Cover Photo Contest deadline extended

The Arkansas Press Association (APA) sent a reminder to all members and associate members earlier last week reminding them that the 14th Annual Cover Photo Contest is well under way, and that the deadline to enter was fast approaching. Since 2003, the Arkansas Press Association (APA) has conducted a contest to determine the cover photos for the Arkansas Media Directory. The 2016 directory will be available early next year. This year APA is again holding the popular contest, and the winners will have their entries showcased on the cover of the upcoming edition. The announcement was made last week.

The deadline for submitting was originally set for this Friday, Oct. 23 by 4 p.m., but APA is extending the deadline to encourage more participation. Submissions received so far this year are a fraction of entries in previous contests. The new (and final) deadline is Oct. 30, 4 p.m. To compete, newspapers and associate members may email their print resolution photos as attachments to Tres Williams, the press association’s communications director and lobbyist (tres@arkansaspress.org). Any questions can be directed to him at the email address above or by phone at 501.374.1500. Each contestant may enter up to seven photos.


Those interested in seeing the finalists in the last five competitions can find them in the APA Forums in the “Photography” forum. The Forums can be accessed from the main menu on APA’s website: www.arkansaspress.org.

FIRST PLACE | The 2005 winner in the Media Directory Cover Photo Contest was ‘Babe Ruth’ by William Harvey of the Pine Bluff Commercial.

USPS publishing deadline approaches

The Arkansas Press Association is continuing to receive queries from members regarding the filing and publishing of the annual U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Form 3526, the “Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation.” The filing deadline has now come and gone (Oct. 1), but the form may be downloaded from the Postal Service’s website: http://about.usps.com/forms/periodicals-forms.htm. Newspapers must file and publish the form to remain in compliance with Periodicals Class mailing permit regulations.

Pursuant to a change in 2012, USPS now allows paid electronic subscribers to be included in circulation totals on the annual report. There is a section for reporting electronic copies on page three of the revised, consolidated form. It is no longer necessary to file a separate form for electronic subscriptions.

The overwhelming majority of APA members are subject to the requirement to file this report with the post office. The deadline for dailies to publish the statement has passed (Oct. 10). The last remaining deadline pertains to publication by weekly newspapers — the end of next week, Oct 31.

important dates

Saturday, Oct. 31
Deadline for weekly newspapers to publish their Statements of Ownership, Management and Circulation Forms (Form 3526)
Nov. 5
Managers’ Roundtable, Ameristar Casino Hotel, Vicksburg, Miss.
Nov. 5-6
ArkLaMiss Conference, Ameristar Casino Hotel, Vicksburg, Miss.
It’s sort of an unwritten rule that when I go out to visit Arkansas Press Association (APA) member newspapers, I don’t do it early in the week and certainly not on Tuesdays. The reason, of course, is that for most weeklies, Tuesday is a killer production day. They don’t have time to talk to anyone not helping get the paper out.

Memories of people doing this when I was responsible for getting newspapers produced and out the door remain vivid. Although I’ve mellowed considerably with age, there was a time when I’m quite sure I wasn’t all that cordial when I was chest-deep in getting a newspaper closed up, printed and out the door.

Many, many years ago when I was serving in the U.S. Navy, I worked with a chief petty officer who claimed he was from “nowhere,” but when he retired he was going to be from St. Joe, Ark. When he found out I was from Arkansas he shared that little bit of information with me.

This guy was a character. He was an old bachelor, married to the Navy. He lived in Navy housing, took his meals at the chief’s mess, and he didn’t even own a car. He was derelict at cashing his Navy issued paychecks, and from time to time the disbursing office (the Navy paymasters) would call to ask me to encourage the chief to cash some of his checks. His desk drawer was full of them.

The point is he didn’t need money, or at least not much. The Navy took care of his every need.

He had been an orphan growing up with various aunts, uncles and cousins in various parts of the country. He really did have no place to call home, so when some friends, Navy retirees actually, invited him to visit St. Joe where they had settled, he did and fell in love with it and the nearby Buffalo River. He decided that was going to be his hometown when he finally retired.

He was still in the Navy when my enlistment was up and I rarely gave him a second thought after I got out and was back at home working at the family newspaper business up in Carroll County.

Then one day, on a Tuesday of course, our receptionist at the time came back to the production area to tell me there was someone up front to see me. I ignored her at first but when she came back a second time I stomped up front fuming at the interruption on such a busy day.

And who was at the front desk but my old Navy Chief buddy just stopping by to say hi on his way to St. Joe. I hardly recognized him because I’d never seen him out of uniform before. He looked like the quintessential tourist in his plaid Bermuda shorts, Hawaiian shirt, black knee-high stockings, and sandals with a camera hanging around his neck.

He had just retired after over 30 years in the Navy. He had no idea Tuesday was a killer day for me, and I couldn’t help but soften my attitude considerably when I saw who it was. We had a nice reunion over a cup of coffee before I told him I had to get a newspaper out. He indicated he understood and headed out to resume his journey to St. Joe. I never saw him again.

I was thinking of that last Tuesday morning as I was driving to make newspapers visits in Pine Bluff, Monticello and Hamburg. The reception I got from Byron Tate at the Pine Bluff Commercial, Tom White at the Advance Monticellonian and Barney White at the Ashley County Ledger was, I’m quite certain, better than I would once give visitors to my newspaper on Tuesdays. All were very cordial.

Knowing every day is a busy one at a newspaper but especially so on Tuesdays at most newspapers, I attempted to be considerate of their time and not take to much of it. I do appreciate the time taken to accommodate me on this unusual Tuesday venture out to visit APA member newspapers.

In case you’re wondering why this particular Tuesday for paying visits, I was en route with Pam to Jackson, Miss. where she was playing in a tennis sectional tournament. I tagged along to make visits and to check-in at the Ameristar Casino Hotel in Vicksburg, Miss., the site for the annual ArkLaMiss Circulation and Marketing Conference.

That conference is in two weeks, on Nov. 5-6. The Mississippi Press Association is in charge of the programming for this year’s conference, and they’ve lined up a dandy.

There remain a couple of the Arkansas Newspaper Foundation grants of $200 to help defray the expense of the trip to Vicksburg. That amount will just about cover the conference as registration is $95 and the hotel rooms are $69, which would leave some for food and gas money, too.

When you weigh the additional costs against what you can potentially learn at this conference, it becomes one of the biggest bargains APA offers. I certainly encourage you to join other circulation and marketing professionals at this conference.

As a bonus again this year, the ArkLaMiss Conference will kick off Thursday morning, Nov. 5, with a newspaper manager’s roundtable designed for newspaper managers of all levels. On the table for discussion will be a variety of topics of relevance to newspapers managers, not just circulation professionals.

This aspect of the ArkLaMiss was begun three years ago as an experiment. The first two were so successful that it’s looking as if this will be a permanent addition to the conference. It certainly compliments the programming as newspaper managers openly discuss their challenges and solutions to problems most newspapers share.

Tim Reeves, publisher of The Vicksburg Post, will moderate the manager’s discussion this year.

Several from Arkansas are already signed up to attend the conference, but there’s always room for more. Information on the conference, including registration forms and applications for the two remaining Arkansas Newspaper Foundation grants can be found on the APA Web site at www.arkansaspress.org.

Have a great week!

Tom
Christenson honored with ‘Distinction’

Charlotte Ruth Miller Hodge, 71, of Morrilton died Oct. 12 in her home following a lengthy illness. A graduate of Morrilton High School and School of Cosmetology, she was also the former owner and managing editor of the Conway Petit Jean Country Headlight in Morrilton and the Perry County Petit Jean Country Headlight in Perryville. She was honored with a 50-year service award from the Arkansas Press Association in June 2013. She also worked for the Morrilton Democrat.

Press Association launches new website

The Arkansas Press Association (APA) is again reminding members that this year’s ArkLaMiss Conference will take place Nov. 5-6 at the Ameristar Casino Hotel in Vicksburg, Miss. More details as well as links to online registration forms and downloadable grant applications can be found on the APA’s website (www.arkansaspress.org). The event begins in exactly two weeks.

The annual conference is devoted to providing continuing education in the areas of newspaper circulation, audience development and marketing. The ArkLaMiss Conference is sponsored jointly each fall by the Press Associations of Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi.

Registration for the event is $95, an amount that pales by comparison to the savings and increased revenues that can be realized through information obtained by participating. Additionally, the Arkansas Newspaper Foundation (ANF) is again providing Continuing Education Grants to those who attend the conference. Of the eight originally available, only two grants remain. Each grant provides a $200 reimbursement that not only offsets the registration fee but also hotel and travel expenses.

More information about the grants is available at the Foundation’s Facebook page (http://tinyurl.com/phmt2d5) and on APA’s website. There is a downloadable grant application form there as well. The completed form can be emailed to the ANF at arknewspaperfoundation@gmail.com or faxed to the APA (501.374.7509). Further questions may be directed to Karen Brown at 479.936.6471 or at the email address listed above.

Paul Felicissimo, director of audience development for Gatehouse Media, will address the conference at the first general session on the afternoon of Nov. 5. Rich Brest with Subscriber Promotions will discuss building and retaining readers and revenue on the morning of Nov. 6, and Helen Sosniecki, a newspaper management consultant, will be there to advise attendees on postal issues and hold one-on-one sessions to review individual postal statements.

As in recent years, the meeting will be preceded by a roundtable for newspaper managers. Tim Reeves, publisher of The Vicksburg (Miss.) Post will moderate this program. Dennis Dunn, operations manager of The Anniston (Ala.) Star, will moderate the “Hot Ideas” Session on the morning of Nov. 6 prior to Brest’s general session. APA members planning to attend are encouraged to submit their own “hot ideas” in the areas of circulation, marketing and audience development to executive director Tom Larimer (tom@arkansaspress.org); fax: 501.374.7509. The last day to submit ideas is Oct. 30 since all of the submitted ideas will be presented in a booklet at the conference.

The special room rate at the Ameristar Casino Hotel for those attending the ArkLaMiss Conference is $69 and may be obtained by referencing “ALM15.” The hotel may be contacted by phone (885.888.7281) or via its website: www.ameristar.com.
Journalism teacher to get posthumous award

Bonnie Thrasher, an instructor of multimedia journalism and faculty adviser to the Arkansas State University student newspaper, The Herald, will be honored by the College Media Association (CMA) on October 29. Thrasher died in her home in Jonesboro on March 31.

The award recognizes outstanding achievements as a campus publication adviser. The award ceremony will be held at the Austin Hilton Hotel in Austin, Texas, during the 2015 National College Media Association Convention. Sandra L. Combs, assistant professor in the College of Media and Communications and the new adviser to The Herald, will attend along with nine members of the staff. The CMA board has also established the Bonnie Thrasher and Dan Reimold CMA Conference Scholarship Program. She was named Journalism Educator of the Year by the Arkansas Freedom of Information Coalition.

Incogruence in ad creativity

BY JOHN FOUST, RALEIGH, N.C., JOHN@JOHNFOUST.COM

Incogruence is an important characteristic of communication. In order to get a message through, all of the ingredients have to match. Most of the time, congruence comes naturally. Just notice how strange it feels to say the word “yes” and shake your head “no.”

On the other hand, incongruence can generate memorable advertising. Years ago, Volkswagen ran a famous ad which pictured a large photo of their beetle with the simple headline, “Lemon.” The copy explained that the car had been rejected by their inspectors, because a small part – the chrome strip on the glove compartment – was blemished.

The headline didn’t match the photo. How could this shiny new car possibly be a lemon? That’s the power of strategic incongruence.

Unexpected photo-headline combinations are not limited to national advertisers. Consider an ad I once saw for a local title insurance company. Most ads for that industry reflect the somber nature of the profession. Indemnity issues, title defects, and unenforceable mortgage loans are not the most exciting topics in the world.

This was an image ad – a business-to-business ad – which was intended to build name recognition in the legal and real estate markets. When I called the company to get the inside story, I learned that the idea had started with a session to photograph a standard (in other words, boring) pose of the executives of the company sitting at a conference table. At some point, someone told a joke that cracked up the group, and the photographer caught the unscripted moment. A couple of the executives were leaning back in their chairs, grinning from ear to ear. One was rolling her eyes to the ceiling. And another was raising his hands in the air. It looked like they were having the time of their lives.

When the company reviewed the photos, they decided – with lots of encouragement from the photographer – to use the laughing photo. Although it was a complete departure from the original plan, they revamped the copy to fit. With the headline, “Title insurance is serious business,” the ad humanized the company and presented those executives as the kind of people you’d like to know. The message was relevant. It made readers think, “Hey, they’re a team. They’re good enough at what they do to relax and enjoy their work. They won’t bore me to death when I call.”

The title insurance company told me the original headline was supposed to be something like, “We’re here to take care of your title insurance needs.” Pretty weak, huh?

An ad like that would have gotten lost in the blur of countless conference table photos that readers had seen over the years. But thanks to the company’s creative flexibility, they ended up with a memorable message that stood out from their starchy competitors.

Incongruence is no laughing matter. With the avalanche of words and images that bombard consumers each day, it’s smart to use a little incongruence every now and then to break away from the crowd.

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John Foust has conducted training programs for thousands of newspaper advertising professionals. Many ad departments are using his training videos to save time and get quick results from in-house training. E-mail for information: john@johnfoust.com.

REMINDERS AND RESOURCES

• This is Free Speech Week. The annual observance themed “Free Speech: The Language of America®” is running Oct. 19-25. The event is held to raise public awareness of the importance of free speech in our democracy — and to celebrate that freedom. As freedom of speech is a right all American’s share, this non-partisan, non-ideological event is intended to be a unifying celebration. More information: www.freespeechweek.org

• Press cards and decals are available for APA members. Two free cards are available for the publisher and editor. Cards for other members may be obtained for $5 per card. Decals are free while supplies last. Contact Tres Williams (tres@arkansaspress.org) for more information. Or, call 501.374.1500.

• Gov’t/Legal Resources: Members are reminded to take advantage of APA’s online resources for newspapers, including statutes governing publication of notices and tax delinquency lists, state and federal advertising regulations, etc.