

Changes coming to Web site, newsletter

Want to know more about that new Wi-Fi project in Southern Pines?

Looking for information on that upcoming Law & Order workshop in Wilmington this month?

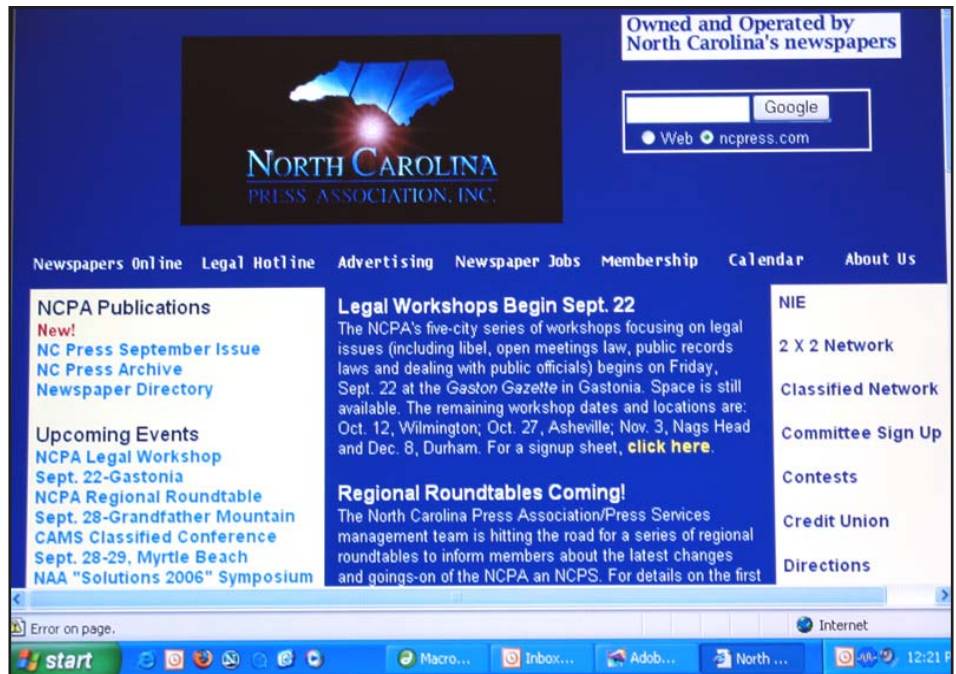
How do you find and download those tourism ads to help out NCPF and the Newspapers in Education program?

NCPA members will be able to do all that, and much more, with far more ease when a redesign of the ncpa.com web site is completed in the next few months.

The revisions, expected to begin late this year, will implement requests and suggestions NCPA members have offered as we work to improve access and use of the site and its content.

The redesign is part of an overall revamp of communications methods between NCPA/NCPS and member papers, which includes changes to the NC Press newsletter and the addition of a new staffer, Brian Rapp, as communications manager.

The changes will fuse the NCPA web site with the printed newsletter, driving readers to both platforms. The changes also pave the way for NCPS to begin offering online



The already-revised NCPress.com Web site will be undergoing even more sweeping changes in the next few months.

advertising options.

“These changes will make us a better partner for our members, making it easier for members to register for workshops, keep up on industry news and, of course, to enter the annual editorial contest!” said NCPA Executive Director Beth Grace.

Among the revisions planned for the Web site are:

- A new-look home page that’s more reader-friendly and more easily navigable.
- Quick links to information on a variety of subjects and events.
- Registration forms that can be filled out online and returned by e-mail.
- Easier access to ads through NCPS, ultimately including online ads.

Some early changes have been made to ncpres.com, with a switch to a dark blue background and white

text for most of the main pages, a new home page logo and online forms for the NCPA’s editorial contest.

The NC Press newsletter also is undergoing gradual revision, featuring some minor cosmetic changes in headline style, the elimination of the Job Bank listings (replaced by a

continued on page 6

Registration deadline nears for NCPA Circulation Conference

There’s still time to register for the NCPA Circulation Conference on Oct. 12 at NCPA Headquarters in Raleigh.

Deadline is Monday, Oct. 9, and space is limited to the first 65 who register. For more information and a registration form, go to www.ncpress.com and click on the conference link under “Upcoming Events” on the home page.

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"On the road again, getting to know all about you!"

If Willie Nelson and Oscar Hammerstein had met, they might have written the lyrics for NCPA's series of regional roundtables, coming soon to a community near you.



Our goal as I join NCPA management on our 2006-2007 *On The Road* tour is to get to know members

better, and to hear first-hand the issues of most concern to you. I'll be leading the discussion at four or five

couple of staff meetings and talking with those women and men who do yeoman's work for NCPA/NCPS every day.

Road tour sending staff to four corners of the state

By Deuce Niven
NCPA President and Editor, *Tabor-Loris Tribune*

different spots across the state between now and next July, but the focus will be on NCPA membership and how your association's management can best deliver the services you expect and deserve.

As I wrote this in late September, we were getting ready for our first meeting, scheduled for Sept. 28 at Grandfather Mountain. Our host for the meeting, Crae Morton, is following in his grandfather's footsteps as a great friend of newspapers and of NCPA, as host for this meeting of newspaper publishers and editors. Thanks, Crae!

In a future column, I'll let you know what we learned at that meeting.

While we're "On the Road," at least some of our discussion will focus on changes at NCPA and NCPS, and efforts we believe make the association an even stronger partner for your newspaper, your readers and your advertisers.

That's just a starting point for these meetings. Don't look for a tightly structured agenda – instead, plan on driving the discussion with your own ideas and issues.

Each of these meetings will be free of charge, and will generally include lunch. So keep an eye on your in-box and we'll let you know when our NCPA road show will be in your area.

Speaking of staff, I spent a day recently at NCPA headquarters and had a dandy time taking part in a

energetic, enthusiastic bunch pulling together to provide better member service in many ways.

Especially gratifying was the success they have had in reducing the lag time between NCPS ad placement and payment. That means we're all getting paid more quickly – something to smile about, especially in this tough economic climate.

Newspaper sales in a good many areas are feeling the economic pinch, which isn't exactly news. I've had several discussions on the issue lately with publishers of various size papers.

Carriers at a few community newspapers, small and mid-sized publications, tell me they've noticed a summer slump in single-copy sales. There's no shortage of theories as to why, but two interesting ideas include:

- Gas prices – Record fuel costs this summer may have left some customers without the spare change for a paper, or with no desire to read about their gas pump woes.
- Lottery competition – With a buck in your pocket and lottery tickets on sale at the register, does the newspaper lose to lady luck?

One daily newspaper publisher told me his single-copy sales have been strong this summer while subscription renewals have been sagging.

Can't say I've found anyone with any one-size-fits-all solution to circulation worries, but I've found plenty working hard on the issue.

Good luck to us all.

THE NORTH CAROLINA PRESS

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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

The North Carolina press made some legal history in September.

In a trial court battle that saw a couple of citizens take on a county elections board, the citizens and the public won.

The other win for the press – secured by Bill Moss of the

Smith, Anderson firm – came in the Court of Appeals' Sept. 19 decision in *Daniels v. Reeves*. In another opinion by Chief Judge John Martin that reflects keen understanding of free-press rights, the Court of Appeals added to the small body of North Carolina libel law by finding the challenged language to be safe harbor for the columnist.

To get there, Judges Martin, Wynn and Steelman expanded the First Amendment-based “opinion” defense, which had been watered down in a 1990 U. S. Supreme Court decision, and reaffirmed the rule that libel plaintiffs cannot end-run constitutional libel defenses by calling their libel claim by another name (in this case, intentional infliction of emotional distress and “unfair and deceptive trade practices”). The opinion defense was held to knock out the plaintiff's entire case.

Amanda Martin's citizen-clients' summary judgment win in an open-meetings case against the Chatham County Board of Elections on September 12 was welcome news. But as solid as the victory was for the citizens who sued to establish a violation of the Open Meetings Law, it was bittersweet – because the citizen-plaintiffs were left saddled with more than \$30,000 in legal expenses, thanks to a ruling that they were not entitled to recover what they spent to enforce the law.

The case shows once again why recovery of legal expenses should be

automatic for plaintiffs who win suits to enforce North Carolina's open government laws.

According to visiting Superior

Two steps forward – one step back

By John Bussian

NCPA Legislative and First Amendment Counsel

Court Judge John Smith's order, the Chatham Board of Elections violated the Open Meetings Law three times in the span of about two months in early 2006.

The Board held a special meeting without giving the statutorily-required notice, went into closed session without providing public notice of the open portion of the meeting and failed to keep minutes in another meeting.

Two citizens challenged the shell game with a lawsuit and asked for minutes of the rescheduled meeting. Before the plaintiffs sued the Board for violating the Open Meetings Law, the Board told the citizen-plaintiffs that the minutes of the meeting could not be disclosed until approved by the Board! Judge Smith quickly saw through the Board's argument and found that the Board violated the law on each occasion.

Despite the Board's clear violations of the Open Meetings Law, Judge Smith made the plaintiff's win a hollow one in at least one important respect. Of more than \$35,000 in expense that the citizen-plaintiffs incurred in enforcing the Open Meetings Law, the judge allowed the plaintiffs to recover only \$3,500.

As a practical matter, an attorney's fees award of ten cents on the dollar encourages the outlaws. Only through awarding the full cost of litigating to enforce the open government law creates the proper incentive among public officials to resolve all doubts in favor of openness, the way

the North Carolina Supreme Court has commanded.

Automatic recovery of legal costs for winning citizen-plaintiffs in open

government litigation is an article of faith in most states – for good reason. The automatic recovery feature, along with criminal penalties, have

proven to be the most effective deterrent to would-be violators.

Giving judges the “discretion” to let the violators off the hook – as is presently the law of North Carolina – simply doesn't work.

The real questions are: how many examples of public officials' getting off without paying for their open government transgressions and how much enforcement cost will citizens have to absorb before the General Assembly gets the policy message?

North Carolinians surely stand to gain from the Court of Appeals' strengthening protection for opinion-makers – but they deserve a better open government law enforcement mechanism than the one that left the Chatham County plaintiffs with the bill for winning their case. We can only hope the General Assembly is willing to restore some balance to the process.

National Newspaper Week promos available

The Kentucky Press Association is once again hosting promotional kits and material for this year's National Newspaper Week, Oct. 1-7. This year's theme is “NEWSPAPERS: We Cover Your Life.” Available materials include articles and ads in both SAU and PASS options. To access, go to www.ncpress.com and click on the home page link.



Winning an open government case shouldn't make you mad. But never before have I been so mad — having just won a case — as I was in early September.

It may sound crazy, but Judge Smith's ruling sent me over the edge despite our legal victory.

Some of you are familiar with the case of two citizens in Chatham County who filed suit against Chatham County elections officials, alleging violations of both the Open Meetings Law and Public Records Law. The court heard our motion for summary judgment on September 11 and ruled that we were right in all respects of our legal case.

The Board of Elections was wrong — dead wrong. Despite that ruling, Judge Smith ordered that the plaintiffs were entitled to recover only about 10 percent of their legal fees, which were substantial.

You won; now pay up? Here's the backstory:

The Chatham County Board of Elections made recommendations to the county commission about what voting equipment should be purchased as well as how precincts should be configured. The county commission was about to reject the BOE's recommendations, so the BOE met in an "emergency session" at a local restaurant to formulate and propose a compromise, which might avoid embarrassment.

In the coming weeks, the BOE met without notice, met out of county, failed to take minutes of their meetings and refused to turn over what minutes they had taken (because they "weren't final"). After repeatedly calling on BOE officials to follow the law and account for their behavior, a group of citizens decided

enough was enough.

When one of those citizens called us to ask about the strength of the case against the BOE, our assessment was that it was a no-brainer. The

Chatham County ruling a win – and loss – for public

By C. Amanda Martin
NCPA General Counsel

violations were clear and should be easy to prove. In fact, they were so clear that lawyers talking with lawyers should get it resolved short of full-blown litigation. We were stumped as to how the public officials even *thought* they had a right to do what they had done.

So, while making repeated attempts to meet and reason with their lawyers, we filed suit to preserve the citizens' claims against the 45-day statute of limitations that applied to some of their claims.

In private, and then in a preliminary hearing in the case, elections officials and their lawyers refused to admit that anything they had done violated the law.

Mind you, they weren't confident enough in that to let matters rest. The BOE took a "do-over" and orchestrated a new, properly noticed meeting to pass the same purchasing recommendations originally passed.

Nevertheless, the BOE *still* refused any form of reasonable discussion and filed utterly baseless motions to dismiss the case, making such ridiculous claims as saying the Board of Elections isn't subject to suit under the Open Meetings and Public Records Laws.

Judge Orlando Hudson denied the motions to dismiss, but the elections officials pressed on in their unreasonable positions. They forced the case through mediation and then refused to mediate in good faith.

Finally, on the day that the case

was called for pre-trial conference and our summary judgment motion, the lawyer for the Board of Elections stood up in court, changed his tune entirely and said, in essence, "Gosh, judge, we realize that we've made mistakes, and we realize you are going to enter summary judgment against our clients. But those mistakes were

innocent, and you shouldn't penalize the people of Chatham County by requiring the county to pay the plaintiffs' attorneys fees."

And the judge bought it.

He said that – despite the language in the law related to awards of attorney fees — it would be "unjust" to order the citizens of Chatham County to pay for the lawsuit. This, despite the recent change in the Public Records Law making an award of attorneys' fees to the prevailing plaintiff presumptive.

Make no mistake about it; citizens of Chatham County will pay for the lawsuit in more ways than one. The question to ask is this: Should citizens who feel strongly that they actually want to exercise their rights of access guaranteed to them by law be forced to pay lawyers to secure those rights? Or should that expense be borne by the electorate at large – who put into office the public officials who then violated the laws?

The answer to that question seems clear to me; it probably seems clear to you. But some judges across this state don't seem to get it. We may need legislative reform to force them to get it.



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Visit the NCPA Web site.



Rebates reward papers for Display Network participation

Newspapers participating on the North Carolina Press Services' 2x2 Display Ad Network will earn a share of the total network ad revenue from February through July 2006.

The network rebate is based on a 60/40 split that allows NCPS to retain 60 percent of the ad revenue, while 40 percent is put into a fund for rebate distribution among the participating papers.

Rebates are issued biannually and are based on profitability of the network and by each paper's circulation percentage.

NCPS requested confirmation from all participating papers to verify publication of the network ads during the six-month period from February through July 2006. The completed verification forms have been received and rebate checks were scheduled to be issued at the end of September.

The NC 2x2 Display Ad Network is a cost-effective advertising option to offer to your advertisers needing additional exposure, and a great way to add revenue to your bottom line. When your paper sells a network ad, you retain one-half of the \$1,350 fee.

Eastern (\$850) and Western (\$650) regional buys are also available, with papers retaining half of those amounts paid by the advertiser.

The 2-column-by-2-inch ads are placed ROP and published one time by each paper on a day (determined by each paper) during the week selected by the advertiser. There is a maximum of 10 ads available weekly from NCPS.

Revenue retained by NCPS helps



fund programs for all North Carolina newspapers, such as lobbying efforts, the legal hotline, workshops, ad conferences, etc. The participating network papers are compensated for their space and support by receiving

a rebate check. Currently, there are 61 member papers on the NC 2x2 Display Ad Network, with a combined circulation of 1,159,737.

To join the network and receive an agreement form and \$150 Sign-On Bonus, or to learn more about the NC 2x2 Display Ad Network, please contact NCPS Network Member Services Director Christa Townley or Network Advertising Director Leta Pope at (919) 787-7443; or visit the NCPA web site at www.ncpress.com. A list of current papers on the network is also available on the web site.

Support the NC Press Foundation, NIE by running state tourism ads

Your newspaper has a chance to keep the Newspapers in Education program strong and growing by running ads provided by the state's division of tourism! It's a win-win situation. The state provides ads designed to bring tourists to our state. Your newspaper runs those ads, gratis, in your print product and online as often as space permits. In return, the state provides a grant that funds Newspaper in Education and other programs offered through the NC Press Foundation, aimed at supporting your local efforts.

Without this annual grant, the special services you now get via the NCPF and the state NIE program no longer would be funded. The North Carolina Press Foundation and the NCPA administer the grant, gathering data on the ads you run and reporting it quarterly to our partners at the tourism division. Your partnership is crucial.

It's easier than ever to download these beautiful ads. Here's how:

Surf to <http://ftp.lkmdads.com/Login>.

Type in the username/password: `ncpress` and choose a newspaper download or an online option.

Please join us in our effort to keep NIE strong and to help communities like yours by attracting tourists to North Carolina! For questions about the program, contact NCPS Advertising & Marketing Director Lindsay Webster at Lindsay@ncpress.com or NCPA Executive Director Beth Grace at beth@ncpress.com.



Changes

continued from page 1

referral to the Web site's more updated list) and expanding the old Copyhook section, now called Clippings, to include more member news briefs.

Want to offer some suggestions?

Please e-mail thoughts and ideas to brian@ncpress.com and attend upcoming meet-the-NCPA-staff roundtable meetings to be held around the state. (Watch www.ncpress.com for details!) Your ideas on changes and improvements will make the partnership between NCPA and the papers even stronger!

UNC School of Journalism to host seminar on avian flu preparedness

Experts believe that avian influenza, in some form, is likely to reach the United States in the next year.

While the current virus has not yet shown the capability to create a human pandemic, onset of the disease among poultry flocks in North Carolina could have a major impact on industry and communities throughout the state.

Learn more about these issues at a one-day seminar, "How Will Avian Influenza Affect North Carolina? Communicating the Facts to the Public," hosted by the UNC School of Journalism and Mass Communication, on Thursday, Nov. 30. The program will provide journalists with background information about the current status of the disease and explore the difficult public policy issues that will arise should avian influenza come to North Carolina.

Panels will cover the basic science of avian influenza, how government and industry intend to respond to an event in the state, methods of communicating about this threat with the

public, and the economic and social impact of an outbreak on North Carolina. Experts also will discuss North Carolina's preparedness for pandemic influenza, focusing on issues such as public communication, quarantining policy and enforcement, vaccine distribution and rationing, impact on the health-care system, and business and government-services continuity.

The program, which is co-sponsored by the North Carolina Center for Public Health Preparedness and the Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security, will be held in Carroll Hall on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus. The registration fee is \$25, which includes lunch. Optional reserved parking is an additional \$12. To register or for more information, please call toll free 1.877.668.0674 or visit jomc.unc.edu.

Thanks to Ad Conference survey respondents

NCPA would like to thank the following people for filling out a survey that went out asking for input on topics they would like to see at the 2006 Advertising Conference.

We would also like to say **CONGRATULATIONS!** to Frances Dunn of the Lake Gaston Gazette. Her name was drawn as the winner of a free conference registration from the surveys that were sent back to us.

Thanks again to all of those who participated!!

1. Frances Dunn – Lake Gaston Gazette
2. Kelly Taylor – Bertie Ledger Advance
3. Brenda R. McCullen – The Sampson Independent
4. Rachel Hoskins – The Franklin Press
5. John Edmondson – The Home News
6. Sandra Hurley – Sampson Independent
7. Sarah Byrd – The Tribune
8. Dawn Wynkoop – Mitchell News-Journal
9. Karen Anthony – The Transylvania Times
10. Ginger Roberson – The Sylva Herald Publishing Company
11. Dee Dee Brown – The Chatham News
12. Kathy Pope – The Daily Record
13. Jackie Brown – Mebane Enterprise
14. Kim Young-Taylor – The Herald (Smithfield)
15. Linda Foster – Daily Herald
16. Ken Harty – Daily Herald
17. Lynn Wagner – Independent Tribune
18. Kyle Stephens – The Times-Leader

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PitStop plug-in a must for Acrobat users

By Kevin Slimp



There are a few software applications that are essential for people who design and print pages for a living.

Adobe Acrobat and Photoshop would fit into this category. So would page layout programs such as QuarkXPress or InDesign.

With its latest upgrade, I've added another title to my list of essentials. Enfocus PitStop has been around for some time. I can't remember the first time I tested a version of this Acrobat plug-in, but I remember it was several years back. Now up to version 7.0, PitStop has come a long way since it was first introduced to layout and printing professionals.

If you've been reading my column very long, you might remember that plug-ins are applications that work within other applications. For example, last month I reviewed a Photoshop plug-in that makes it easier to enlarge photos while retaining some quality.

PitStop is a plug-in for Adobe Acrobat. Once installed, it allows the Acrobat user to do many things more quickly, such as change colors and fonts. Of greater benefit, however, is that PitStop adds functionality to Acrobat Professional that doesn't exist without it.

Take CID fonts, for example. Newspapers often send their problem PDF files to me. Approximately half the time, the source of the files' problems lies in fonts that have been converted to CID format after a

document has been exported to PDF. Some applications and printers have problems with files that contain CID fonts.

One way that many newspapers have fixed this problem is by opening the PDF document in Photoshop, at a very high resolution, then saving it as an EPS file. Yes, this usually works. But it's time consuming and, unless the user knows what they're doing, problems could result from converting the file from a vector format (PDF) to a pixel-based format.

Upon finding CID fonts in a PDF file, PitStop users can use the Enfocus Inspector to convert the fonts to outlines, eliminating any problems related to having CID fonts in the document.

Newspaper professionals will also appreciate the ability to convert colors using PitStop Professional. In our business, we're all too familiar with colors that are saved in the wrong mode. RGB and Lab colors have been the cause of many late-night problem-solving sessions.

In addition, even more complicated issues can result from a well-meaning designer building color profiles into a PDF file. Profiles created for one work environment can be problematic for another environment, meaning a PDF file might not print correctly.

With the click of a button, however, PitStop users can apply changes to color profiles using the Enfocus Image Matching Panel.

As mentioned earlier, I've used PitStop many times in the past. What's impressed me most about PitStop Professional 7 is its im-

proved interface. By making the interface cleaner and more attractive, Enfocus has made PitStop much more intuitive. Users will be able to fix many problems without having to look through a manual first.

Additional features of PitStop Professional 7 include:

- Remove OPI information. This is possible without PitStop, but is much quicker with it.
- Add, modify, or remove spot colors.
- Renumber pages.
- Use the Place PDF feature to position and scale ads on an existing page.

Users will appreciate the View and File control panel which allows them to change color-management and other settings with the press of a button. And, as it always has, PitStop Professional does an admirable job of preflighting PDF files.

Available on both Mac and PC platforms, PitStop Professional 7.0's requirements include Adobe Acrobat 6 or 7, OS 10.3 or 10.4 (Mac), Windows 2000 or XP (PC) and 1024 x 768 screen resolution (1280 x 1024 recommended).

MSRP is \$599 (US) / \$699 (CA) / \$999 (AU). Upgrades are available from \$199 (US) / \$299 (CA) / \$275 (AU). For more information, visit www.enfocus.com.

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.



Why are there ads on Page One?

By Randy Hines



You've read about it and now it's here. The doom and gloom of front page advertising that will ruin the news industry is

upon us.

Much has been written about the large number of newspapers that are succumbing to the temptation to sell that precious real estate to the top bidder.

Who are we kidding? Do readers really care that much about an ad along the bottom of the page? There has been little outcry among the public, only from purists – where I hung my hat in prior decades.

I'm still not in favor of the trick pulled off by *The Daily News* of New York, which ran a full-page ad that appeared to be a wrap-around (or fake front page). With tiny type at the top that said "Sponsored Copy," readers read only about Mazda. Another similar surrender to the dollar was arranged for Toyota.

Undoubtedly, that ploy should irk readers. They want to see major news on the front page.

"To give the whole front page away seems to me a dangerous message to send to readers," said the Poynter Institute's Kelly McBride in *The Media Trainer* back in May 2006. "The front page is for the news you consider most important to the community."

USA Today popularized the section front ad years ago. Many other dailies have adopted the practice. But the latest rhetoric concerns the growing trend of small ads running across the bottom of front pages. Seeking additional revenue, newspapers realize that the additional funds from that bottom banner could help the bottom line.

Selling that sacrosanct spot to advertisers is not new. Look in newspaper archives and you'll probably see front pages with ads as late as the 1950s.

The trend started once more at the close of the 20th century. *USA Today*, again, started doing that in 1999. But its widespread adoption is causing a slight uproar in 2006.

Even *The Wall Street Journal* announced its intentions to sell ads on its opening page.

The underlying fear is that the Page One advertiser will get a break from the folks on the news side in covering stories. Nothing could (or should) be farther from the truth. All reporters would even scoff at the idea of preferential treatment for a particular advertiser, whether it is buying a front page ad or a Page 16D ad.

Most operations are created with news and editorial separated from advertising by floors or long corridors. A few I've visited even have separate exterior building entrances, as if employees from the two departments should not know each other.

I recall once – while serving as wire editor – when I calmly

mentioned needing more room for major stories when I had a three-quarter page ad assigned to my tiny section of only two pages.

When I said I would go ask the ad director for more space, the newsroom personnel around me gasped. No one had ever done that before, even though this was a Pulitzer Prize-winning daily. Mouths dropped ever farther when I announced she had changed it to only a one-third page ad.

European, Asian and South American newspapers have sold ads on front pages for decades. Many U.S. non-dailies are full of Page One ads. A local weekly has 50 percent advertising on its front page.

Are U.S. readers even bothered by ad placement? Or just those remaining purists?

Perhaps a soon-to-be-released American Press Institute study will approach the topic. "Newspaper Next: The Transformation Project" was prompted partially by the decline in newspaper circulation, both subscription and newsstand sales.

Results will be announced soon and implementation will be experimented in early 2007.

Copyright © 2006. Former North Carolina educator Dr. Randy Hines teaches in the Department of Communications at Susquehanna University. Contact him at 514 University Avenue, Selinsgrove, PA or e-mail him at randyhinesapr@yahoo.com.



Learn the trade, not the tricks

By John Foust



As I sorted through the day's mail, one envelope stood out among the others. Through a window on the

front were the words "Vehicle Recall Information" in bold letters. Wondering why there would be a manufacturer's recall of my car – which at the time had nearly 100,000 miles – I opened it immediately.

It was a trick. There was no recall. Inside the envelope was a mass-mailed message from a local car dealer, offering to buy my car "with incredible incentives." One of the incentives was something they called "dead cost pricing." The letter didn't explain what they meant by that term, but as far as I was concerned, the offer was dead as soon as I read it.

They used a cheap gimmick to get me to open their envelope. Why should I trust them to give me a fair deal on a car?

A couple of weeks later, I mentioned the direct mail piece to Clark, a regional sales manager at a large market paper.

"It sounds like their letter writer's baloney detector is broken," he said with a laugh. "We'd never let one of our advertisers get away with something like that. It's not a classic bait and switch, because it doesn't involve money. But it still looks manipulative and dishonest. That kind of tactic makes the advertiser – and the advertising medium – look bad."

Clark was right. The car dealer's trickery worked on one level, but failed miserably on a deeper, more important, level.

Although it succeeded in making me open the envelope, it failed by making me suspicious of everything they said in the letter. (Think of a good news/bad news joke: The good news is you've got their attention. The bad news is they think you're a liar.)

Sadly, some advertisers don't look beyond that first level. Their entire

focus is to get attention, even if they have to resort to word games and visual gimmickry.

The most blatant example that comes to mind is the clichéd industrial equipment ad featuring a bikini-clad model and the headline, "Now that we've got your attention." Thank goodness – or perhaps thanks to better baloney detectors – it's been a while since that one has appeared.

Harry Vardon, the legendary British golfer, advised young Bobby Jones to "learn the trade, not the tricks of the trade."

Jones took those words to heart, and before he retired from competitive golf at 28, he won 23 of the 52 tournaments he entered – an astonishing 44 percent. In 1930, he won the Grand Slam of the day: the U.S. Open, the British Open, the British Amateur and the U.S. Amateur.

That's good advice for the advertising business, too. Don't learn the tricks of the trade, learn the trade.

Sure, you can trick people into reading your clients' ads. But don't forget that you ultimately want readers to trust them.

Without trust, consumers won't buy what your clients are selling. And without sales, your clients will spend their advertising dollars somewhere else.

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Copy desk's worth is hard to measure

By Doug Fisher



What is your copy desk worth? Not what it costs you. That's in your operating statements. But do you know what

it's worth?

Managers and copy editors are guaranteed to struggle with that question during the next decade as cost and profit pressures increase.

Copy editors are passionate about the issue, raising the "last line of defense" flag. They point to very public cases, from the Janet Cooke fiasco to a small Tennessee newspaper, where that last line failed. And they take pride in the daily dozens of unheralded cases where an eagle-eyed editor prevented a correction or maybe a canceled subscription.

But managers can be understood if they see a cost center. How do you prove a negative? How do you value preventing another trip to the lawyer's office – or worse, to the bank?

The *New York Times*, reporting on the demise of Knight Ridder, noted that during the final scramble the company considered consolidating its copy desks. Murdoch MacLennan, chief executive of Britain's Telegraph Group, wrote that "integration of print and on-line inevitably provides considerable scope for reducing duplication of effort and for simplifying the editorial production process."

Guardian columnist Roy Greenslade concluded it meant

"waving farewell to sub-editors." Instead, all journalists will need the skills of untangling tortured prose, spelling and fact-checking, he wrote. After all, bloggers post lots of readable copy "without the need for anyone to write a snappy headline or insert a semi-colon." And it's cheap.

He who has himself as an editor has a fool for one, retort the copy editors. And in a day when information is a commodity and the need for distinguishing content is critical to success, why do you want your reporters editing when they should be reporting?

About three years ago, Gannett consolidated some of its Wisconsin desks. It's been done in a few other places, too, with the predictable complaints that local copy sometimes is mishandled. But expect to see more of it.

In 2002, three researchers said editing was undervalued in journalism schools. They, in turn, cited a 1983 report calling editing one of the toughest courses to teach because of the lack of respect.

In 1998, one of the three, John Russial, a former Philadelphia copy editor, had argued that copy editing is more than chasing type lice, and if no one has time for the larger issues such as fairness and structure, "then value will be lost."

But Russial, in looking at how editors were being dispersed from the desk to newsroom teams, didn't quantify that value.

With the Internet, those taking aim now have bigger guns and more ammunition. For one thing, the speed at which language changes is

raising good questions about the role of copy editing and about maintaining those shibboleths long held dear on the desk.

But lest copy editors cry "Woe is us," they need to check reality, too – reality that in a struggling industry, changes will happen.

Among those are likely to be a greater use of part-timers and contract editors to match staffing to workflow. Copy desks, much like utilities, need to be staffed for peak times, but the inevitable financial pressures will make managers look at ways to control costs otherwise (after all, those part-time hires often get reduced benefits).

Wringing their hands won't help. Copy editors, never an easy bunch to corral, will have to figure out how to quantify their value – and then how to work together to effectively tell their story. The American Copy Editors Society has helped, but there is more to be done.

One way might be to pull out a copy of that Tennessee paper I mentioned earlier. It paid \$978,721 to a high school soccer player and his coach for a "joke" quote left in a story – 50 words that appropriate copy editing could have caught.

What is copy editing worth? About \$19,574 per word.

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.

Clippings

Linda Baez was hired in July as human resources director for the Fayetteville Publishing Company. She replaces Tim Hinton, who assumed the role of business development director. He is also serving as general manager of *The Sandspur* weekly for southern Cumberland County as well as overseeing the business function of *The Carolina Trader* and *Acento Latino* publications.

Stephen Bailey has been hired as business manager for the *Salisbury Post*. The Greenwood, S.C. native previously worked as a credit assistant for the *Charlotte Observer* and a staff accountant for the *Charleston (S.C.) Post and Courier*.

Clara Cartrette was named news editor of *The News Reporter* in Whiteville in August. The former lifestyles editor and 45-year veteran of the paper succeeds Lee Hinnant, who accepted the news editor's position at *The State Port Pilot* in Southport after 14 years with *The News Reporter*. Fuller Royal, a 10-year staffer with *The News Reporter*, has been named the paper's layout editor.

Paul Collins was hired in August as news editor for *The Stokes News* in King. Collins, who has worked at *The Danbury Reporter*, *Winston-Salem Journal*, *Winston-Salem Chronicle* and *The Weekly Independent* in Rural Hall, replaces Ben McNeely, who accepted a position as the Kannapolis beat reporter for the *Independent Tribune* in Concord.

John Derrick, an outdoor columnist for *The Star* in Shelby, left the paper in June to attend law school at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Michael Gavin left *The Daily Courier* in Forest City in August to become public information officer for Isothermal Community College in Spindale. Gavin was with the

paper for six years as a reporter and managing editor.

Jeffrey P. Green was named president and publisher of the *Asheville Citizen-Times* in September. The former senior vice president of advertising and marketing for *The Honolulu Advertiser* succeeds Virgil L. Smith, who was promoted to chairman of the *Citizen-Times* and president of talent management for The Gannett Co, Inc., the paper's parent company.

Robb Grindstaff, former advertising/business manager for *The Courier-Tribune* in Asheboro, was promoted in August to executive editor for the U.S. military daily *Stars and Stripes*. He joined the publication in 1998 as assistant chief operating officer after stints in editorial, advertising, production and finance with papers in Arizona, Oklahoma and North Carolina.

Les Gruber retired at the end of July after 48 years as a reporter, editor and columnist with *The Star-News* in Wilmington. It's believed the South Dakota native, who most recently authored the "Back Then" column for the paper, may have the record for the longest employee tenure with the company.

Ritchie Hallman was hired in July as a sportswriter for *The Banner News* in Belmont. He previously covered ACC basketball and NASCAR for a publishing company in Charlotte and was a sports reporter for the *Lincoln Times-News* in Lincolnton.

Patty Harris returned in August to *The Randolph Guide* in Asheboro as a contributing columnist. Harris last worked for the *Guide* in October 1999.

Bill Kiser was hired in August as editor of the *Lake Norman Times*. Kiser, who has worked for papers in Charlotte, Concord, Hickory and

Statesville, replaces Luann Laubscher, who left to accept the position of associate editor of the *Huntersville Herald*.

Cara McDonough left *The Chatham News* in July after three years with the paper as a reporter and columnist.

Michael Moon, a reporter and sports editor with the *Kenly News* since January 2005, left the paper in August to accept a teaching position at Kinston High School in Lenoir County.

Timothy Rogers was hired in July as editor of the *Wilson Daily Times*. A native of Houston, Texas, Rogers has worked for papers in Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky and

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Calendar

Oct. 5, 2006

NAA Solutions 2006 Conf.
Hilton North, Raleigh

Oct. 12, 2006

NCPA Circulation Conf.
NCPA Headquarters, Raleigh

Oct. 12, 2006

NCPA Legal Workshop
Wilmington

Oct. 27, 2006

NCPA Legal Workshop
Asheville

Nov. 3, 2006

NCPA Legal Workshop
Nags Head

NCPA Job Bank

Visit the NCPA Job Bank at www.ncpress.com to view the full listings.

Clippings

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Pennsylvania.

David D. Singleton recently accepted the position of classified display advertising manager with *The Daily Reflector* in Greenville. Singleton, who has been with the organization since 1992, most recently served as publisher for *The Chowan Herald* in Edenton.

Virgil L. Smith, chairman and former president and publisher of the *Asheville Citizen-Times*, in August was named the 2006 recipient of the Ida B. Wells Award. The honor is presented annually by the National Conference of Editorial Writers and the National Association of Black Journalists to executives in the media who successfully strive to create diversity in their editorial staff.

Obituaries

Robert "Bob" Louis Collins, the last managing editor of the *Asheville Times*, died July 30 at age 78.

The Hendersonville native began his career at WHKP Radio before joining the *Hendersonville Times-News*. He came to Asheville in 1956 as a sports reporter for the *Citizen*.

Collins became sports editor of

the *Times* in 1960 before moving to the news desk in 1966. He remained with the paper until the *Times* merged with the *Asheville Citizen* in 1991.

Walter Burke Davis, author and former reporter, editor and columnist, died August 18 at age 93. A novelist and Civil War buff who authored dozens of books about American history, Davis, the only member of the North Carolina Hall of Fame in both literature and journalism, also worked as an editor and reporter covering sports and politics for the *Charlotte News*, *Greensboro Daily News* and *Baltimore Evening Sun*.

John Eslinger, a former reporter, editor and editorial writer, died August 10 at age 76. During his career, he worked for the *Charlotte Observer*, *Durham Morning Herald*,

Fayetteville Observer, *Baltimore Sun*, *Winston-Salem Journal* and *Twin City Sentinel*. He was also the first director of the North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research.

Jim Hardin, a 31-year employee of the *Charlotte Observer*, died July 22 at age 71. Hardin began as a reporter and copy editor for the *Observer* before retiring in 2000 as newsroom systems manager.

Linda Bradford Miller, a reporter and columnist for six years with the *Cherokee Scout* in Murphy, died July 12 at age 59.

Schuyler Wayne Pennington, a former reporter and editor with the *Mount Holly News*, *Gaston Gazette* and *Jacksonville News and Views*, died August 13 at age 82. He founded the Raleigh-based Pennington Associates agency in 1979 and ran it until retiring in 1992.

North Carolina Press Association

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