



This man's turning 200, so why's he smiling?

See below



Even Cupid is in love with the new Winter Institute

See below

The NORTH CAROLINA

PRESS

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January 2009

Honest, it's going to be big!

Celebrate Lincoln's birthday and get ready for Valentine's Day at the all-new, biggest Winter Institute ever held!

With the suspension of the 2009 Summer Convention, many of the activities associated with that meeting have been combined with the Winter Institute. That means your attendance is more important this year than ever. And it's a program even Honest Abe would smile about.

Check out the details:



NORTH CAROLINIAN OF THE YEAR PRESENTATION. This annual award goes to someone who has had a profound impact on our state. Usually presented at Summer Convention, this year it will become part of the Thursday night awards banquet.



WEDNESDAY NIGHT SPECIAL AWARDS RECEPTION. With the addition of the North Carolinian of the Year to the Thursday banquet, we wanted to make sure other special awards got their due without making the banquet too long. At a special reception Wednesday we'll give out the Bar Association Awards, the Henry Lee Weathers Awards, Duke Divinity Awards and the Duke Higher Education Awards



ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING AND LUNCH. Normally this meeting would be at the Summer Convention. This is the meeting when we'll elect the new president and vice president of the NCPA/NCPS board of directors as well as new members of the board. The terms of those elected at this meeting begin in August. Also up for consideration at this meeting will be a vote on whether to formally suspend the 2010 Summer Convention. The meeting is scheduled for noon on Thursday (Feb. 12).



ANNUAL MEETINGS OF THE ASSOCIATED DAILIES AND THE ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS. These groups will also meet to elect their new presidents. In addition, as a part of the Dailies meeting, Associated Press will present its annual member awards. These meetings are scheduled for 2 p.m. on Thursday.



LEGISLATIVE REVIEW. So this year you don't have to wake up early and go to a breakfast to hear this news. This session with our Legislative Counsel and members of the Legislative Committee is scheduled for 3:30 p.m. Thursday. Don't worry, we'll be done in plenty of time for the reception. The review is free for all members to attend.

FREE training opportunity for attendees

The SNPA Foundation Traveling Campus will be a part of Winter Institute again this year.

Below are the courses tentatively scheduled for Feb. 12-13 in Cary.

Check registration materials when you receive them in the mail or watch for updates on www.ncpress.com.

- The Art of Leadership (two parts)
- Thinking Visually
- Photography for Reporters
- The Art of the Interview
- The Road to Better Writing
- Interactive Journalism

And don't forget, it's **FREE!**

2009 WINTER INSTITUTE ★ FEB. 11-13 ★ EMBASSY SUITES, CARY

Two of the 'under 40' Presstime magazine's annual list includes a couple of N.C. people
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ALSO INSIDE

President Rick Thames provides a story of a town that wouldn't let its newspaper die / Page 2

John Bussian expects some rough seas ahead during this year's General Assembly session / Page 4



From the president

RThames@charlotteobserver.com

Readers know the value of their own newspapers

Rick Thames

Inside our industry, it's almost cliché to call a newspaper a community asset.

Yet, how many communities would tout their newspaper in a brochure, alongside good schools, plentiful jobs and clean water?

I know at least one that would. And its circumstances seem especially timely now, as pundits speculate that newspapers are in danger of disappearing from some major American cities.

I was editor of the *Wichita Eagle* when one of our reporters came across the story in a southwestern Kansas town called Protection.

Protection has 527 residents. It's a farming community. The town's Web site has been known to describe itself this way:

"It's a clean and attractive town with lots of peace and quiet. People here are proud of their schools and churches. There's an excellent city library, a golf course and a beautiful park."

And a newspaper? Yes. But in the fall of 2000, *The Protection Press* published an obituary.

It was the newspaper's obituary.

Bob Greer, editor and owner, wrote it. At age 74, Greer told readers he was simply worn out from the grind of publishing the weekly for almost 15 years. That day's edition, Greer declared, would be its last.

People perked up all over town. No paper? How could that be?

Dave Webb is the local historian in Protection. He explained to our reporter that there were at least three reasons why the demise of the Protection Press would spell disaster for his town.

First, somebody had to sort out the truth from the rumor. Gossip's one thing, it seems, but at some point somebody needed to confirm something.

Second, people depended on the paper to provide it a sense of community. "It ties us all together," Webb said. "Every week, the Press is the one thing we all do in common. We sit down, and we read it."

And third, Webb said, the paper, is, "literally a town's living history, and if this paper ends in the fall of 2000, this town's living history ends in the fall of 2000."

So Webb and other residents crowded into Greer's office, desperate to change the course of their town's history. They promised they would pitch in and help him produce the newspaper.

In return, Greer had to keep reporting the news.

And so he did. As a postscript to his newspaper's obituary, he also wrote this:

"Death doesn't come easy, even for a newspaper, I have learned."

Kansas is a long way from the likes of Detroit or San Diego. But don't think for a minute that death would come easy for big city newspapers, either. If some go out of business, a crowd will gather and insist that something take their place.

Same as they would if they were losing their last hospital, library or source of clean drinking water.

To hear our critics tell it, our communities would start from scratch and design a whole new model. I'll concede that we have work to do on the old one.

But if someone wants to carry on the work of newspapers, they'd be smart to keep the foundation that's already there, just like Protection did.

Protection's historian noted three ways newspapers are a community asset: we find and report the truth, we nurture a sense of community and we authenticate our people's place in history.

There are other ways papers are assets. We've launched a discussion in *The Charlotte Observer's* newsroom to identify them and assess how well we are delivering.

We think now is an especially good time to talk about this. As the recession deepens, it's important to do more than just preserve those assets. We need to prioritize them, even elevate them. Strip away everything else, and this will be why our communities yet support us.

Bob Greer's community is still behind him. Bob is now nearly 83. When I reached him for this column, he had just finished writing three stories.

He's thinking again of retiring. Only this time, he hopes to sell the paper to someone who will keep his cherished community asset intact.

He has a good story to tell. Circulation continues to rise. Centered in a town of just over 500, *The Press* is selling 780 papers a week.

"I think that's pretty good, considering that some of this population is babies who can't read," Bob said. "We also have people who die. But we gain a little more every year."

Here's to Bob, and to growing more readers.



Wanted: Your Ideas

<http://ncpaideabank/blogspot.com>

Be a part of the discussion. This is your place to find out what others are doing and share what great work you are doing. No registration required.

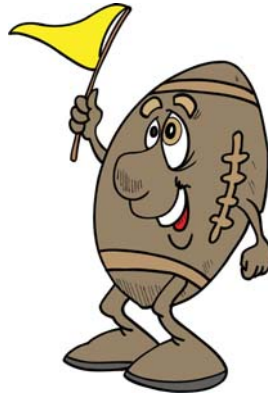
You still have time to earn extra cash in NCPS contest

The N.C. Statewide Classified Network is in its second month of a Super Bowl Sales Contest for member newspapers.

During December and January, newspaper advertising representatives receive points for each ad placed during those months.

At the end of the contest, the rep with the most points wins \$100, and all other reps who participated will be entered into a drawing for \$50.

For more information and to see which reps have earned points, visit: www.ncpress.com/ncps/ClassContest.html.



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We need more participation

We have a few more newspapers to add to our list of participants in www.ncnotices.com this month.

Our thanks go to the following newspapers for signing up during December: *News & Record*, *The Mebane Enterprise* and *The News of Orange County*.

The total number of N.C. papers signed up now stands at 30. In order to be an effective defense in the legislature against removing public notices from newspapers, we need more participation.

Find out how to sign up by going to www.ncpress.com.

CALENDAR

Jan. 28, 2009
First day of N.C. General Assembly long session

Feb. 4-6, 2009
SNPA Key Executives Conference, New Orleans

Feb. 6-7, 2009
SND Multimedia Training sessions at UNC-CH

Feb. 12-13, 2009
Winter Institute at Embassy Suites, Cary

March 15-21, 2009
Sunshine Week

April 5-7, 2009
Newspaper Association of America annual convention, San Diego, Calif.

THE NORTH CAROLINA PRESS

Beth GracePublisher
Holly JohnsonEditor
John PeaManaging Editor

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

Want to contribute? NCPA encourages members to submit items or stories of interest for publication. The easiest way is to e-mail to john@ncpress.com. Deadline for contributions is the 15th day of the month preceding the publication month.

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 PopeNCPS Network Advertising Director



John Bussian

Warning: Rough times ahead in the legislature

Ominous signs and a few rays of light mark the horizon as the General Assembly prepares to open for business Jan. 28.

A \$3 billion state government revenue shortfall and continued House leadership opposition to automatic recovery of legal fees by a public records lawsuit winner paint a bleak picture for the press. The ray of light is the potential for improving access to records of government employee misconduct.

Against this backdrop of issues are a House and Senate controlled by Democrats with roughly the same margins as the 2007 session (62-58 in the House; 30-20 Senate). Yet, even with new Gov. Bev Perdue and Lt. Gov. Walter Dalton in place, the press faces tough sledding on virtually every potential legislative issue from open government to taxes.

The biggest problem facing this and every other state is the revenue shortfall, and how the projected \$3 billion budget gap will be closed is anyone's guess at this point. Some have weighed in favoring a combination of tax and budget cuts. Others feel the state's per capita government spending has not kept pace with inflation, and they advocate a tax increase. In the latter camp are those who want to restructure the tax base, moving it from the current sales tax-driven system to one centered on a services tax. One thing for sure, it will be the subject of fierce debate.

So lawmakers will be focused on the budget, and it will be a while before any serious attention will be turned to improving the public's right to know.

When the General Assembly finally can focus on improving open government, there will be as many opponents to progress as there as sup-

porters — at least when it comes to improving open government the way the NCPA has advocated improving our Public Records and Open Meetings laws.

The 2008 short session ended with the House Speaker declining to have the House hear the NCPA-backed "automatic recovery" bill, which

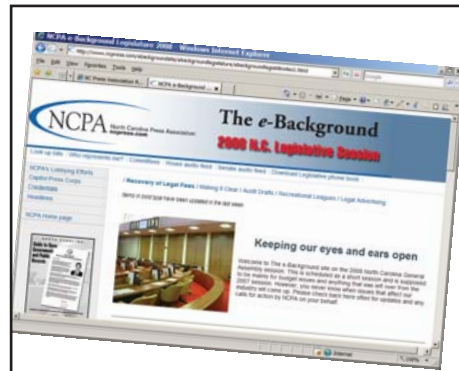
Carolina with histories of serious misconduct. In the last year alone, police officers in Durham and Greensboro were suspended, yet the public was kept in the dark. Only when the press threatened litigation was the public given any information about the accused public servants.

The state Ethics Commission records are similarly shrouded in secrecy. Commission investigations into complaints of misconduct against House members Thomas Wright and Michael Decker were closed to the public. (Evidence was only later disclosed in the course of criminal proceedings.)

The first-ever head of the NC Lottery Commission, Ken Geddings, was hired without the public or press having been given access to information about his background. He now is serving time in prison. Had the public been given access, Mr. Geddings might now have been appointed.

So the General Assembly has its hands full trying to balance the state budget and to improve the public's right to know. We'd say the press already carries a heavy tax burden. Instead of entertaining new legislation that would restrict the public right to know, the General Assembly would do well to boost the public's confidence in government by opening personnel records reflecting serious misconduct.

For the press today, surviving a session of a state legislature is a bit like Vikings crossing the north Atlantic: Fraught with peril, but buoyed by the hope of discovering new lands. The 2009 session of the General Assembly looks ominous. Whatever the decisions, government should be more transparent, not less.



Returning soon

With the General Assembly getting ready to head back to Raleigh, our e-Background site will also make its return on the NCPA Web site.

Be sure to check it often to follow issues of importance to our industry.

passed the Senate by an overwhelming margin. Despite the experience of more than 20 states showing that automatic recovery of legal fees by the winning plaintiff reduces litigation, House of Representatives leadership remains dug in against any meaningful change in the existing law.

At the same time, the number of prosecutions of high-ranking government officials is giving traction to the idea that government should be more transparent. Examples abound of police officers and public school teachers employed in North

100 years of journalism

In 2009-2010, the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at UNC-Chapel Hill will commemorate the 100th anniversary of UNC's first journalism course.

Tom Bowers, who was on the school's faculty for 35 years before he retired in 2006, has written a history of the school. It will be published this year and distributed by the University of North Carolina Press.

The North Carolina Press will print a series of articles this year based on his book, examining the connections between NCPA and journalism at Carolina.

By Tom Bowers

The history of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication chronicles a symbiotic relationship between the school and the North Carolina Press Association.

The story, which began before the Department of Journalism was formed in 1924, includes the first Press Institute in 1916, pressure from NCPA to seek accreditation for the department in 1946, creation of the School of Journalism Foundation in 1949, and efforts by NCPA members to influence the selection of a dean in 1953.

On two occasions, editors in NCPA threatened to ask Duke University to create a journalism program if UNC-Chapel Hill did not improve its program or choose the right dean.

Students were involved in journalistic activities at Chapel Hill before the first journalism course in 1909. The first issue of the student newspaper, the Tar Heel, appeared on Feb. 23, 1893. It was published by the University Athletic Association, a student group that used the newspaper to publicize the athletic activities it organized and ran on campus, including intercollegiate football.

The intertwining of journalism and athletics was evident in the fact that Charles Baskerville, the first Tar Heel editor, was also a star halfback and manager of the football team.

The student interest in journalism was serious and extended beyond the Tar Heel. Periodically, the newspaper reported the accomplishments of UNC alumni who worked for newspapers in North Carolina, New York City and Washington, D.C.

The first issue of the Tar Heel also indicated that students were engaged in another form of journalism. A directory of student organizations in that issue included the University Press Association, which included students who wrote articles about the university and sent them to their hometown newspapers.

The impetus for the first journalism course can be

traced to the University Press Association's annual banquet in 1907. The guest of honor was Edward Kidder Graham, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and a popular professor in the English department.

As a student, he had been president of the University Athletic Association and served briefly as Tar Heel editor. In a speech at the banquet, he praised college journalists and said, "The man who has the most power in the nation today is the newspaperman."

One can easily imagine students beseeching Graham to create a journalism course in the English department, which he did in 1909.

Graham taught the course once more before he became the university's president in 1913. As president, he quickly established the philosophy for which he became famous—the boundaries of the campus extended to the boundaries of the state, and the university had an obligation to serve the citizens of the state.

He put that mantra into practice in 1916, when he asked Richard Thornton, the journalism teacher at the time, to organize an institute in Chapel Hill for the state's newspapers. It marked the beginning of a long tradition of cooperation between NCPA and the university.

Coming in February: The first Winter Institute.

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Amanda Martin

From the NCPA/NCPS General Counsel

amartin@eghs.com

Government shouldn't limit the market of ideas

In my last column – written before the presidential election – I was optimistic. I was a glass-half-full girl with regard to the state of our First Amendment rights. With the election weeks in our past, I have to wonder if we have made as much progress as I had hoped.

The day following Barack Obama's election as president, hateful racist graffiti appeared on the so-called Free Expression Tunnel at NC State University. The Tunnel is a recognized forum for free expression, but by mid-morning the University had painted over the statements because they were "going over the edge of what was acceptable."

The U.S. Secret Service determined the statements were not actual threats, and Wake County D.A. Colon Willoughby reportedly agreed that no charges were appropriate, saying it was offensive but that it was a free speech issue.

In the following days, there was a 500-person rally by NCSU students opposed to the graffiti writers. The University wouldn't identify the students who spray painted the message (though they were "caught" on a surveillance videotape), but the painters could be left with little doubt as to the response of their fellow students.

North Carolina NAACP President the Rev. Barber wrote a letter to Chancellor Oblinger and demanded a "strong response and punishment."

Editorials in local newspapers have called for discipline of the students, and letters in response have called for recognition of the students' rights of free speech.

Prompted by the controversy, UNC President Erskine Bowles has created a study commission to consider student codes of conduct related to hate crimes.

I'm in the camp that believes NCSU should have done nothing.

Don't get me wrong. I think the message painted on the tunnel was despicable, and if it had been deemed to be an actual threat, I hope and trust that the law enforcement officials would have taken action.

But absent that, the community of NC State students should have been left to address the issue themselves.

As I write this, I have pulled down from my bookshelf *On Liberty*, by John Stuart Mill. I read *On Liberty* as a freshman at the University of Florida, and to say the book is yellowed with age would be an understatement. I don't read from it very frequently. I still love the book, though.

There were many things I didn't fully understand or appreciate when I first read Mill, but his notion of the marketplace of ideas has stuck with me to these 23 years. And here's why. It was John Stuart Mill who first taught me that there is benefit in the collision of any idea with its opposite. Strong and right ideas become stronger; weak, untenable ideas are revealed for what they are. Mill writes:

"If all mankind minus one were of one opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind. ... [S]ilencing the expression of an opinion is that it is robbing the human race, posterity as well as the existing generation – those who dissent from the opinion, still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth; if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth produced by its collision with error."

Mills' notion was sort of a survival of the fittest of ideas, and the campus of NC State on Nov. 5 was an ideal Petri dish to test Mills' theory.

If university officials had not intervened and painted over the racist speech on the Free Expression Tunnel, I have no doubt the tunnel would have been repainted by students outraged by the message.

And that would have been good. It would have given NC State students a first-hand experience in Mills' collision theory.

The rally that was held on the NC State campus speaks volumes about the progress we have made as a society. It highlights the student body's disgust at racism.

My law partner, Hugh Stevens, says his legal career was both prompted and shaped by his experience fighting North Carolina's "speaker ban" law in the 1960s. The targets of that campus speech code were members of the Communist Party or those who had invoked with Fifth Amendment when asked if they were by Congress.

They were not allowed to speak on Carolina's public college campuses. The bill was passed by the General Assembly in 1963.

Our university is again considering campus codes in response to disfavored speech on a college campus. In 1968, a panel of three federal judges ruled that North Carolina's speaker ban was unconstitutional.

In the intervening 40 years, our campuses have become more diverse. There are more voices clamoring to be heard. There are more perspectives on any given issue. Respect for those voices demands less regulation of speech, not more. We must not react to offensive speech by cutting it off.

As our country enters these remarkable, even revolutionary, times, the answer remains the same: The antidote for wrong ideas is more speech. Our founders knew this when they enacted the First Amendment, and nothing has changed in the intervening 217 years.

News of North Carolina newspaper people

Martin D. Fisher joined the staff of *The Courier-Times* at Roxboro as a staff writer.

James Robert Grady, the founder of the *Duplin Times*, was inducted into the Duplin County Hall of Fame in November. Grady died in 1958.

Wayne Hinshaw retired after more than 37 years as a photographer for the *Salisbury Post*.

John Huff, who has been editor of *Sun Journal* of New Bern, is the new editor of the *Anderson Independent-Mail* in South Carolina. Huff previously served as executive editor at *The Post and Courier* of Charleston.

The **Phillips family**, owner of the *Carteret County News-Times* at Morehead City,

was honored during the Core Sound Waterfall Weekend for its support of the Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center.

Kevin Pitts has been named publisher of the *Charlotte Business Journal*. He had been vice president for advertising and circulation at the *Philadelphia Business Journal*.

Brian Tolley, who has been executive editor of *The Fayetteville Observer* since April 2005, resigned to take care of an ailing parent.

Laura L. Woodring was named the editor of *The Andrews Journal*. She had



Huff



Pitts



Moore

been a staff writer for the *Cherokee Scout* of Murphy. Both papers are owned by Community Newspapers Inc.

Deaths

Lewis Wallace Green, 76, former staff reporter for the *Asheville Citizen-Times* and founder of the weekly paper *The Native Stone*. Died Oct. 24, 2008.

John Moore, 92, former editor and publisher of *The Laurinburg Exchange*. Died Nov. 29, 2008.

Two from North Carolina among the '20 under 40'

Mike Fuhrman, editor of the *Statesville Record & Landmark*, and Wendy Reeves, director of audience development for *The News & Observer* of Raleigh, were among the 20 newspaper people

under 40 years of age honored this year by Presstime magazine.

The list is an annual feature of the Newspaper Association of America's publication. "The goal is to assemble a group of people, under the age of 40, who represent the innovative work being done at today's newspapers." The magazine says.

Fuhrman is recognized for his efforts to transform his and other papers into multimedia operations.

Reeves is honored for growing audience for the Raleigh paper.

Profiles of each person and other information is available online at www.naa.org.

Wendy Reeves | Director of Audience Development | *The News & Observer* in Raleigh, N.C.

Mike Fuhrman | Editor, *Statesville (N.C.) Record & Landmark*

Retired editor releases book

"Folks Around Here" is the title of a newly published book written by retired *Goldsboro News-Argus* Editor Eugene Price and introduced by Pulitzer Prize winning author and journalist Gene Roberts.

The book, in large part, is a selection of humorous and serious columns, editorials and talks made by Price over more than 60 years as a writer.

Asheville to move printing

The Citizen-Times of Asheville will be printed in Greenville, S.C. beginning this month.

Both Asheville and *The Greenville News* are Gannett newspapers.

Positions are being eliminated at *The Citizen-Times*, but some of the employees will be relocated to Greenville.



<http://ncpaideabank.blogspot.com>

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Don't forget the mugshot!



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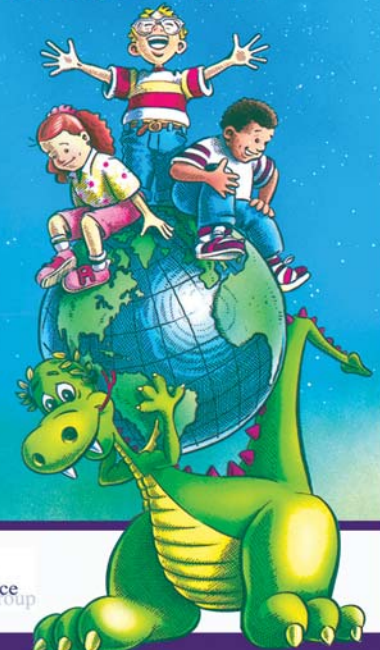


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