

Shurr receives the Order of the Palmetto

By Jen Barclay

SCPA Communications & Development Coordinator

John Shurr, former AP South Carolina Bureau Chief, was awarded the Order of the Palmetto on Aug. 24 for his lifetime achievements and service to South Carolina through his work with the Freedom of Information Act.

Shurr has worked with the Associated Press for more than

On The Web

For more on this story, visit www.scpa.org

30 years, including 23 years in South Carolina. He has been instrumental in strengthening our state's FOI Act and has chaired SCPA's FOI Committee since 1987.

Bill Rogers, SCPA Executive Director, said Shurr has been "a most effective champion of open government in South Carolina."

"We were the third state in the country to do an FOI audit thanks to John's leadership. And we were one of the first states to celebrate 'Sunshine Week,'" Rogers said. "We are fortunate to have had John as our FOI chair for more than 20 years, and we hope he will continue in that role."

Shurr said he's most proud of his work with press access and the First Amendment.

"We try to kick the doors open and make sure the people have access to their government and know as much as they need to know about it," Shurr said. "Because it doesn't work very well without access."

Rogers also mentioned Shurr's successful efforts to get cameras into South Carolina courts. "John met with the Chief Justice, set up demonstrations and tests, and wrote the rules of conduct. Without John, we'd still be depending on sketch artists in courtrooms."

Shurr spent much of his career running

the AP Bureau in Columbia. He said when he started working at the Associated Press in the 1970s, words were transmitted at 66 2/3 words per minute, compared to the well over 10,000 words transmitted per minute today. He said his work there has meant much to him.

"I miss working with my staff and helping them develop and cover a wide assortment of stories," Shurr said. "I really love the news business. I got into it to make a difference."

And he certainly has made a

Please See **SHURR** page 12



Shurr was presented The Order of the Palmetto Aug. 24 for his service to S.C. through his FOIA work.

Municipal Workshop Oct. 18

Good local government reporting is a mainstay of newspaper coverage, yet often reporters don't have the background to properly understand how municipal government works and where to go for information and stories.

The S.C. Press Association and the Municipal Association of South Carolina are teaming up on Thursday, Oct. 18, to offer

their popular daylong seminar on covering municipal government.

This workshop will help you better understand the basics of local government, meeting structure, budgets, Census information, under-covered stories, the FOIA and more.

The deadline to register is Oct. 12. Spaces are limited so sign up today! Fax or mail back the form on Page 9 to register.

Hit the greens to raise some green

Join us for a little friendly competition and support our state's up-and-coming journalists at the 18th annual S.C. Press Association Foundation Golf Tournament, presented by Congaree State Bank. We'll tee-off from the Fort Jackson Golf Club at 11 a.m. on Thursday, Sept. 27.

All proceeds go to the SCPA Foundation, which provides much needed scholarships and internships to deserving S.C. college

students who are preparing for newspaper careers.

This year the SCPA Foundation has provided \$6,125 of dollars in scholarships to six deserving students.

With the rising costs of education, the SCPA Foundation's scholarships are a welcome help to the state's journalism students.

To register, use the form on Page 10.

Calendar

Sept. 27

Golf Tournament
Ft. Jackson
Columbia

Oct. 1

Publishers
Ownership
Statement Due

Oct. 4

Weekly Publisher's
Roundtable
SCPA, Columbia

Oct. 18

Local Government
Reporting Workshop
MASC, Columbia

Oct. 25

Ad Basics
Workshop
SCPA, Columbia

2007 NICS results show newspaper changes in pay

A recently released study produced by the Inland Press Association shows interesting changes in patterns and trends of pay for newspaper professionals.

The 2007 Newspaper Industry Compensation Survey shows that national advertising managers at newspapers topped the charts with a recorded 10.1% increase in base pay from 2006 to 2007. These managers saw a 7.4% increase in total direct pay, which includes salary and incentives.

Another group to see an increase was newspaper reporters. According to the NICS, reporters' pay is up from last year. The editorial job category (which includes reporters and copy editors) experienced increases of 2.6% in salary and total compensation last year.

Entry-level reporters saw a 2.9% increase in base pay and a 2.5% increase in total compensation in 2007. Experienced

reporters saw a smaller increase, at 1.2% in salary and 1.7% increase in total compensation.

The survey also saw some downward trends since the 2005-2006 survey.

The largest decrease was for Online editors, who saw a -0.4% decrease during the 2006-2007 year. This group saw the largest increase in 2005-2006.

The average increase in base pay for all newspaper occupations was 2.22%, a drop from 2.58%, which was reported in last year's study.

The NICS covers 90 newspaper job positions and provides information including means, medians, and ranges of base pay and total direct compensation for newspaper employees. This study, which included 514 daily newspapers, is useful because it allows papers with similar circulation and demographics to compare figures.

USC J-School fall career fair set for Oct. 25

SCPA members are invited to participate in the USC School of Journalism and Mass Communication's Fall Career Fair on Thursday, Oct. 25 from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the Strom Thurmond Wellness Center on the USC campus.

Students will be available for scheduled interviews from 9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. and for open interviews from 2:30 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Students from print journalism, broadcast journalism, advertising, public relations and visual communications will be interviewing for internships and entry level jobs.

To register online, visit the following link: <http://www.jour.sc.edu/opps/jobs/career-fair/index.html>

For more information, contact Beverly W. Dominick, Internship/Placement Coordinator, at (803) 777-3347.

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FOI Briefs

High Court ruling applies to municipalities

A recent S.C. Supreme Court ruling against a Spartanburg school district also applies to local governments, SCPA attorney Jay Bender told the *Tribune-Times* in Simpsonville last month after the city of Mauldin refused to release the names of its final candidates for city administrator.

The city's final pool of candidates was narrowed to four, and city officials contended names need not be released unless that list was narrowed to three.

The city agreed to release the names Aug. 10 following a review of the Supreme Court decision by the city attorney and an Aug. 8 article by the *Tribune-Times* reviewing the city's previous stance.

Gaston man hit with \$780 FOI bill

A Gaston man was hit with a bill for \$780 for FOIA requests he'd made from the town beginning in January. The information requested remains at town hall, waiting on him to pay the bill. It is one of two requests actually answered by the town. The town has ignored several other requests, the *Lexington County Chronicle* reported last month.

Police delay report

It took Horry County Police seven days to furnish a police report from an August murder in Longs, the *Loris Scene* re-

ported last month. *The Scene* requested a copy of the incident report on Aug. 10 and Aug. 13, but wasn't able to obtain a copy of the report either day. County police did issue a news release, but the actual report wasn't made available for inspection and copying until Aug. 14.

According to the FOIA, all incident reports kept by police agencies must be made available immediately when the person requesting the reports appears in person.

...

The Lexington-Richland 5 school district should have disclosed the details of a \$1 million land deal, SCPA attorney Jay Bender told *The State* newspaper last month. The board approved the sales contract last Sept. 25, but did not disclose the location of the property. Negotiations for the land began in July 2006.

"They didn't authorize negotiations," Bender said. "They authorized the approval of a contract."

...

The chairman of the Dillon County Council issued an apology in July to *The Dillon Herald*, two weeks after that newspaper's editor discovered five members of county council meeting in a local restaurant.

"There was no agenda and no action of any kind taking place," the chairman said. "I didn't understand that simply discussing county business was not allowed."

...

The mayor of the town of Hampton issued an apology during a council meeting in July for allowing the council to take a vote without the public being present during a previous meeting.

"It's unfortunate," said SCPA attorney Carmen Maye, "but although the mayor did ask for forgiveness later, it's not the ap-

propriate way to operate."

The Guardian in Hampton County reported that it did not receive notice of the meeting in question.

...

The Beaufort County School District is seeking permission from a former elementary school principal and her attorney to release details of a lawsuit settlement agreement that both parties signed, the *Island Packet* reported in July. The district has previously declined to release details of the settlement, but after it received an FOIA request from *The Beaufort Gazette* in late June, it responded with a letter that it would ask the former principal and her attorney for permission to do so.

Carmen Maye, an SCPA attorney, disagreed with the district's decision to keep the settlement secret, saying the settlement did not fall under any exemptions to state law.

Industry Briefs

The Columbia City Council voted last month to authorize a task force of media representatives, business owners and community leaders to examine how to better regulate newspaper racks in the city.

At issue are dozens of racks for newspapers and other publications that crowd the sidewalks in parts of the city and aren't maintained. Possible solutions include limiting the number of racks allowed at a location and requiring that racks be made of certain materials.

...

The chairman of Gannett Co. issued a company-wide memo last month telling employees to "relax" amid rumors that the company would be the next newspaper chain for sale.

The memo came after Gannett, the largest company in the newspaper industry, amended its bylaws and compensation plans in a way that would accelerate payment of retirement and deferred compensation to executives if the company is sold.

Gannett, which publishes *The Greenville News*, among others, called the changes "routine."

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People & Papers

Wilson new AP bureau chief

Sue Price Wilson, chief of bureau for The Associated Press in North Carolina, is adding South Carolina to her responsibilities, reviving a two-state territory the AP maintained until the 1970s.

Wilson, based in Raleigh, has managed AP operations in N.C. since 1999. In S.C. she succeeds **John Shurr**, who was bureau chief in Columbia for 23 years.

Mitchell named Post and Courier features editor

Ann Mitchell, an award-winning reporter and editor, was named features editor last month for *The Post and Courier*. She replaces **Judy Watts**, who left the newspaper earlier this year to become executive editor of Summerville Communications, Inc. and the *Berkeley Independent*. Mitchell, 45, is a Charleston native who joined the newspaper in 1987 as a zoned editions reporter and copy editor.

Allison Askins, food writer, and **Tracy Glantz**, photojournalist, received *The State's* annual Hampton and Gonzales awards on August 31.

"Tracy and Allison bring the best qualities to this newspaper – a passion for storytelling combined with a respect for the community they serve," said Mark E. Lett, executive editor of *The State*.

Askins and Glantz join dozens of other winners of these coveted awards, which date back to 1968. Each also received a \$1,000 cash award and trophy.

Arek Sarkissian joined *Bluffton Today* as police reporter last month. He has previously written for the *Tucson Weekly* in Arizona.

The Citizen News in Edgefield has a new e-mail address. The newspaper can now be reached at news@citizen-news.com. All correspondence, including letters to the editor, may be sent to the new address.

Elaine Ellison-Rider, co-publisher and editor of *The News-Chronicle* in Belton and Honea Path, was awarded the Honorary American FFA Degree at a ceremony last July. Ellison-Rider was recognized for her outstanding and continuous

promotion of the FFA and Agricultural Education.

Lynn Lawhon joined Swartz Media last month as general manager of *Kidsville*. The monthly publication for children will be distributed in Marion, Florence and Darlington counties.

Latoya Thompson, a senior at Francis Marion University, joined *The Marion Star & Mullins Enterprise* in July as a correspondent. Thompson is majoring in English-professional writing and is pursuing a minor in writing and languages.

The city of Aiken temporarily installed a large newspaper box downtown last month. The large vending machine, capable of holding eight separate publications, will let City Council members see how the boxes blend into the streetscape. The city ordered the machine after two years of negotiations with area publications, including the *Aiken Standard*, to reduce the number of vending boxes in the downtown business district.

Martha Rose Brown, assistant editor of the *Santee Stripper*, took third place in the Best News Story category last July at the Trib Publications annual news seminar. Brown also received the Best News Photograph award for her coverage of the Ellore Cotton Gin fire.

Chad C. Rhoad joined the staff of *The Messenger* in Hartsville last month as a sports writer. He is a recent graduate of the University of South Carolina, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and graduated cum laude.

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New technology brings new issues

As a condition of full-time employment to run a printing press for a Minnesota truck company, I had to join the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers of America. I quit a part-time, low-paying job I loved as sports editor of a weekly to take the new position. The steep monthly dues were offset by good wages, which allowed me to earn a master's degree while paying rent on the apartment.

Now another union is attempting to form, as you may have read recently. But this one is for bloggers. An Associated Press story by Ashley Heher said:

"In a move that might make some people scratch their heads, a loosely formed coalition of left-leaning bloggers are trying to band together to form a labor union they



By Randy Hines
Professor

PRESSING ISSUES

hope will help them receive health insurance, conduct collective bargaining or even set professional standards."

It is applaudable that this coalition is thinking about setting professional values. Perhaps that step should be taken first so the assortment of individuals with blogs who claim to be journalists can be appropriately classified.

AP's article talks about similar activities when freelance writers wanted more rights and protections about 25 years ago. But the wide range of freelance writers wanting more clout consisted of people who submitted articles to editors for publication. That gatekeeper function performed by the professional journalist protected the public — for the most part — from sensational, opinionated, dogmatic outbursts. However, all bloggers have their own 2007 version of a printing press — the World Wide Web.

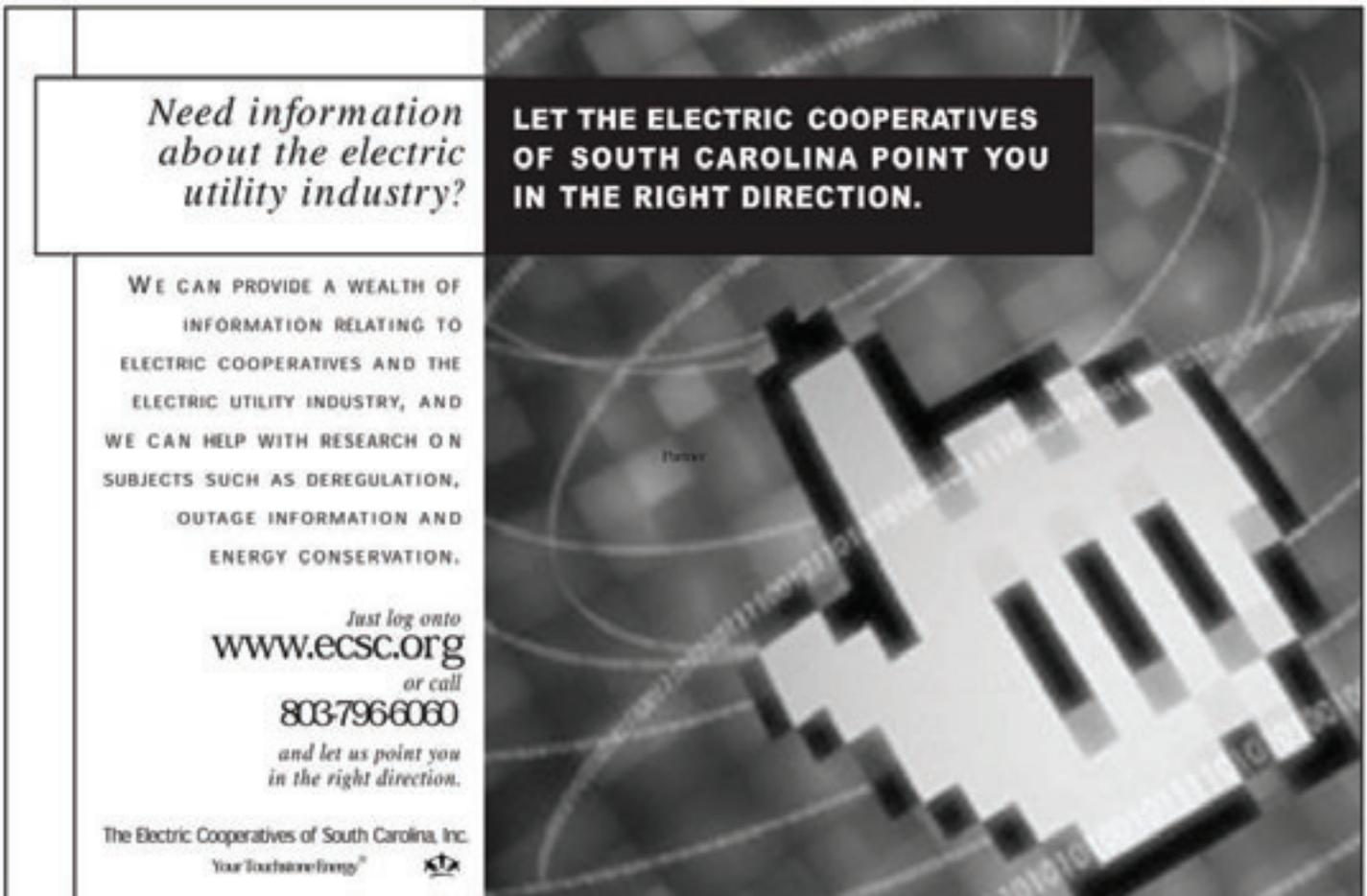
That is not to deny that many South Carolina bloggers are indeed trained writers

with a sense of fairness and professionalism. But for those who are not — and there are thousands — where is the gatekeeper function? Bloggers, identified by many seasoned newspaper journalists as thin-skinned, may cry censorship if all of them are not allowed to unionize.

The Pew Internet & American Life Project estimates 11% of American Internet users have made Web pages or blogs for others, and 8% have created their own online journals or Weblogs. More than 120,000 blogs are going online every day.

Current debate brings back a mid-20th century history lesson about the public relations profession. Edward Bernays, considered by many to be the father of modern PR, advocated for the licensing of PR practitioners. He felt such a move would eliminate the charlatans and elevate the profession. But implementing licensure procedures (such as producing and grading examinations, adopting minimum

Please See **HINES** page **13**



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Copy editors can take pride in these students' stories

During more than 30 years in journalism, I have always loved the reporting, editing and (from my broadcast days) shooting film and video. But now that I'm teaching, some moments beat even the best days in the field or the newsroom.

This month, I want to share two of them, small things that give me hope for journalism in general and specifically for copy editing.

Newsrooms are filled with angst as layoff and buyout notices keep coming, but it may be especially acute among copy editors. The consolidation of editing functions already under way and the threat of shipping some jobs overseas color many a conversation on the desk these days.

It can be easy to despair that anyone will see the value of what copy editors do. Then along come notes like this posted on the class blog in my beginning copy-editing class. The writer is a public relations major not required to take the course, but who did so anyway:

"I work with a girl at the Governor's Mansion who is also a public relations major. Today we were discussing different classes we both have liked, and she told me she would be taking copy editing in the Fall, but was considering dropping it from her schedule. Of course, she went on to tell me how scared she is about taking this course.



By Doug Fisher
USC School
of Mass
Communication

COMMON SENSE JOURNALISM

... I told her it would be the biggest mistake of her career not to take this class. I told her that of course, this class requires a lot of effort, patience and time, but that it would be worth it in the end. I think I convinced her.

"I'm not even two weeks into this class, yet I realize the value of what I'm learning. I think everyone in any journalism field should be required to take this class, especially public relations majors who must constantly be aware of how they communicate. I realized today, this class isn't just about editing newspaper articles and headlines ... it's about perfecting the way we communicate in order for our audience to get the clearest message possible."

Some may see that more as blowing smoke and others may quibble with the suggestion that public relations is a "journalism field." But that misses the point, I think. These are students who "get it," as the digital mavens like to say. They have grown up in a multimedia world. They don't follow the rigid distinctions many of us do.

And they recognize the importance of editing – yes, copy editing – to communication. I take hope in that, as I take pride in this vignette from another student who has the determination to be a solid sports journalist, but who frankly says he spends most of his time online, and not at newspaper sites.

"My girlfriend and I were talking last night ... about how my classes were going. We were talking about stressful

jobs, and I was telling her about some of the duties of a copy editor. She made a statement like, 'I would rather work at McDonald's, or serve, or wait tables for the rest of my life than to have to be a copy editor.' I found this particularly amusing because she has just graduated with a nursing degree from USC and will begin work in the emergency room at Baptist Hospital next month. The emergency room! ... She is going to be caring for sick, hurt, dead, and dying people all day long, and she thinks copy editing is worse than that! ...

"That conversation, along with the 'Copy Editor's Lament' ... kind of gave me a new opinion on copy editing. I think those two things kind of showed me that copy editing is looked at by other people as a very difficult and stressful job. As hard and overwhelming as this class seems to us already, it is important to keep in mind how difficult it really is, and that it is a job that not everyone can do. So I feel a lot better about my struggles."

Maybe, you should too. Copy editors are notorious for celebrating their studied anonymity. But when their story is told, people do understand how tough a job it is.

How are you going to tell the story, not only of the job and importance of the copy editor, but of the journalist in general? If you don't, no one else will.

And just think, emergency room nurses tremble at the thought. Sure, that and \$3 will get you a cup of coffee these days, when yet another Newspaper Research Journal study has shown at least a third of copy editors are dissatisfied with their jobs. But isn't a little pride still worth something?

("The Copy Editor's Lament: George Martin's elegy for desk editors," as Tim Porter describes it, can be found at <http://www.timporter.com/words/copy-editorlament.shtml>.)

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/cs/index.html>.



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Using focus groups to focus in on your work

Focus groups are an opportunity for us to meet with readers and advertisers one-on-one.

They give us the chance to chat with those readers and advertisers and learn — directly from them — what matters most to them about your newspaper.

I know of no survey that can do that. Moreover, surveys don't give us the option of stopping in the middle of a conversation and doing a 180-degree shift, allowing readers to question us about what we do and why we do it.

During a recent round of focus groups, I realized once again that our readers and advertisers really want us to succeed on two levels:

1. Readers rely on us for honest, complete and balanced reporting of what's going on in their town.

2. Advertisers want us to be a popular, well-read newspaper so they can be sure they're reaching all of their target audience.

Focus groups are a conversation with our readers and advertisers that help us to succeed — and to respond to their needs on both levels.

Here are some suggestions for focus groups:

- **Identify what it is you want to learn** — even before you begin listing questions you want to ask. Do you want to know about reaction to your opinion page? Do you want to know about the quality of your reporting? What if your questions are about home delivery concerns?

- **Create a list of key questions you want answered.** If you're organizing a group of sessions to consider your content, don't let the design of your newspaper...or circulation problems...or other issues onto the list. Stay on target.

- **Decide upon the makeup of the group.** Do you want a cross-section of your demographics? Do you want read-



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

ers only? How about advertisers? Is gender a factor? Age?

- **Set up a venue for your session.** I prefer something on "neutral ground" — a nearby restaurant, a library conference room or the like. Make sure it's comfortable and quiet, with items you may need such as a whiteboard or an easel with flip paper.

- **Choose a good facilitator.** You need someone who can keep the conversation going and keep the discussion on topic. Occasionally, there's someone in the group who wants to dominate the discussion — or someone else who shies away from the conversation. It's the facilitator's job to make sure the session doesn't get bogged down by personalities — and to ensure the steady flow of the discussion.

- **Take good notes.** Designate someone from your staff to keep a steady flow of notes. And it's OK — provided the participants approve — to record or videotape the session, too. If a tape recorder or videotape camera seems threatening to the participants, don't hesitate to turn it off. Note-taking is usually expected as part of the process.

- **Take care to follow up.** Evaluate what you've learned. No, you don't have

to act on it if a reader tells you she just isn't interested in sports and thinks it's a waste of time and paper. But you may want to consider increased coverage of real estate if there are suggestions that your paper just doesn't do a good job of covering the real estate boom in your town.

A focus group is an effective tool you can use when you're taking a close look at your product and your work. And your readers and advertisers will applaud your efforts to stay in touch.

IF THIS COLUMN has been helpful, you'll find more help in Ed's new book, *Henninger on Design*. With the help of *Henninger on Design*, you'll become a better designer because you'll become a thinking designer. Find out more about *Henninger on Design* by visiting Ed's web site: www.henningerconsulting.com.

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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2007 Covering Municipal Government

Good local government reporting is a mainstay of newspaper coverage, yet often reporters don't have the background to properly understand how municipal government works and where to go for information and stories.

The S.C. Press Association and the Municipal Association of South Carolina are teaming up to offer their popular daylong seminar on covering municipal government.

Want to freshen up on the basics of town and city government? Municipal Government 101 will teach you the basics of local government operations, including structure, zoning and local government officials.

Millage, municipal bonds, property tax caps -- oh my! MASC's Executive Director Howard Duvall will help you understand budgeting, taxation, annexation and other local money matters.

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After lunch, we'll cover meeting structures, MASC resources and how to utilize Census data. Then Reba Campbell, MASC director of communications, will discuss under-covered stories.

Before we send you back to the newsroom, Howard will go over some frequently asked questions. Then Howard and Bill Rogers, SCPA Executive Director, will help you better understand the Freedom of Information Act. We'll wrap up with a Q&A session in case we didn't answer your questions.

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Questions? Call (803) 750-9561 or e-mail jbarclay@scpress.org

SCPA STAFF PROFILE

MICHELLE KERSCHER

PROFESSION:

SCPA Director of Marketing and Programs since August 2007

Michelle is the person members should contact for membership and contest questions, workshop help and meeting details.

AGE: 27

HOBBIES: Watching Carolina Football, photography, and spending time with my family and my dog Cassie

LAST BOOK I READ: *The Land of Mango Sunsets* by Dorothea Benton Frank

LATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT: Redesigning the SCNN Web site

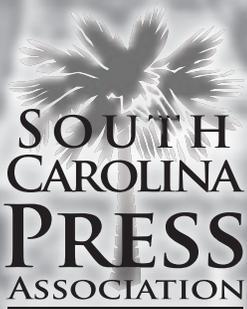
EDUCATION: Attended The University of South Carolina and Graduated from Coastal Carolina University with a B.S. degree in Finance

WORK EXPERIENCE:

Joined SCNN in 2005 as Network Advertising Coordinator. Promoted to Director of Graphics and New Media in 2007. Formerly Marketing Assistant, Brookgreen Gardens, Murrells Inlet; Staff Accountant, Ripley Entertainment, Myrtle Beach

QUOTE: "If life hands you limes, make margaritas."
- Jimmy Buffett

WHY I DO WHAT I DO: I love meeting new people and being a part of this organization.



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Use “reason why” bridges in sales presentations

“I found a helpful idea to tweak my sales presentations in an unlikely place,” Mack told me. “It was at a local community college – in a one-day class on how to use a particular computer program. There were about a dozen people in the class. And although we had different skill levels, the teacher did an excellent job of keeping everyone on track.”

“What was the teacher’s secret?” I asked.

“First of all, she didn’t use what I call ‘geek speak.’ She talked in terms that the people on our level could understand.



By John Foust
Advertising
Trainer



And she presented each point in a way that easily connected to previous things we had learned. I lost count of the number of times she said, ‘The reason I say that is,’ or ‘I’m asking you to do this because.’ It was a positive learning experience. She logically walked us through each module of the training, intuitively knowing when to tell us the ‘why?’ behind the information.”

Mack explained that he tried the computer teacher’s technique a few days later in a meeting with a prospective advertiser. “It was one of the ‘Ah-ha’ moments in my sales career. I found that a

simple ‘reason why’ bridge helped me link my sales points together in a logical sequence. And I could tell that the prospect was more attentive than usual.”

If you’d like to try this in your sales presentations, here are a few things to keep in mind:

1. Organize your sales points. “This technique goes beyond the basics of covering features and benefits,” Mack said. “In essence, it’s a way to add more depth to your sales points. If you tell them you’re going to give them a reason that something is important, you’d better make it a good one – or they’ll think you don’t know what you’re talking about.” It’s all about giving them a relevant reason why.

Take this quick multiple-choice test: I believe our paper reaches your target

Please See **FOUST** page **13**

Shurr

Continued from page 1

difference. Throughout his career Shurr has covered a wide range of stories including Hurricane Hugo and the DC-10 crash in Chicago.

Shurr was also instrumental in helping release spending documents from USC and its foundations, which led to the resignation and conviction of its president.

Looking back, Shurr said winning the FOI cases against USC were gratifying, but not easy. Reporters waited years for S.C. courts to release the documents, only to find them missing. Shurr and other reporters literally had to dig up the dirt -- renting a front-end loader to dig up spending documents, which had been buried in a local landfill the size of two football fields. He described the papers as “rancid but still legible.”

Shurr laughed as he recounted the court judgment, which not only included the \$250,000 legal fees to be paid by USC, but also the rental of the front-end loader.

This case set a precedent for FOI in South Carolina.

“Nobody has any doubt anymore in government in South Carolina that if they have public money, they have to disclose how they are handling it,” Shurr said of the 1988 case which underscored the

part of FOI law that says public money is disclosed. “It told a lot of people, ‘they’re not going to go away like they used to; they’re not going to say OK we give up or forget about it.’”

Shurr’s belief of open government goes beyond the mainstream. Shurr also serves on the Editorial Board of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma. Using the S.C. FOI Guide, Shurr authored the Independent Press Act in 2000, which passed unanimously.

“Because of all my FOI work here in South Carolina, I knew a lot about FOI laws and I felt like ours was very good,” Shurr said of the act which allows press freedom and greater access to tribal government. “If you look at the two side by side, they are almost identical.”

It is the first of its kind for any tribal government and creates a buffer between the newspaper and tribal government. Other tribes are using this model to create their own FOI Acts to increase public access.

Shurr just returned from Oklahoma, where the Cherokees held a retirement party for him. Oklahoma AP Bureau Chief Lindel Hutson gave Shurr a proclamation from the governor of Oklahoma, proclaiming the day John Shurr Day in Oklahoma in observance of his FOI efforts.

Shurr has made a difference in the newspaper industry through his passion

for open government and high-quality journalism.

“It’s a calling more than it is just a job,” Shurr said.

In his retirement, Shurr plans to spend time with his wife, Debbie, and their pets at their home on the Intracoastal Waterway in Beaufort. He also plans to stay on the editorial board of the Cherokee Nation and will continue to serve as an advocate of open government in South Carolina.

“I think I’ll stay active in FOI here because I worked so cheap for the last 20 years,” Shurr said.

John has been honored twice by the Press Association for his FOI work and has won a Gavel Award from the American Bar Association for uncovering abuses in the Illinois workers’ compensation system. For over a decade, he has served on the Reporter’s Committee for Freedom of the Press and as vice president of the First Amendment Congress. John served on the AP Diversity Council from 2001 through 2005 and is a member of the Native American Journalists Association. John graduated from the University of Oklahoma School of Journalism.

A journalism scholarship has been established in honor of John with the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma. If you would like information on how to donate, contact the Press Association.

Hines

Continued from page 6

educational requirements, setting uniform standards) proved too much of an obstacle. What about someone who passed the licensing exam in one state but wants to practice in another? Many public relations activities are conducted nationwide and worldwide.

A solution for PR was to create an accreditation process back in 1965 that was voluntary. Members who wanted to prove their professionalism could become certified as a competent, experienced practitioner by undergoing oral and written exams and passing a portfolio review process. Anyone can still claim to be a PR person, but only those who are accredited can use that status in their materials.

Heher mentions that the union blog proposal has lots of questions unanswered. Who should become a member? What are the guidelines? What about a looser federation for those who are activist bloggers to something else for those who merely want to chat about video games or the hottest Charleston bands? Not all bloggers are enchanted with the union concept.

"The blogosphere is such a weird term and such a weird idea," admits Curt Hopkins, founder of the Committee to Protect Bloggers, in the AP story. "It's anyone who wants to do it. There's absolutely no commonality there. How will they find a commonality to go on? I think it's doomed to failure on any sort of large scale."

Blogging was also discussed in New York City in June during the New Media Academic Summit. Those in attendance — a mix of professors, journalists, bloggers and PR pros — seemed to have no problems with legitimate journalist bloggers having shield law protection. But there's always the question about the 12-year-old from Greenville who wants to trash teachers at school. Does simply having a blog give that student full journalistic rights without any of the responsibilities? Will 12-year-olds be card-carrying members of the International Brotherhood of Bloggers?

More Information

Dr. Randy Hines teaches in the Department of Communications at Susquehanna University. His address is 514 University Ave., Selinsgrove PA 17870. He can be reached at randyhinesapr@yahoo.com.

Obituaries

Carnis B. Davis

Publisher Emeritus, The Easley Progress

EASLEY

Carnis Bowen Davis, 93, co-owner and publisher emeritus of *The Easley Progress*, died Aug. 18 in Summerton.

Davis was advertising manager at *The Progress* before she and partner Jerry Vickery formed Crescent Communications, Inc. in 1972. Davis and Vickery bought *The Easley Progress* in 1981 and set about immediately to update the news content of the paper and to modernize the plant and equipment, bringing the newspaper into the computer age.

"She was a gifted, talented and versatile writer," Vickery said. "She wrote some of the best features about people you'd ever read, but she also did quality research for news stories."

While Davis was at *The Progress*, circulation more than doubled because people loved to read her features and column called Tidbits.

Fellow journalist Dot Jackson called Davis "the epitome of a great newspaper person."

Davis retired from the newspaper business when she sold her share of *The Progress* to Vickery in 1989, but she continued to write her column and an occasional feature for several years.

O. Jackson Smyrl Jr.

Cartoonist, The State

CAMDEN

Oscar Jackson "Jak" Smyrl Jr., 84, died Aug. 7 in his hometown of Camden. Smyrl was a student at Alabama Polytechnic Institute (now Auburn University) when he volunteered for the U.S. Marines during World War II. After the war, he studied art at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh, Pa., and the University of South Carolina.

As the staff artist at *The State* and *The Columbia Record* newspapers for 37 years, as well as a freelance illustrator for dozens of books and hundreds of other projects, Smyrl made an indelible mark on



South Carolina and beyond.

He was a sustaining contributor to *The State* magazine. The state and local maps he illustrated with comic sketches record valuable details of historic and contemporary locales. His was the first logo of the University of South Carolina to depict the gamecock in fighting stance. His sketches of Smokey the bear garnered national attention in a forest fire prevention campaign.

Ruth Davis Sheriff

Contributing columnist, Westminster News

OCONEE

Ruth Davis Sheriff, 83, died July 25 at Oconee Memorial Hospital from a massive stroke. Born in 1924 in the Hopewell Community of Westminster, she was a contributing columnist for the *Westminster News* and a homemaker.

Foust

Continued from page 12

audience. The reason I say that is...

- a) ...we have a lot of readers.
- b) ...your competitors advertise with us, and they must know something.
- c) ...it's important to have a target audience.
- d) ...a recent readership study showed that X% of our readers fit the demographic profile of your industry's consumers.

Choice "d" is the one that offers a legitimate "reason why."

2. Find different ways to say the same thing. "Obviously, you shouldn't say 'the reason I say this' all the way through," Mack cautioned. "If you want people to stay awake, add some variety with phrases like... 'I mention this because' ...or 'This is due to the fact that,' or... 'You can accomplish this by.'"

3. Don't overdo it. "I can't tell you how many times to use a 'reason why' bridge in a presentation," he added. "That decision is up to you. I just know that it's not a good idea to use it on every sales point. Pick your spots carefully, so you won't sound like a broken record."

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.

New SCPA applications for membership

The following have applied for membership in the SCPA to be voted on by the Executive Committee on Sept. 20:

Free Distribution Newspaper Membership:

- *Pickens County Courier*

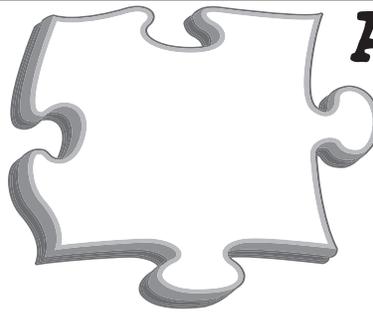
Individual Membership:

- Bonita Jenkins, Director of Marketing and College Communications, Piedmont Technical College
- Karen Peluso, freelance photographer/writer

Associate Membership:

- S.C. Department of Consumer Affairs
- *The Dutch Fork Chronicle*

Please contact Bill Rogers if you have any questions or comments.



Ad Sales Basics Workshop

October 25
10 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
SCPA, Columbia

New sales people on staff? Help them get started with the essentials of ad sales. Register today for SCPA's popular quarterly sales training for new sales reps.

This workshop will cover the basics in advertising sales and get your revenue-producing staff off to a great start.

Alanna Ritchie, Director of Advertising for the SCNN, will conduct this full-day workshop on understand the basics of sales.

Topics will include selling against competition, dealing with objections, closing skills, basic design, and consultive selling. For additional information, contact Alanna Ritchie at SCPA at (803) 750-9561 or e-mail her at aritchie@scpress.org.



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