at age 88.

Jim Pharr, who served *The Fayetteville Observer* as a writer and editor from the 1950s into retirement, died in February at age 83.

Rama Whisnant, 63, a clerk with *The News Herald*, Morganton, died in February.

Maurice Williams, publisher of *The Kinston Free Press* for 20 years, died in February.

—North Carolina Press Association—

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