

Learning, networking and a few awards too

Winter Institute set for Feb. 28-29 at the Embassy Suites in Cary

It's nearly time for that annual tradition among North Carolina newspaper people known as Winter Institute. It's a time to gather with colleagues, chat about the latest innovations, gain valuable knowledge ... oh, and something about an awards ceremony.

This year NCPA heads for the Embassy Suites at Cary. It's conveniently located off Interstate 40 Exit 287 (if you're coming from the west, that's the one just before the Wade Avenue exit).

The hotel has great meeting space and the guest rooms are spacious.

Speaking of meeting space, we'll be using some of it for FREE training (yes, we said "free"). NCPA has teamed up with the SNPA Foundation to use the Winter Institute as a Traveling Campus location.

We'll have a variety of sessions from the traditional newsroom courses such as Writing 101 to more modern issues such as Doing Interactive and Online Disaster Management. (See descriptions on Page 10)

North Carolina AP has a special guest speaker lined up for its annual Awards Luncheon on Feb. 28. The executive editor of the AP, Kathleen

Carroll, will clue us in to the big stories and issues coming up in 2008. Plus there will be awards for member cooperation, writing and editing.

Speaking of awards, winners in the NCPA News, Editorial & Photojournalism Contest will pick up their honors during the Feb. 28 banquet.

A new twist this year – your newspaper or group can reserve a table with a \$100 donation to the North Carolina Press Foundation. Be sure to check out the details on the special reservation form. If you misplaced it, you can also download a copy from our Web site.





Reserved table or not, remember you have to register to attend the banquet.

Announcement of the General Excellence winners will climax the evening. Once again this year the names of the winning papers will be a secret until then. Don't miss it as it just might be your paper taking home the big prize!

Winter Institute Informer
Journalists invade Cary!
 Embassy Suites Hotel preparing for onslaught
 Hundreds of award winners eagerly await grand banquet
 SNPA Traveling Campus called in to provide diverse training program
 Papers on edge waiting to hear who won General Excellence!
 You decide in '08: Will it be beef, chicken or vegetarian?
 Legislative Breakfast to serve up some hot information on upcoming session

If you haven't received registration materials in the mail, you can download the forms from our Web site.
www.ncpress.com

Helpful Tips!

-  Save money by registering early. Prices go up after Feb. 18.
-  Remember, with a sleeper sofa and up to two beds Embassy Suites rooms can accommodate several people. Plus there's the hotel's free breakfast!
-  Choose between prime rib, beef or vegetarian at the awards banquet, but you have to indicate your choice on the registration form. If you don't choose you'll either get chicken or the leftovers from the previous night (OK, not really).
-  Seminars are free, but you must sign up to attend.



Special Report:
 How is Newspaper Next going in North Carolina and elsewhere?
 Pages 5-8

ALSO INSIDE
 John Bussian thinks the time is right to go after public employee personnel records. Page 4
 Questions can be a powerful tool in trying to help serve your advertising clients. Page 9



From the president

tdearman@statesville.com

Ask yourself: What will really make a difference?

Tim Dearman

The holidays, the vacations, the office parties we all waited so long for are just memories now. Welcome to 2008!

The new year brings new challenges as we all struggle to set – and meet – our business goals for the year.

No one can single-handedly manage all the details in a 100-page budget and strategic plan, so what do you do?

That's exactly what the instructor at a Northwestern University seminar I attended wanted to know. Another Media General publisher talked about our process, then I piped up.

I said we also do all of the required stuff – but we add one more step. We head into a room where we sit down with our department heads and list three to five things each department can do that will really make a difference.

To my delight, the instructor said that is exactly what we should do.

After you complete all the formal budgeting and planning, the instructor said, stop and ask yourself: What will really make a difference? What are we really going to do? Then, make a real list with real goals.

Here is a little insight into my list:

► News:

More local. The two most significant research reports for our industry in the last decade are the Read-

ership Institute's Eight Readership Imperatives and the American Press Institute's Newspaper Next report. If you are in the industry you need to read these again. In short, good local content was, is and always will be king. Yes, good design and packaging helps, but local is the reason we exist.

► Advertising:

Sell the value of our product. I believe we have the best product to move merchandise. We have to understand who newspapers reach and convey that information effectively to our advertisers. I am frustrated when seeing ad dollars wasted on less-effective advertising because we have not done a good job of presenting our product. We will also expand the number of active accounts.

► Production:

From our reader's viewpoint, being well-printed is the key. From an internal viewpoint, we have to be efficient.

► Circulation:

Sales and service are the gold measures. Diversifying our acquisition sources and lowering our service errors are important goals.

► Business:

We can do better in producing management information. We need to understand why it is instead of just what it is. Expense controls are here to stay, too. Managing means

getting the most out of scarce resources.

► Human Resources:

We have to recruit talent, retain good people and replace poor performers. We plan to increase training hours and training dollars, too.

► Web:

Create more unique content and publish more reader-submitted content.

You get the picture. Make yourself a one-page list of your top three to five goals in each department and have a weekly conversation about that list. A focus on key points will make a difference.

This one-page list may even be too much. Lee Enterprises has it in five bullet points.

■ Grow revenue creatively and rapidly.

■ Improve readership and circulation.

■ Emphasize strong local news.

■ Build our online future.

■ Exercise careful cost controls.

Finally, you need to do the same for yourself. I have narrowed my list to one easy-to remember bullet point:

■ I will strive do everything with professionalism, integrity and enthusiasm.

Tim Dearman is the president of NCPA/NCPS and publisher at Statesville Record & Landmark.

THE NORTH CAROLINA PRESS

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The North Carolina Press is published by the North Carolina Press Association, 5171 Glenwood Avenue, Suite 364, Raleigh, NC 27612; (919) 787-7443.

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The **basic subscription rate** of \$24 a year is included in members' dues.

For **address changes**, contact the NCPA office.



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.

Lindsay WebsterNCPA Marketing Director

Leta PopeNCPA Network Advertising Director

www.ncpress.com

Federal shield bill lingers in the Senate

After the U. S. House of Representatives voted resoundingly on Oct. 16 to pass the proposed reporter's shield law for federal courts, the Senate version of the bill remains on hold. Senate Republican opposition remains strong despite the 15-4 vote by the Senate Judiciary Committee to send the bill (S. 2035) on for consideration by the full Senate.

Still, Senate supporters, including Republican Sen. Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, hope to bring the legislation to a Senate floor vote this spring.

While the bill may attract enough Senate votes, a veto looms. The Bush White House has formally

complained that the legislation would compromise prosecution of disclosure crimes (confidential and classified information) and would make it unduly difficult for federal prosecutors to do their jobs.

In any case, the challenge for the press and other shield law supporters will be to project the number of votes necessary to override a presidential veto in both chambers of Congress.

The federal shield legislation would improve protection for reporters nationally in the federal courts. NCPA members should contact Senators Burr and Dole to urge support for S. 2035!

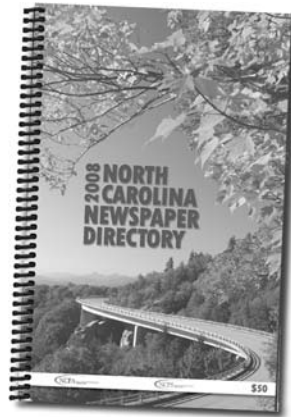
Newspapers in Education Week scheduled for March 3-7

NAA Foundation offers a curriculum and in-paper features or ads each year. This year's curriculum titled "Connect to the World with Newspaper" can be printed off the NAAF Web site.

For more details about NIE Week and to print the curriculum, visit www.naafoundation.org.

Sunshine Week launches free ads in 'Sunshine Campaign'

The Sunshine Campaign, intended to spur discussion of open government issues in the election year, rolled out new Web and print ads that can be used free of charge by participants. The ads, in English and Spanish, are available on the Sunshine Week Web site, <http://www.sunshineweek.org>.



Heading your way soon

The 2008 North Carolina Newspaper Directory will be arriving soon (if it hasn't already).

We have a new size and format this year that we hope you'll find user-friendly.

NCPA/NCPS Board of Directors 2007-2008

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CALENDAR

Feb. 17-19
SNPA Key Executives Conference, Tampa, Fla.

Feb. 18
Early Bird registration deadline for Winter Institute.

Feb. 22
Final registration deadline for Winter Institute

Feb. 22
Understanding HIPAA Seminar
Carroll Hall, UNC-CH

Feb. 28-29
NCPA Winter Institute
Embassy Suites, Cary, NC

March 16-22,
Sunshine Week 2008

April 3-4
SNPA/NIE Conference
Meredith College, Raleigh

April 13-16
ASNE annual convention in conjunction with Newspaper Association of America meeting, Washington, D.C.

May 9
NCPA and UNC School of Journalism and Mass Communication Newspaper Academy

July 17-20
NCPA Summer Convention
Crowne Plaza hotel at Asheville



Crossing the public personnel records divide

John Bussian

It's Lexington and Concord all over again. Mecklenburg County's stunning refusal to permit *The Charlotte Observer's* access to records from the new sheriff-elect's personnel file, bearing on his fitness for office, has sparked outcry for improving North Carolina open government law.

The Mecklenburg County fiasco is the latest in a series of disputes over access to records of hiring, firing and on-the-job performance of officials holding positions of public trust.

NCPA member-led efforts to gain access to Durham and Greensboro police personnel records resulted in modest disclosures in situations that clearly demand full disclosure. The bitter taste left from these recent encounters has led many to conclude that it may be time to face the opposition and act.

The Observer and the Greensboro *News & Record* came to blows with local law enforcement when public records requests were denied. Why? Because the lack of meaningful access to public personnel records continues to be a gaping hole in North Carolina public records law.

This defect, along with the lack of an effective open government law enforcement mechanism, puts North Carolina in the bottom tier of state open government law.

And in a state growing as fast as ours, North Carolinians no longer should put up with flaws that prevent the public's access to baseline information about those seeking and performing state and local government jobs.

Yet, experience shows that the only avenue for improving current access to government employee records – moving a bill through our General Assembly – faces tough opposition.

In 1997, then-Senator Roy Cooper made the only recent run to improve access to personnel records when he sponsored the "Disciplinary Disclosure Act."

That effort was telling of the politics surrounding public personnel records. The only measurable support that could be mustered for liberalizing access to performance records for government employees was a "three strikes and it's open" mechanism. That would have meant secret records of public official hiring, firing, and job performance could only be disclosed when three formal complaints were filed by a citizen or co-worker, and the last complaint resulted in disciplinary action against the public official.

While there are no statutes available with which to measure how many employee records would have been opened for citizen inspection, it is a good bet that precious few officials would have survived one or two formal complaints without some resolution of the matter – let alone the three that would trigger disclosure!

In the face of massive opposition by public sector interests, the bill died in the House.

All the while, most states continued to permit access to employment applications and performance reviews. The top "transparency" states allowed virtually unfettered access to hiring, firing, and performance records.

Florida, Ohio and Texas rank at the top with public records laws that require disclosure of everything except medical data, Social Security numbers and information that would identify confidential informants working with law enforce-

ment. (In Florida, when a medical condition of a government employee in a position of "public trust" becomes an issue in state courts, disclosure of those records is required.)

Of the states surrounding North Carolina, all but Virginia broadly require disclosure of public official hiring, firing, and job performance records.

Why not allow public access? In the case of the Mecklenburg County Sheriff-elect, shouldn't the public have access to the personnel file to see for itself whether there's any truth to allegations that he inaccurately filled in his time cards as a law enforcement officer – especially when a police chief in that county said he wouldn't hire the sheriff!

In Greensboro, why did the police department refuse to release the names of three suspended officers accused of sexual assault on the job? And why did it take the city so long to disclose the records over the objections of the police department?

And shouldn't Durham County residents see the application and performance reviews for that sheriff's entry-level "fines and judgments" processing clerk, who has been charged with embezzling more than \$50,000 in public funds?

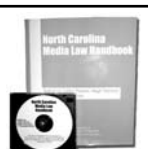
Isn't the public's right to know greatest when it comes to those in whom the public entrusts money and power?

With some General Assembly courage and a Roy Cooper-like sponsor, a bridge to the 21st century can be built with legislation that gives the public meaningful access to information about the folks it employs."

It's what you don't know that can hurt the most

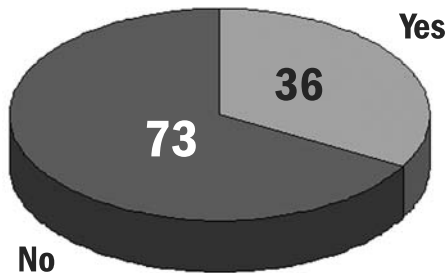
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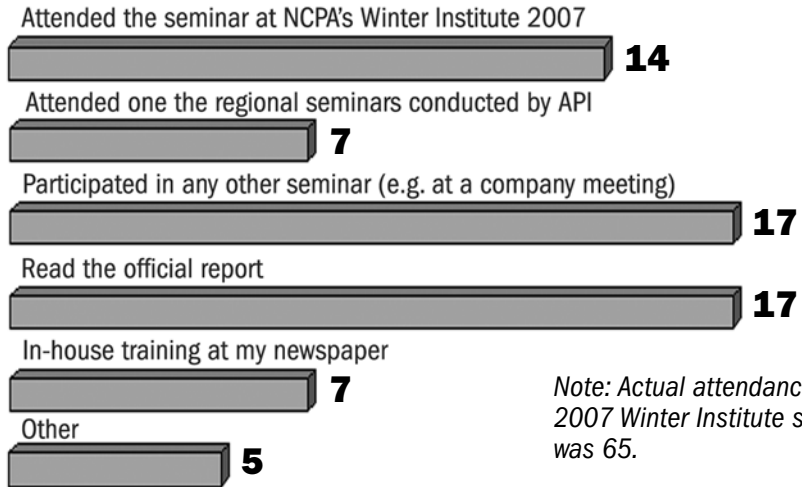
In January we asked publishers, editors, advertising directors and others in newspapers to complete an online survey about Newspaper Next in our state. Here are some of the results:

Have you attended a session concerning API's Newspaper Next program or read the written report on Newspaper Next?



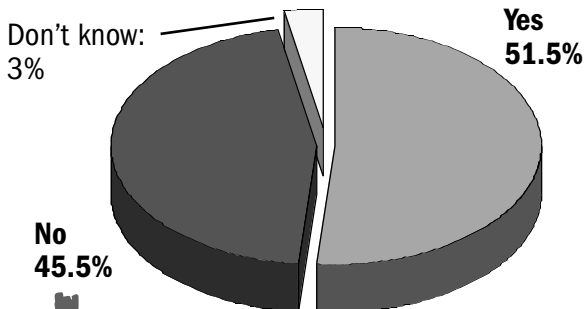
Note: Those who responded "no" went directly to the demographic questions.

How did you **become familiar** with Newspaper Next? (Check all that apply)



Note: Actual attendance at the 2007 Winter Institute session was 65.

Have you used the Newspaper Next process at your newspaper?



Please describe **why you have not** been able to implement the Newspaper Next process at your newspaper?

I have used parts of the process at a previous newspaper with enough capacity to experiment and make changes. My current newspaper in North Carolina is overwhelmed with corporate-mandated change.

Need more info, more manpower, more time

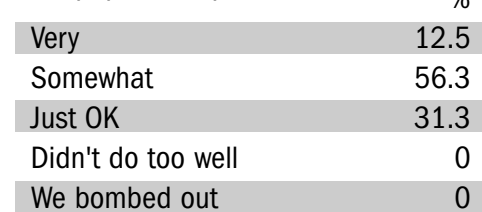
We have worked on the (Readership Institute) study's 8 Imperatives instead

Don't have specific tools I read about.

Other higher priority projects – new software, new building, etc. Staffing has also been a problem, when do you find the time?

Been too busy with day-to-day activity

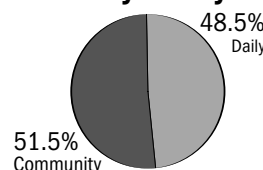
How successful were you in using the Newspaper Next process?



Who answered?

Publisher	28
General Manager	6
Editor	26
Advertising	16
Marketing	0
Circulation	5
New Media	1
Newsroom other than editor	20
Other	4
No answer	15

Community or Daily?



Would you use the Newspaper Next process **again**?



Please briefly describe the **results** of using the Newspaper Next process?

We have several new products, such as web sites and magazines, in development.

We're using some of the ideas there in developing ideas for new products, our web strategy, and how we continue working on the newspaper.

Two new Web sites created, possibly leading to print products (under the "fail fast, fail cheap" worst-case scenario).

Almost all of our web-directed efforts were results from exposure to Newspaper Next.

About Newspaper Next: A Q&A with the experts



At the 2007 NCPA Winter Institute a special day-long session introduced Newspaper Next to North Carolina newspapers.

The room was packed and unfortunately the air conditioner couldn't seem to pump out enough cool air.

But those attending left with their heads full of new information about the newspaper industry and what it could do to survive "disruptive innovation."

American Press Institute put months of work and loads of money into studying the problem. The result was Newspaper Next.

Almost one year after the Winter Institute presentation, we wanted to know how N2 was progressing.

Steve Gray, director of Newspaper Next, and **Elaine Clisham**, managing director of marketing for API, took time to answer some questions from The North Carolina Press about N2.

It has been about one year since many North Carolina newspapers got their introduction to Newspaper Next at the 2007 Winter Institute. Since its release in late 2006, what impact has the program had on our industry?

EC: Our observation has been that it's probably the single biggest thing since the Readership Institute research to get the industry talking. Newspapers that were struggling to define both the problem and potential solutions now have some way to understand the disruptions that are buffeting the industry, and what we can do not just to defend ourselves against them but to turn those disruptions into opportunity and real growth.

SG: I'm seeing the N2 concepts popping up in trade reports all over the industry — for example, things like "jobs to be done," "good enough" and "invest a little, learn a lot." I believe a lot more papers are putting a lot more effort into innovation, influenced in many ways by N2. Some are using N2 largely as we presented it, while others are cherry-picking the parts of it that resonate with them. My impression is that the industry is moving much faster than it was two years ago, prior to N2.

What are some real success stories from the past year?

EC: Most of the success stories have been in the area of audience-building, what we call Area 2 of the Newspaper Next Game Plan. Newspapers have really embraced things like hyperlocal content, databased information, community conversations, new products, particularly online products, for new audiences such as parents/moms, and ways to incorporate user content — photos,

blogs, etc. — into many things they were already doing. Newspaper Next 2.0 will include a casebook of 24 such examples, but we know there are many more out there.

SG: Most of the 24 are successful — some of them very much so — but I would mention two as both especially successful and especially innovative. 1) Quality Consignments — a full-service consignment store created by the Ogden (Utah) Standard-Examiner to extend the traditional classified model by helping people actually sell — not just ad-



"It's probably the single biggest thing since the Readership Institute research to get the industry talking."

vertise — their quality used items. The other is www.DeliveringQC.com, a subscriber retention website created by the Moline (Ill.) Dispatch, which enables scores of small businesses to buy online coupon advertising with gift certificates instead of cash. The Dispatch converts them to cash by selling them to consumers on the website.

Have there been any areas in the project that made you say, I wish we could have had a "do-over" on that piece?

EC and SG: This is not just PR, but on a macro level we honestly don't think so. Our objectives were to help the industry understand what's disrupting newspapers at the moment; to try to identify some navi-

gable ways forward; and to get the word out as quickly and as broadly as possible. And I think we did that.

On a tactical level, we at API have suffered a little from the same things the newspaper industry suffers from, so we've been behind on technology to support the N2 efforts, particularly to do with facilitating conversations among newspapers working on N2 initiatives and with being an industry clearinghouse for N2 ideas. Look for that to change very soon!

What part of Newspaper Next appears to be giving newspapers the most fits?

EC: Revenue generation, hands down. Most new revenue efforts look very much like the old revenue efforts, and there's been very little adventuring into completely new models like paid search, lead generation, video advertising, sponsored or white-label e-mail, things like that. Partly the problem is the difficulty of moving resources away from what is still a very profitable core business, partly it's a lack of knowledge about how these new opportunities work, and partly it's a training and compensation issue. We wish the industry were investing more and moving faster on that front, but people really seem to be stymied about how to take the first steps.

SG: One of the strongest messages of our 2.0 report is that a great many newspaper companies are missing large amounts of revenue because they don't have enough (or any, in many cases) online-only sales reps. To harvest the growth in local ad dollars available online, companies **MUST** be willing to hire and train people who specialize in online sales.

Our own survey here in North Carolina indicates that roughly two-thirds of our membership have not been introduced to Newspaper Next. How well has the rollout gone?

EC and SG: That's a surprising number to us, because, after 45 press association presentations, 21

public one-day workshops, approximately 40 on-site workshops for individual newspaper organizations and a 90-minute presentation to every API residential seminar since September 2006, we're finding that at least two-thirds of the groups we encounter have had at least some exposure. It's our objective to make sure we do whatever we can to en-



“Most new revenue efforts look very much like the old revenue efforts, and there’s been very little adventuring into completely new models”

sure that the Newspaper Next concepts are pushed as far down into organizations as possible.

Newspaper Next 2.0 is scheduled for release this month (February). What is new in this version?

SG: Titled “Making the Leap Beyond Newspaper Companies,” the report has three major sections: 1) A vision of what newspaper companies can become if they set larger goals and fulfill new community functions far beyond the boundaries of the old model; 2) a Casebook section providing 24 “how-to” case studies of new products and services launched with the N2 process, and 3) a pragmatic and research-based examination of local online revenue opportunities and how to tap them successfully, provided by Borrell Associates. Extensive additional data resources will be provided along with the report so newspaper executives can see what the key revenue opportunities are for markets of their size. Also to be provided are vendor lists for online revenue infrastructure and job competencies for key online positions.

What would you say to publishers who have been reluctant to tackle

Newspaper Next?

EC and SG: Four things: First, you may think your business is just fine and you don't need to be doing these things, maybe because your market isn't heavily penetrated by broadband or you don't have any real competition, but trust us, that will change, and sooner rather than later. If you're not already being disrupted, you have a wonderful opportunity to fix your roof while the sun is still shining, so we urge you to get started proactively and not to wait.

Second, you don't have to do everything all at once. Pick one thing, start small, let it grow, and then repeat the process. That will give you a chance to set new goals and develop a framework for real-locating resources, revising job descriptions, hiring or training for new competencies, adjusting compensation plans, restructuring

departments, etc., all of which sound huge but will actually be quite doable once you have a vision of why you're doing them. Doing new tasks will drive organizational change, rather than the other way around. But acknowledge that you'll need to start doing things differently, and don't be afraid of that. Get out of the building and start talking to your customers about important jobs they need done, and you won't be short of ideas to get started on.

Third, be willing to spend some time figuring out what you can stop doing in order to make room for this. Make it a regular thing to look for efficiencies or for activities that take a lot of time or resources but don't pay off, and be willing to reallocate those resources to higher-yield efforts. Change is hard work, but we're pretty sure your staffs will be willing to help your newspaper change and thrive rather than let it sit still and struggle.

And fourth, be bold! This is a revolution we're in, so once you've gotten started and seen some successes, have the courage to make big plans. Good luck and let us know how you're doing!



Don't let 'good enough' keep you from trying N2

John Pea

Several years ago on a trip visiting family the folks decided we'd eat at a particular chain buffet-style restaurant.

It was my first visit, but I was pretty sure what it would be like. That's why seeing the company mission statement on a large poster at the entrance intrigued me.

"Our food quality, friendly service and cleanliness will exceed our guests' expectations."

I made a point to write it down for later use.

Now, I'll admit that considering the type of restaurant, its location in an older shopping center and the general décor, my expectations weren't extremely high. I had no preconceptions that the food would be four- or five-star caliber. I didn't expect fine linens or elegant china and flatware.

In the end, yes – the restaurant met or exceeded my expectations.

I doubt anyone in that restaurant had expectations that couldn't be met or exceeded. They made a choice based on any number of factors (e.g. price, location, taste buds) and undoubtedly came away with full bellies.

For them, this restaurant was

"good enough" to meet their needs.

The phrase "good enough" is a difficult one for most newspaper people to swallow. After all, didn't the noted business author Jim Collins tell us in his book "Good to Great" that good is the enemy of great?

Yet the learned people at American Press Institute along with the folks at Innosight instruct us to embrace the concept of "good enough" in the Newspaper Next program.

Can both Jim Collins and Newspaper Next be right?

I've seen plenty of scowls on journalists' faces when the phrase comes up, but yes, both can be right.

Nowhere does the Newspaper Next report tell us to apply "good enough" standards to our core newspaper products. "Good enough" isn't about lowering standards for our newspapers.

But let's face it, a lot of people don't read our core products. For some of them, it's not that the newspaper doesn't meet expectations, it's just more than they need or want. (For those people in the buffet restaurant haute cuisine might very well be a waste of money.) In the terminology of the Readership Institute, it's "too much."

For these current non-readers the concept of "good enough" comes into play. In developing new products to serve them, Newspaper Next challenges us to make those products good enough to fulfill the particular needs (or jobs to be done) of the target audience.

What is "good enough?" It's not our own standards and tastes that matter here. We don't set the criteria or the definition.

Something is "good enough" when it satisfies the intended users – when it meets their otherwise unanswered needs. (Of course, that means you have to understand their needs and that's where Newspaper Next's "jobs to be done" system can help. But that's another story.)

So is Newspaper Next the magic silver bullet that will save newspapers? I don't know, but it may help preserve newspaper companies and their missions.

But it certainly won't if we allow fear of the "good enough" concept to keep us from implementing it.

John Pea serves as member communications manager for NCPA/NCPS and formerly held the top newsroom jobs in Gastonia and Burlington.

Newspaper Next stories from two North Carolina publications

The Wilson Times

It's not what we have done ... it's more like what is coming down the pike, such as hiring Andrew Small to be our new media guy and using John Fish as a new media consultant. Andrew launched a new webdesign of www.wilsonsintimes.com.

It's like hiring Dave Crawley for what we are calling our Newspaper Next Department. David's job will be to bring in new dollars from niche products from nontraditional revenue.

We have just had a presentation from Urban Associates of Boston. They did a cash analysis of our market telling us what advertising dollars are being spent and who is getting them. This gave us ideas of what categories we were not getting and how to go after them. All with niche print products and a .com component.

It's also like having Alan Jacobson of

Brasstacksdesign redesign the print product to "snazz it up" to attract the 18-35 year olds but not make your 45-plus readers mad at you. Alan's print design will also drive readers to www.wilsonsintimes.com.

It will also be packaging a bundle so advertisers can be rewarded for advertising in print, online, phonebook, mailer and other products we have!

Morgan P. Dickerman III, publisher

Winston-Salem Journal

Media General Inc., which owns the Winston-Salem Journal, Hickory Daily Record, Statesville Record & Landmark, and several smaller newspapers in North Carolina, embraced Newspaper Next last year in a pretty big way.

The company created its own version of the innovation initiative, which it dubbed Media General Innovation Inside, or MGi2.

We have used the Newspaper Next Idea Resume to develop potential new products, which are man-

aged by small committees. There are dozens at work across Media General newspapers, televisions and web operations currently.

In Winston-Salem, projects include some ideas for new niche web sites, including an all-inclusive wedding portal for the region. The wedding web site, which is still in development, will pull together into one location all the resources that a prospective bride needs for wedding planning.

The key to the power of Newspaper Next is the jobs-to-be-done concept. Once a newspaper begins to think about the ways in which its readers perceive the value of the newspaper, i.e., what can it do for me today, it changes how we think about improvements, new features, etc. In addition, it's good to ask, what jobs do not need to be done. Most newspapers, by force of habit, produce content that is of little use to most readers anymore. The process can help you reallocate those resources.

Carl Crothers, editor



Ad-Libs

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Questions can be powerful

John Foust

It's no secret that children are curious. They are like sponges, constantly asking questions, soaking up all the information they can. I recently heard that the typical child asks half a million questions by the age of 6. (No doubt, there are many parents who feel their sons or daughters ask that many on a single Saturday.)

Good sales people have an almost-childlike sense of curiosity. This serves them well, because the first step in helping clients make buying decisions is to learn as much as possible about their businesses, their goals and their products and services. There's a lot of truth in the old saying, "knowledge is power."

The word "question" begins with "quest," which can be defined as "search." That's not a bad description of the questioning process. It's a search for information. To find the right information, we have to search in the right places — with the right kinds of questions. Here are a few points to keep in mind:

1 Mix closed and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions call for short answers, while open-ended questions require longer answers. For example, "When did you start your business?" is a closed question. "What is your marketing approach?" is open, and invites a more detailed answer.

The most common closed questions are those that can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no." It is easy to see that short answers don't provide much information. As a result, you may want to use a closed question to introduce a topic ("Is your business open on weekends?"),

then follow it with an open question that asks for elaboration ("How has that affected your traffic?")

2 Rephrase the other person's statement as a question. Let's say your client declares, "My last ad didn't work." Instead of arguing (which is always a bad tactic), simply probe for more information by rephrasing his or her statement as a question. Ask, "It didn't work?" and wait for a response.

3 Use non-verbal questions. By raising your eyebrows and tilting your head, you can show that you are particularly interested in something the other person is saying. This may encourage your client to provide more detail, without being asked.

4 Ask for help. As a conversation progresses, it is inevitable that there will be certain points you would like clarified. To add a little variety to the interview, you may want to say, "That sounds interesting. Help me understand what that means in terms of your marketing strategy." When they explain it to your satisfaction, smile and say, "That makes a lot of sense. Thank you for taking a couple of extra minutes to help me get in step."

5 Show sincere interest. Don't be a fake. Your questions should spring from a genuine interest in your clients. Listen carefully as they express their ideas, opinions and marketing goals. Show them that the more you know about their businesses, the better you will be able to serve them.

After all, service is what it's all about.

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Newspaper Academy 2008 May 9 - UNC School of Journalism & Mass Communication

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Watch for details and registration information.

Plan to attend these seminars at Winter Institute

“Golly Martha, Would You Look at That” Guide to Photojournalism

Kenneth Boone, Chairman, Tallapoosa Publishers, Alexander City, Ala.

When you open your newspaper in the morning do you keep yawning ... or do you see images that make you sit up and take notice?

How often do you turn to your spouse, hold up the paper and say something like, “Golly, Martha! Would you look at that?”

Kenneth Boone’s Golly Martha Photojournalism workshop is designed to help photojournalists – and reporters who carry cameras – capture a higher percentage of photos that will wake up newspaper readers.

This exciting, in-depth photo course covers a large number of topics that apply to any journalist with any camera, including:

Extensive work on photo composition that includes:

- The Rule of Thirds, Framing, Leading Lines

- Getting Close, Keeping It Simple, Dynamic Light, Color Theory

- Diagonals, Texture, Silhouettes & Reflections, Patterns & Abstraction

- Capturing Motion, Capturing Emotion, Depth of Field, Lens Length

- Specific tips on shooting news, sports and feature shots

- How to relax subjects for better portraits

- How to create a serviceable portrait studio for less than \$100

- How to handle a presidential visit or major sports event

- An overview of digital workflow and file management

- Shooting and designing photo pages

- Learning to work any scene to get the best possible photo

This course includes the presentation and lecture, time for questions, and the “Golly Martha! Would you look at that?” Guide to Photojournalism, a 16-page color mini-handbook designed to be carried in a camera bag. In addition, this full day pro-

gram adds hands-on photo work, giving photographers the opportunity to bring their cameras and to shoot photos.

This is an ideal way to learn – putting the classroom concepts to use in the field with their own cameras, with an instructor available for those questions that always come up.

This course does not cover the specifics of operating various cameras. Participants should be familiar with their cameras and are asked to read their owners manuals before the class.

This presentation is designed for photographers who use digital SLR cameras. While point-and-shoot photographers will benefit greatly from this presentation, it does cover some techniques – such as making 5-minute exposures – that are not possible with inexpensive point-and-shoot cameras.

Writing 101: The Craft of Writing

Jerry Bellune, Lexington, SC

The keys to writing powerful stories are unleashed in a class that students have consistently rated as among the best writing seminars. Based on the universal rules for powerful writing — clear, simple statements — and reading ease formulas, the Craft of Writing is the one writing class that makes you a better writer that day. Its practical advice encourages students to return to their terminals and put into practice a few simple rules.

The \$120 Million Question: How sharp is your content radar?

Thad Ogburn, Features Editor, Raleigh News and Observer

In this session, you’ll see real-life examples in stories that challenge you to think about big-picture editing problems, including: blind quotes, logic, overwriting, juxtaposition, taste, quotes and a host of other problems that could cost your newspaper money – or worse, credibility. We’ll also touch briefly on online editing of blogs and comments.

Thinking Visually: The Art of Being Brilliant

Charles Apple, Graphics Director, The Virginian Pilot, Norfolk, VA

Year after year, decade after decade, we put out the same old stories; the same old papers. No wonder readers are getting tired of us.

How can we give a new look to our product; provide a fresh angle for our stories and our pages? By opening up our minds to new ideas and by using the resources at our fingertips. You may find that the biggest barriers to reaching that next level are in your own head.

Charles Apple, graphics director of The Virginian-Pilot, will show us how to put a fresh spin — or a whole new approach — to not just visuals, but also stories, projects and management in general.

Doing Interactive

Presenter: TBA

This session will not only be about interactive media, but will be interactive (and a great chance to steal some ideas). Member papers will discuss how they are using online tools, such as blogs, to add to their reporting.

You’ll also get a chance to see some of the winning entries in the Web-related categories of this year’s NCPA contest and hear from the people responsible for those projects.

We’ll end up with a brainstorming session where all participants can share what they have done online and what they are thinking about.

Online Disaster Management

Tim O’Briant, News Director, Aiken Standard, Aiken, S.C.

When the big story hits, how do you keep your web site fresh – and your server up?

Managing with Few(er) Resources

Jerry Bellune, Lexington, S.C.

Your budget — and your hiring — are frozen. Revenue’s down. But the news keeps coming. Learn how to do a great job with less!

News of North Carolina newspaper people



Aydelette

Jeff Aydelette has been named editor of *The Pamlico News* of Oriental. Aydelette has been with *The News* since 2004.



Buckley

Steve Buckley, Burlington *Times-News* publisher and a Freedom Community Newspapers vice president since 1996, will retire on May 4. Buckley is a former NCPA director.



Dromm

Crossroads Chronicle at Cashiers hired **Lisa Dromm** as its new sales representative.



Flono

Fannie Flono has been named the Batten Professor of Public Policy at Davidson College for the spring 2008 semester. She is an associate editor at *The Charlotte Observer*.



Newsom

Halverson won in the category of creativity and innovation. **Debbie Mahaffey** won the award for customer service while **Roger Spratley** won for initiative.



McKinley

Steve Herring, editor of *Mount Olive Tribune*, received the 2007 Alumni Hall of Fame Award from Mount Olive College. He received an associate's degree from the school in 1972.



Purvis

Pete Lawson, editor of *Smoky Mountain Times* at Bryson City, has been named Friend of the Year for 2007 by the Swain County cooperative extension.



Williams

Mary Newsom, associate editor at *The Charlotte Observer*, was among 15 journalists from the U.S. awarded a Nieman Fellowship for a year of study at Harvard University.



Riley

Jessica Goodman has been named community news editor and general assignment reporter for the *Times-News* at Hendersonville.

Grant Halverson, director of photography and multimedia for *News & Observer* community papers based at Cary, received the N&O's Excellence and Outstanding Achievement Award.

Karen Pait joined the staff of *The Highlander* at Highlands as a graphic designer.

Saveur magazine named *The Charlotte Observer's* food editor, **Kathleen Purvis**, as one of the "unsung saviors of America's local food scenes." She was among five newspaper food editors honored by the magazine in its February issue.

The News & Observer of Raleigh named three senior editors who will run the paper's daily operations, reporting directly to the executive editor. **Linda Williams** will oversee the daily news report. **Steve Riley** will be in charge of enterprise reporting, including the Sunday paper, and the visual journalists. **Dan Barkin** will oversee the online report. Editor **John Drescher** said the changes will make the newsroom "quicker and more responsive" by cutting a level of management.

Associate Editor **Mary Schulken** of *The Charlotte Observer* was honored by her alma mater, East Carolina University, as one of the school's 100 Incredible Women.

Kit McKinley was promoted to general manager of *The Pilot's* telephone directories. She has been with the Southern Pines newspaper since 2005 in the advertising department. **Patty Rea** replaced McKinley in that department.

Kevin Siers, cartoonist for *The Charlotte Observer*, was recently honored by Crisis Assistance Ministry with the Shirley Henry Award for volunteers.

The Star at Shelby announced new roles for three staff members. Interactive Editor **Joy Scott** will add the title of managing editor. Crime Reporter **Graham Cawthon** has been promoted to city editor. Lifestyles Editor **Emily Killian** will also take on the role of design editor.

Triad Business Journal at Greensboro has named **Mark Sutter** as its new editor. He worked for the *News & Record* at Greensboro for almost 18 years in various roles such as business editor and city editor.

David Woronoff, publisher of *The Pilot* at Southern Pines, received the 2007 Cornerstone Award from the United Way of Moore County. The award is given at a banquet that doubles as a roast and a fundraiser for United Way.

Jennifer Pearce has been named advertising manager at the *Tideland News* in Swansboro, replacing **Kim Wins**, who now works for the *Topsail Voice*. Pearce has been with *Tideland* for two years. **Gary Price** has been hired as a sales representative with the *Tideland News*.



Barkin



Schulken



Siers



Scott



Cawthon



Killian



Woronoff

Deaths

Pat Carter, 71, former executive news editor of *The Charlotte Observer*. Died Dec. 21.



Lewis Winston Gregory, 84, former managing editor of *The Scotland Neck Commonwealth*.

Died Dec. 14.

William Palmer Fulton, 78, former office manager for *The Cherryville Eagle* and advertising representative for **Kings Mountain Herald** and **Belmont Banner**. Died Nov. 20.



Mary Elizabeth Hilley High, 87, former columnist for *The Nashville Graphic*. Died Nov. 29.

Roy Thompson, 84, former local columnist for *Winston-Salem Journal*. Died Dec. 8.



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Truman 