

SCPA Bulletin

South Carolina Press Association
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JANUARY 2008



More than 50 reporters from across the state previewed South Carolina's hot issues for 2008 at SCPA's annual Legislative Workshop for the Media Jan. 3. Legislators included Sens. Thomas Alexander, Harvey Peeler, Larry Martin, and Reps. Dan Cooper, Bob Walker, Gilda Cobb-Hunter and Harry Ott, Jr.

Internship program places quality students in S.C. newsrooms

If you haven't considered hosting an intern through the S.C. Press Association Foundation internship program, now is the time!

The internship program is a great way for students to gain meaningful experience that will make them better journalists. If you want to host an intern, contact Bill Rogers at (803)750-9561 or e-mail brogers@scpress.org.

Applications for the 2008 internship program are being accepted through Jan. 21, 2008. The internship program allows college students an opportunity to experience the excitement of working at a newspaper, and it provides member papers an extra person in the newsroom during these challenging budget times. The S.C. Press Association Foundation awards up to three 10-week paid summer internships to students who want to work at a S.C. news-

paper after graduation. Each intern is paid \$3,000 by the Foundation.

Much thought goes into making sure that both the newspaper and the intern make a good fit.

Last year, we were able to offer invaluable on-the-job training to University of South Carolina student Chelsea Hadaway, who interned at the Charleston *Post and Courier* and North Greenville University student Ryan Stone, who studied photojournalism at the Walterboro *Press & Standard*.

The Foundation's internship and scholarship programs are supported through donations by member newspapers and interested individuals in the industry.

To apply for an internship, you must be a full-time student at a S.C. university or college and you must have completed your sophomore year by June 2008. Download an application at www.scpres.org.

Winter Meeting set March 6-7

Community journalism is the talk of the day at the upcoming S.C. Press Association Winter Meeting and Awards Presentation to be held in Spartanburg March 6-7.

During the Friday morning session, Scott Hunter, publisher of the *Aiken Standard*, will lead a discussion on building circulation at community newspapers.

The afternoon session will feature Jock Lauterer of the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, who will address community journalism in the 21st century. Lauterer has written six books and is a columnist for the *Chapel Hill Herald* and *Carrboro Citizen*.

Other events include an opening reception sponsored by BMW, roundtable breakfasts, the Hall of Fame and weekly awards luncheon, the President's Reception and the daily awards dinner with dancing.

The meeting will be held at the Marriott Renaissance Park in Spartanburg. The room rate is only \$99 per night plus tax and includes breakfast for two. To receive this rate, you must make reservations by Feb. 20. Call the Marriott at 1-800-327-6465.

To register for the Winter Meeting, see pg. 6.



Hunter



Lauterer

News contest results will be posted Jan. 29 at 5 p.m. at www.scpres.org

Calendar

Jan. 21
Scholarship and
Internship
deadline

Jan. 24
Ad Sales Basics
Workshop,
Columbia

Feb. 29
Kelly McBride
newsroom ethics
workshop

March 6-7
Winter Meeting,
Spartanburg
Marriott

March 28
SCPA Collegiate
Meeting & Awards,
Columbia

Attorney general pushes openness to next level

Attorney General Henry McMaster struck a strong blow for open government in his opinion on how the state's environmental agency handled information about the Barnwell County nuclear waste landfill.

The state Department of Health and Environmental Control violated the state's Freedom of Information Act when it did not expeditiously review documents the company operating the dump sought to keep secret, the opinion states. And some information DHEC did release was not presented in a way that could be understood by an ordinary person, making it virtually useless.



McMaster

McMaster nails the problem with this assessment: "If the information ... had been more readily accessible to the public and in terms the public could understand, the integrity of the decision-making process

COMMENTARY

concerning this facility over the years would have been greatly enhanced."

The (Columbia) State newspaper had requested maps showing the location of monitoring wells at the site, but was told it was proprietary. That information had been labeled proprietary by the company and accepted as such by DHEC. Only when the newspaper appealed that decision did DHEC review the information, according to the attorney general. After the appeal, the agency determined the information was not proprietary and should be released.

To turn over such an important duty to a private company turns the process on its head.

The nuclear waste dump has long been controversial and for years has been slated for closing to all but two other states. Lawmakers considering whether to extend its use to all states looked to DHEC for in-

formation to help guide them. They didn't get it.

The House committee considering the bill eventually rejected it. But DHEC never told the committee about the levels of pollution and locations of monitoring wells on pollution maps. *The State* obtained the maps after the bill was defeated. The pollution data the agency did release in quarterly monitoring reports was in the form of complex equations that few could understand.

McMaster makes clear that to release information in a way that cannot be understood is tantamount to denying access.

State Sen. Phil Leventis also was clear in his assessment of DHEC's performance: "We've been told, 'No problem, everything is fine.' When DHEC withholds information or gives us information without the background to understand it, it puts the public at risk."

That's a serious charge, and if there's

Please See DHEC page 7

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FOI Briefs

Sheriff's office mishandling public money, FOI shows

Suspicious findings discovered by an auditor have driven Dorchester County Council to expand its audit of the Dorchester County Sheriff's Office. Auditors have found problems involving tens of thousands of dollars during a two-year period, signs of long-term embezzlement by a high-ranking deputy and money mishandled in accounts. The council wants to know how much money is being generated by fees collected at the county detention center, and where it's going.

The Post and Courier received documents containing preliminary findings made by the auditors after filing FOIA requests with county officials which included:

- Payments to S&R Promotions, which installed a computer system for the department, and is owned by Nash's brother-in-law.
- Someone apparently siphoning off jail money. Sheriff Ray Nash said his former jail chief diverted checks from a jail fund into a personal account.
- Nash making his former campaign manager jail chaplain, which might be a conflict of interest.
- Nearly \$50,000 of \$88,000 in checks written at the jail commissary which were not deposited to the detention center account.
- "Several thousand dollars" from a bank account that handles fees charged to inmates going to an employee Christmas party and more than \$9,000 to gift cards as Christmas bonuses.

"It is public money, there's no question about that," Nash said. But it's not tax revenue money. Collecting fees and maintaining separate accounts for them is common detention center practice across the country, he said.

An expanded audit is under way and the State Law Enforcement Division is investigating.

Berkeley seeks lawsuit dismissal

The Berkeley County School District wants a judge to dismiss a *Post and Courier* lawsuit seeking the release of Chester

Floyd's performance evaluations. The district says the information is not under the district's control and is not public record. A motion for the judgment says the records are protected by attorney-client privilege and their release would represent an invasion of privacy.

The newspaper has made numerous requests for Floyd's detailed evaluation since he received an overall favorable review and pay increase last September.

The Post and Courier maintains that the use of an attorney appears to be a way to circumvent the law, and the newspaper's only recourse is to ask a judge to force the district to turn over the records.

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For a brief time, *The Carolina Forest Chronicle* was blocked from attending a public meeting of the Grand Strand Humane Society. A shelter staff member told the paper the board of directors would send for the newspaper when the meeting started. This occurred with a quorum of board members present in the boardroom. *The Chronicle* was eventually allowed inside after the newspaper raised concerns with a member of the board. SCPA attorney Jay Bender said *The Chronicle* should've been allowed in without any delays. Bender said the state FOIA law considers all meetings of public bodies to be open when there's a quorum present.

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A nonprofit group with close ties to Gov. Mark Sanford has made public its financial records related to money – some of it state tax dollars – left over from hosting a national governor's conference in 2006. The group, Carolinians for Reform, voluntarily released the information at the request of *The State* and maintains it is not subject to state public information laws.

"They got public money," SCPA attorney Bender said. "I think very clearly under the law they are a public body."

•••

Although Mt. Pleasant Town Council has already approved spending \$6 million to buy land, it voted again in late Dec. after questions were raised about the timing of the first vote. SCPA attorney Jay Bender told *The (Charleston) Post and Courier* that the town acted illegally when it approved the purchase in early Dec. without 24-hour public notice.

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The Patriots Point Development Author-

ity Board has refused to release e-mails, photographs and other electronic materials found on its former executive director's state issued equipment to the *Moultrie News*. The Patriots Point legal counsel cited the reason as being the lack of the specific phrase "Patriots Point network computer server," in an FOI request sent by the paper.

•••

Summerville City Council approved a new city attorney by secret ballot because council members didn't want to hurt anybody's feelings with a public vote, they said to *The Post and Courier*. The Mayor Pro Tem asked for the secret ballot and none of the council members objected. SCPA Executive Director Bill Rogers said he doesn't like secret ballots, but the law seems to uphold them.

"It happens in small towns when they don't want to let their buddy know how they're voting," Rogers said. "I personally think it's not a good idea. It's public business, and it should be made public. I understand in a small community where nobody wants to hurt anybody's feelings. But there's no safeguard in a secret ballot. Who counts the votes?"

Secret ballots are legal if nobody on council objects, according to the state attorney general's office. If a council member asks that the vote be public, the individual votes must be recorded.

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The Georgetown Times has been denied the release of the names of the five applicants in the running for Georgetown county administrator. Of 29 applicants, the county's human resources director said five were invited for interviews. He also said that because the search committee did not identify the five candidates selected as "finalists" their names are not public. Bill Rogers, executive director of SCPA said, "I think those five candidates are under final consideration and they are releasable. Three is a minimum number, not a maximum number. I think they should release all five." The HR director told *The Times* that neither he nor the council have used the term "finalist" in regards to the pool of five applicants, so the council is not in violation of FOIA.

The state Supreme Court ruled in a Spartanburg case in School District No. 7 that the district violated FOIA when board members refused to release the names of five finalists from a pool of 30 applicants in a search for a school superintendent.

SCNN gives \$12,100 to Foundation

The sales arm of the S.C. Press Association has donated more than \$12,000 to the SCPA Foundation. The gift will be used to equip an educational training room when SCPA relocates in the near future.

The S.C. Newspaper Network has recently concluded another successful year representing S.C. newspapers in the advertising marketplace, recording more than \$9 million in display advertising sales.

"We are delighted to be able to make this contribution to support our members and to further journalism education in our state," said Randall Savely, Director of Operations for SCNN. "It is a direct result of the efforts of the entire SCNN staff."

SCPA is currently evaluating potential sites for relocation of its headquarters. Since 1994, SCPA has been leasing office space in a building owned by the S.C. Education Association.

If you would like to contribute to the SCPA Foundation, contact Jen Barclay at (803) 750-9561. As a 501(c)(3), all Foundation donations are tax-deductible.

Bush signs bill toughening FOIA

President Bush signed a bill aimed at giving the public and the media greater access to information about the government's operations.

The new law toughens the FOIA, the first such makeover to the signature public-access law in a decade. It amounts to a congressional pushback against the Bush administration's movement to greater secrecy since the terrorist attacks of 2001. Bush signed the bill without comment in one of his final decisions of 2007.

The legislation creates a system for the media and public to track the status of their FOIA requests. It establishes a hot line service for all federal agencies to deal with problems and an ombudsman to provide an alternative to litigation in disclosure disputes. The law also restores a presumption of a standard that orders government agencies to release information on request unless there is a finding that disclosure could do harm.

Agencies would be required to meet a 20-day deadline for responding to FOIA requests. Nonproprietary information held by government contractors also would be subject to the law.

The legislation is aimed at reversing an order by former Attorney General John Ashcroft after the 9/11 attacks in which he instructed agencies to lean against releasing informa-

tion when there was uncertainty about how doing so would affect national security.

Last year, the government received 21.4 million requests for information, according to statistics provided by the Justice Department. The government processed nearly the same number of requests, which was almost 1.5 million more than processed during the previous fiscal year, according to the department.

— *The Associated Press*

Numbers

Continued from page 9

tivated by Stale Stats," "Sales of Pirated Goods Lead to Fuzzy Figures" and "Weddings Cheaper Than Survey Suggests."

Someone from your newsroom should read Bialik and share his work every time.

And none of us should forget to ask: "How do we (or you) know that?" Over six years, its importance has just gotten stronger.

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

Ad Sales Basics Workshop

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People & Papers

Myrtle Beach appoints new publisher

Pamela "P.J." Browning has been named president and publisher of *The Sun News* in Myrtle Beach. She is the former publisher of *The Telegraph* in Macon, Ga. Browning, 43, started her new position Jan. 7.

Browning joined *The Telegraph* in 2005 and is credited with a number of improvements, including the launch of several successful niche publications and an increase in traffic for the newspaper's Web site.



Browning

Browning replaces Gary Wortel, who has been named publisher of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. All three papers are owned by The McClatchy Co.

Greer names new editor

Jim Fair has been named editor of the *Greer Citizen*.

Fair was sports editor of the Spartanburg *Herald-Journal* for 20 years. He began his journalism career as a sports writer with the *Anderson Independent Mail*, took a similar position in Spartanburg and was named sports news editor in 1980 and executive sports editor in 1985. He has been business editor of the *Herald-Journal* for the past three years.



Fair

He replaces Leland Burch, whose family has held the editor's position since 1942. Burch will continue to contribute weekly columns.

Ben Robinson has been named managing editor of *The Easley Progress*, *The Pickens Sentinel* and *Powersville Post*.

For more than 21 years, Robinson has worked at newspapers in Pickens County, starting in high school. He is an experienced reporter, photographer, editor and column writer.



Robinson

Robinson's passion is getting out and meeting the readers of these three publications.

"I feel like our readers are our extended family," Robinson said. "When I go out to an event and speak with the folks who read our papers, it's almost like a family reunion."

Jeff Holsinger has been promoted to news editor of the *Anderson Independent-Mail*. He has been with the paper since 2005 as a copy editor and page designer. Holsinger has also worked for the *Daily Journal* in Seneca as a sports reporter, sports editor and news editor. He is a graduate of Indiana University.

Tom Priddy has been named multimedia editor of the *Herald-Journal* in Spartanburg. Priddy helped Knight Ridder develop online services for newspapers in 1987. He was a part of the digital distribution of photos from the 1991 Super Bowl, which is recognized as first worldwide online electronic distribution of news images. He joined the *Herald-Journal* in 2006 as an online content producer. He's a graduate of Clemson University and has worked as a reporter or editor at newspapers in Anderson, Greenville and Columbia.

The *Great Falls Reporter* office has merged with The *Chester News & Reporter* office in downtown Chester.

"Like all Chester County businesses, *The News & Reporter* has felt the impact of plant closing and high unemployment and has found it necessary to merge the offices," said Buddy Aultman, publisher of *The News & Reporter*.

The look of the *Great Falls Reporter*, which is published as part of *The News & Reporter*, is also changing. It will now be printed on broadsheet, instead of tab-sized sheets.

Landmark Community Newspapers Inc. owns the two papers.

The Fort Mill Times was honored by the McClatchy Co. with a 2007 President's Award in the spot news category. The award recognized the paper for its coverage of a fire that destroyed a local eatery. **Mac Banks, Jenny Overman, Jonathan Allen** and Editor **Michael Harrison** were recognized for their coverage.

Rick Brundrett, who has covered courts and victims issues for *The State* for the past decade, was honored with the Excellence in Media Award by the S.C. Victim Assistance Network.

The Summerville Journal Scene has changed its method of delivery for their Wednesday edition, which now reaches more than 27,000 homes by news carrier. The paper said they discovered that mailing that many newspapers was more expensive than carrier delivery. The Friday edition of about 6,200 newspapers is still delivered in the mail. *The Journal Scene's* new wider Wednesday distribution has led to a larger subscriber base.

The Laurens County Advertiser has hired **Julie Lowe**. Her duties at the paper include news and feature writing, as well as photography.

The Gaffney Ledger has begun posting an electronic edition of the newspaper on its Web site, www.gaffneyledger.com. Subscribers can view full page PDF files of the paper each day.

The North Trade Journal just turned 50. The paper was started by Carl and Betty Kilgus and was later sold to Bob Tribble and Associates. There has never been a single week that *The Journal* wasn't published and distributed to North and surrounding communities.

Tim Gulla has joined *The Gaffney Ledger* as a police reporter. He comes to the paper from *The (Swoyersville, Pa.) Citizen's Voice* and its sister newspaper *The Times-Tribune* in Scranton, Pa., where he was a business and personal finance writer.

Mykal McEldowney, a recent graduate of Ohio University, has joined *The Daily Journal/Daily Messenger* newspapers as a photographer and reporter.



2008 WINTER MEETING
AND AWARDS PRESENTATION
MARCH 6 - 7 • SPARTANBURG, SC

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Print Name <i>(As it will appear on name badge)</i>	Check here if Spouse	Opening Reception \$15	Publishers' Breakfast*	Morning Session Included	Weekly Awards Luncheon \$50	Afternoon Session Included	AP Members Meeting	Daily Awards Dinner/Dance \$95	Total per person

Total Amount Due \$ _____

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Hotel Information



This year's event will be held at the Marriott Renaissance Park in Spartanburg. SCPA has secured a limited number of rooms at a group rate of \$99 per night plus tax for March 6 and 7. Room rates include breakfast for two. To ensure you receive this contracted room rate, **you must reserve your room by Thurs., Feb. 20, 2008. For reservations, call 1-800-327-6465 and tell them you would like the SCPA group rate.**

FAX THIS COMPLETED FORM BACK TO SCPA AT (803) 551-0903

TO BE INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAM, REGISTRATION INFORMATION MUST BE RETURNED BY FRIDAY, FEB, 29, 2008.

DHEC

Continued from page 2

anything in the law or DHEC's rules and regulations that allows the agency to perform as it did, the law should be changed.

One need only look to the stated purpose of the Freedom of Information Act to know that many government bodies too often fall short:

" ... Provisions of this chapter must be construed so as to make it possible for citizens, or their representatives, to learn and report fully the activities of their public officials at a minimum cost or delay to the persons seeking access to public documents or meetings."

Unfortunately, too many officials and their attorneys look to the list of exceptions in the law as an escape hatch from their responsibility to account for their actions to the people they serve.

The exceptions become the rule, and the public and open government suffer.

— from *The Island Packet*

Industry Briefs

Landmark considers sale of papers

The family that owns Landmark Communications is exploring a sale of the company's businesses, including nine daily newspapers and its community newspaper division, including papers in S.C.

Landmark owns *The Lancaster News*, *The News & Reporter* in Chester, *The Pageland Progressive Journal* and *Carolina Gateway* in Lancaster.

Frank Batten Jr., Landmark's chairman and CEO, said that the privately held company has retained JPMorgan and Lehman Brothers to help it look into possible sale scenarios.

"At this early stage, we cannot speculate on where this process will lead," said Batten, whose father helped build the company after taking over as publisher of the local newspaper in 1954.

Newspaper profits have been steadily dropping over the past several years, and

the industry is making a transition into unknown territory with Internet marketing. That will require money for ventures that may or may not pay off - not necessarily a buyer magnet.

Landmark also owns The Weather Channel.

•••

The Federal Communications Commission, overturning a 32-year-old ban, voted to allow broadcasters in the nation's 20 largest media markets to own a newspaper.

FCC Chairman Kevin Martin was joined by his two Republican colleagues in favor of the proposal, while the commission's two Democrats voted against it. Martin pushed the vote through despite intense pressure from House and Senate members to delay it.

•••

Newspaper publishers, entering 2008 with some of the worst economic conditions in many years, said at a conference last month they hope to bring even more readers – and ad spending – to their Web sites with expanded offerings of news, advertising and videos.

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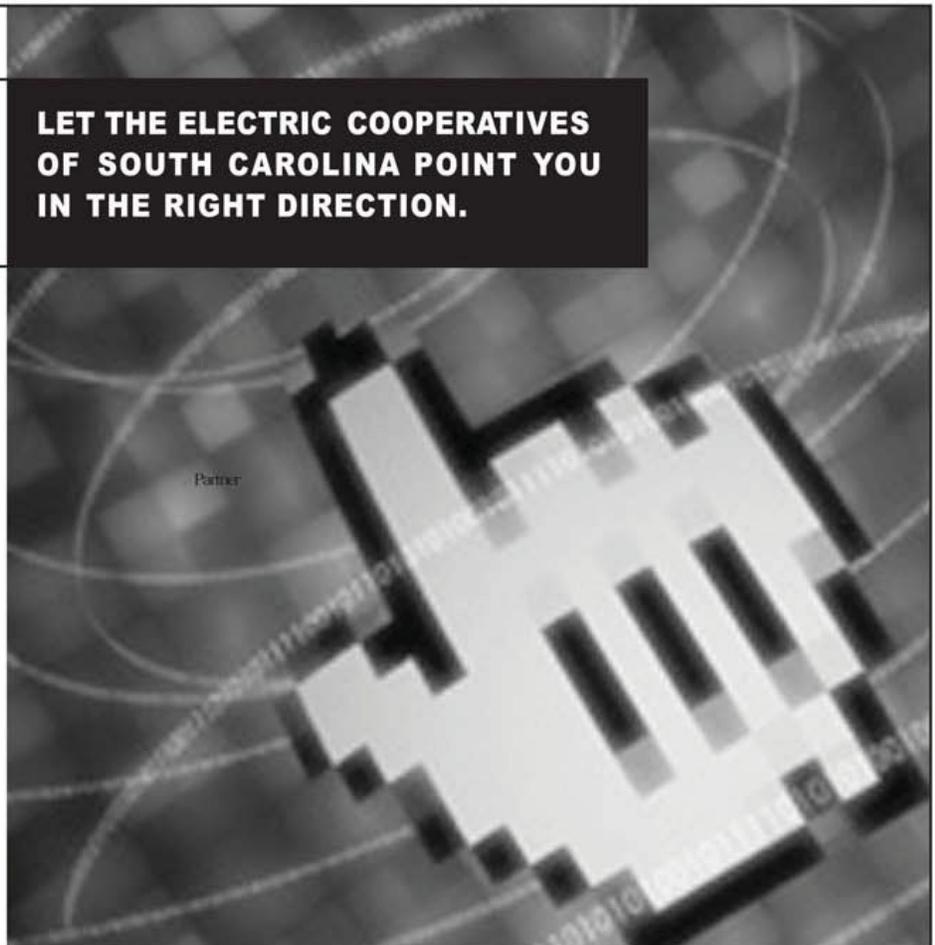
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SCPA STAFF PROFILE

SHARON BAILEY

PROFESSION:

Director of Finance. Sharon handles accounts receivables, collections, accounts payable, payroll and financial statements for SCPA, SCPS and the Foundation.

AGE: 58

HOBBIES: Making ceramic jewelry and shadow box miniatures to display at craft shows, spending time with my four grandchildren, riding motorcycles and playing with my dog Muffy.

LAST BOOK I READ: *Beach Road* by James Patterson and Peter De Jonge

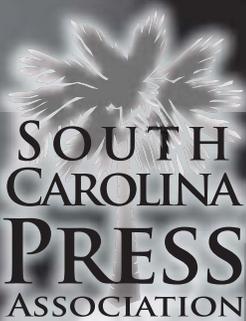
LATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT: Preparing for the annual audit of the financial records.

EDUCATION: Degree in Business Management

WORK EXPERIENCE: Joined in 2001 as bookkeeper. Promoted to Director of Finance in 2003. Previous positions held: CFO of Furniture Services Inc., Director of Advancement Services at USC and Director of Financial Services at Tri-County Home Health Care.

QUOTE: "To rest is to rust, to be active is to be alive."
- unknown

WHY I DO WHAT I DO: My father instilled in me as a child I had to know where I was to know where I wanted to go and I have used that philosophy in my career. I feel that I make a difference and I love working in financial management.



(803) 750-9561
sbailey@scpress.org



Numbers: How do we know that?

To paraphrase a recent *New York Times* lead: It was a staggering sight. Upwards of dozens of papers and wire services reporting 29,000 people at a political rally, and almost all with the sheerest of attributions – or none at all.

The rally was the joint appearance by Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama and entertainer Oprah Winfrey at the University of South Carolina's Williams-Brice Stadium. Obama's organizers had moved it, saying early requests for tickets indicated it would be too big for the 18,000-seat Colonial Center.

The crowd's size was the news. "29,000 attend rally at Williams-Brice," *The (Columbia) State* headlined it. "The largest crowd yet of any event in the race to '08," CNN crowed. "Oprah, Obama pull record crowd," *The Charlotte (N.C.) Observer* declared. And, of course, the *Times* called it "a staggering sight."

Yet most of the stories reflect little reporting beyond campaign officials' assertions. I don't doubt the sincerity of Obama's aides or of the papers that repeated the number. But as journalists – and in the silly season of campaigning – we owe our readers more.

- *The Times* had no attribution in Katharine Q. Seelye's "Oprahpalooza in South Carolina" of that Sunday or in her next-day follow-up. *The State's* story didn't either, though by connecting some dots and looking at a graphic (work the reader should not have to do), it appears the reference came from Obama.

- The AP, CNN and Reuters all attributed the number to campaign officials. CNN was explicit in its first two paragraphs, a smart thing if the crowd was, indeed, the story.

- *The Observer* at least sought two sources: "Police estimated the crowd at between 25,000 and 30,000. Obama staffers said more than 29,000 were in the stadium."

But there is no indication the reporters or their editors asked the simple question "How do we know that?" – one of the six



By Doug Fisher
USC School
of Mass
Communication

COMMON SENSE JOURNALISM

questions for editors with which I began this column six years ago.

Many police departments have stopped giving official crowd estimates because it's too squishy to figure out. *The State*, in a story about a St. Patrick's Day festival earlier in the year, highlighted the problem. In 1989, it said, the paper had reported a crowd of 175,000. Once organizers started selling wristbands to get beer, however, that dropped to about 35,000 (add a few more, of course, for non-drinkers).

Salon.com's Thomas F. Schaller, in the most detailed coverage as far as the crowd estimates, initially asserted the 29,000 without attribution. Later, he wrote, "On Sunday, Obama's team was trying to figure out just how big the Columbia event was." He quoted a former state Democratic chairman saying it was far bigger than a 10,000-person rally for Bill Clinton in 1992.

Still later, Schaller provided more detail – that people were given tickets only after filling out a volunteer card and that they then also received a list of people to call. This is useful information that can help readers judge the veracity of a claim. But did anyone think to directly ask how many tickets

were given out? If so, no one told us.

(*The State* also mentioned the call sheets, saying 36,426 were passed out. But then was it 29,000 or 36,000 who attended? Ultimately, it appears the tickets might have been the best metric, assuming the campaign had a way to keep track of their count.)

In our number-drenched world, the silly season is now year-round. But journalists seem to accept numbers uncritically, or at least without telling readers how the person or group providing the number knows it is grounded in fact.

The Wall Street Journal, in a recent story about efforts to ban car washing at home, wrote: "In Santa Monica Bay, for example, 30 million to 40 million gallons of urban runoff from sources such as car washing flows into the bay every day when it doesn't rain, according to Heal the Bay, an environmental group."

It never explains how the group gets that number. And taking what might be a small number (car wash runoff) and mixing it inside a larger and more diffuse one (urban runoff) confounds things.

Journal columnist Carl Bialik, "The Numbers Guy," continually pokes and prods such assertions. Among his recent columns: "Longer Daylight Saving Time Mo-

Please See NUMBERS page 6

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Front page models can be a starting point

Some quotes just make sense the moment you hear them. They contain an element of truth that's just undeniable. Here's one I'm particularly fond of:

"Rule #1: Don't sweat the small stuff.

Rule #2: It's all small stuff."

That quote came to mind recently when a client editor asked what he could do to make his front pages appear different from week to week.

My response was that he focus instead on the things that would make his front pages consistently better:

1. Larger photos.
2. Careful use of color.
3. Careful use of negative space.
4. Balance.
5. Focus.
6. Unity.
7. Strong typography.
8. Fewer jumps.
9. Good headline hierarchy.
10. Well-written heads.

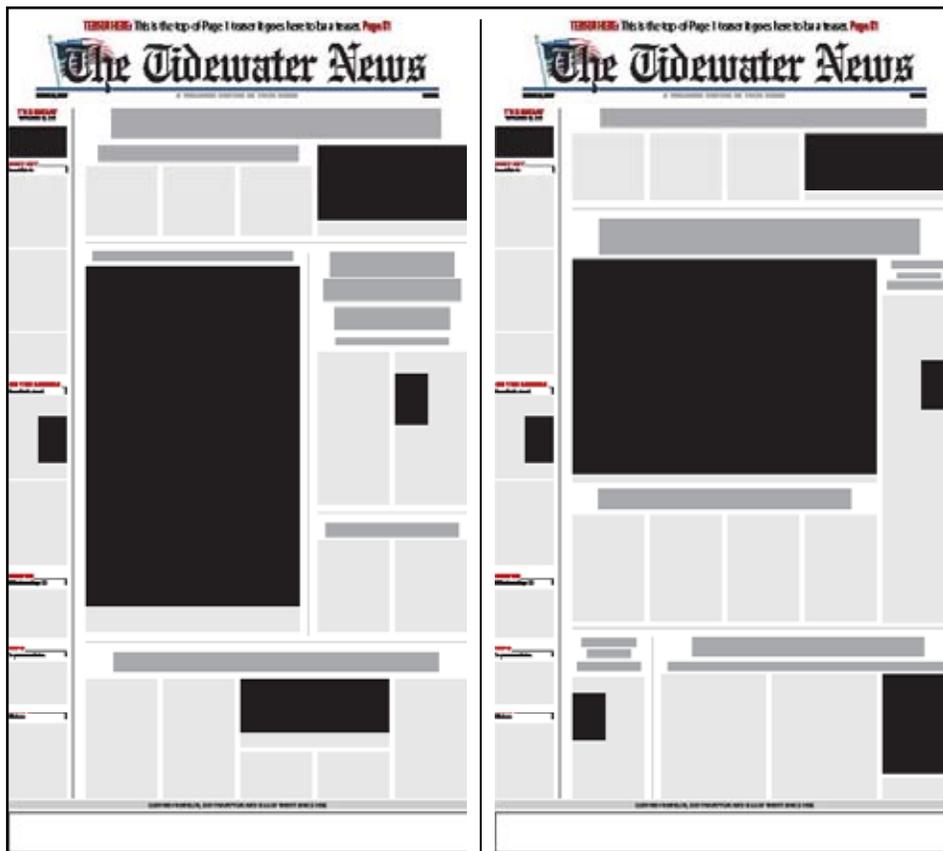
Readers don't expect you to design your front page so it looks different from issue to issue. What do they expect instead? See the list in the previous paragraph.

So, if every front can't be strikingly different, what can we do to assure some variation in our look?

One suggestion is to create a half-dozen models from which you can choose when you're about to commit the act of designing Page 1.



By Ed Henninger
Henninger is an independent newspaper consultant and director of Henninger Consulting in Rock Hill



Two examples of front page models: one with a horizontal lead photo, the second with a lead photo that's vertical.

I don't recommend this for those newspapers that have the advantage of design editors because we don't want the models to handcuff them. But frontpage models are a benefit to editors at smaller newspapers.

The models I usually build are three with a horizontal lead photo and three with a lead photo that's vertical. The lead story may run across the top of the page or to the right of the photo. I also place a secondary photo on each model and block out headlines, stories

and other elements.

When we create our front page, there can be thousands of variations. But a half-dozen models offer the editor in a hurry a good place to start.

More Information
ED HENNINGER is an independent newspaper consultant and the Director of Henninger Consulting, offering comprehensive newspaper design services, including redesigns, staff training, workshops and evaluations. You can reach him at: 803-327-3322. E-mail: edh@henningerconsulting.com. On the web: www.henningerconsulting.com

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Kelly McBride,
ethics group leader
of Poynter Institute

Look beyond the obvious

Extraordinary customer service requires looking beyond the obvious.

I was talking to Nigel, who has been advertising in his local paper for many years. "I'm crazy about my account rep," he said. "Even though she has a lot of bigger advertisers on her list, she always makes me



By John Foust
Advertising
Trainer

feel like I'm her most important client. She does more than the obvious things – like returning calls promptly, and making sure our ads stay on schedule. She is always asking questions about changes in my business, new products, new services, new people who join our staff."

"Does that ever seem a little nosy to you?" I asked.

"No way," he said. "She doesn't ask prying, personal questions. She's just looking for ideas. She instinctively understands the power of information. The more she knows about our operation, the better the ads will be."

Talking to Nigel reminded me of a business trip that took me to several cities in Arizona. The night before flying home, I stayed at a Phoenix hotel. It wasn't fancy, but it was within several miles of Sky Harbor Airport. There was a maintenance man – wearing a blue shirt with his name on the pocket – standing behind the registration desk, chatting with the lady who was checking me in. "Going home?" he asked.

I nodded. "Headed back to North Carolina."

"Morning flight?"

"Yes."

"Got a rental car?"

"Yes."

"Planning to return it tomorrow morning?"

"Yes."

"Want to save some trouble?"

"Yes." (I was amazed at the amount of information he was getting with simple, closed-ended questions.)

"Why don't you return that car tonight? The rental places are jammed in the morning, but they're not busy at night. Turn in the car, take their shuttle bus to the terminal, call the hotel, and our hotel shuttle will pick you up and bring you back. In the morning, take our shuttle back to the airport. It'll drop you off right in front of your terminal, and you'll avoid the zoo at the rental return."

Wow! In less than a minute, he solved a big problem for me. I thought back to the times I had traveled to Phoenix and gotten tangled up in long delays at the rental return. Going to the airport that night seemed like a minor inconvenience, compared to the possibility of missing my flight the next day because of a logjam at the rental return.

I've stayed in a lot of hotels, some with concierge staffs wearing starched and pressed uniforms. They all know how to answer questions. (Where is the museum? What time does the restaurant open? Where is the subway?) But they could learn something from that maintenance man in Phoenix. He knew how to ASK questions to fix problems.

My account rep is always on the lookout for new solutions to my marketing problems," Nigel concluded. "That's what sets her paper apart from all the other advertising options I've considered."

Look beyond the obvious. That's a good way to find – and solve – problems.

More Information

John Foust conducts on-site and video training for newspaper advertising departments. His three new video programs are designed to help ad managers conduct in-house training for their sales teams. For information, contact: John Foust, PO Box 97606, Raleigh, NC 27624 USA, E-mail: jfoust@mindspring.com, Phone 919-848-2401.

Obituaries

Shirley Huneycutt

Former news editor, *The Journal Scene*

SUMMERVILLE

Shirley S. Huneycutt died Dec. 5, 2007, in Virginia. She was 82.

Huneycutt was a reporter, writer, news editor, advertising manager and general manager for the *Summerville Journal Scene* for more than 25 years. For years she wrote a column, "At Random."

She also worked for publications on Air Force bases across the world while she and her husband were stationed there.

She enjoyed the challenges of newspapering and jumped into the reporting business wholeheartedly, said Bill Collins, former owner and editor of the paper.

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SCPA sponsors weekly legislative press conference

As the 2008 legislative session gears up, the S.C. Press Association is proud to sponsor SCETV's weekly Statehouse press conferences, which feature legislators from both political parties. The program allows state leaders to discuss their views on the issues affecting South Carolinians.

SCPA member journalists are invited to attend these programs live or watch them over the Internet. There is also a toll-free number you can call in and listen.

"This is a great way for editors and reporters who are not in Columbia to ask questions to our state's leaders," said Bill Rogers, SCPA executive director.

Reporters can ask questions via a telephone link or by e-mailing questions to Bill Rogers at brogers@scpress.org.

Media advisories are sent to members who cover the Statehouse. If you are not receiving these advisories, call SCPA at (803) 750-9561 or e-mail jbarclay@scpress.org.

This Week in The House, hosted by Bobby Harrell, Speaker of the House, is on Tuesdays at 11:30 a.m. and *This Week in the Senate*,



Sen. Harvey Peeler of Gaffney, Sen. John Land of Manning and President Pro Tem Glenn McConnell of Charleston discuss their views on the issues likely to be addressed during the 2008 session during the first *This Week in the Senate* press conference on Jan. 10.

hosted by Glenn McConnell, President *Pro Tempore*, is on Thursdays at 9:30 a.m.

To watch or listen to this week's program live, just log on the Internet, go to www.myetv.org and click on "pressroom." By clicking on the Statehouse dome, you will be

taken to a page listing both programs.

Portions of this program can be viewed on State House Tonight on your regular ETV channel at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday evenings and repeated at 12:00 noon on Sundays.

Newsroom ethics
 seminar
 featuring Kelly McBride
 of the Poynter Institute
 Feb. 29
 See pg. 10 for more info

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