



Bulletin

Newsletter of the Nevada Press Association

February 2007

NNA contest entries

Community newspapers should be scouring their best stories and photos for entry in this national contest

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Free beta of Photoshop

It might be especially useful for Intel Mac.



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We're not so objective about objectivity

Oh, reporters and editors might think they are, but ...

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Some bills to watch



NPA will keep you updated in Carson City.

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Longtime editor retires

The Lincoln County Record has a new editor, now that Connie Simkins has retired.

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Propoganda? Never

Do readers view U.S. media with skepticism? And for that matter, do you?

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Bill drafts we'll be watching

As the Nevada Legislature prepares to open on Feb. 5, the Nevada Press Association is gearing up to keep track of bills that affect the industry and lobby on behalf of open government.

So far, among the more than 1,000 bill draft requests from legislators and agencies, none is aimed directly at the business of newspapers. But it's still early.

On other issues, however, we've compiled a list of more than 40 bill drafts that may be of interest. (See Page 3.) Only one has been drafted so far, Senate Bill 10, requested by Sen. Barbara Cegavske, R-Las Vegas. It



Ah, springtime in Carson City. We won't promise the trees will be in bloom, because it could be snowing. But you'll want to be here for Newspaper Day at the Capital on March 8, when we'll hold a luncheon and reception for lawmakers.

prohibits video voyeurism.

While the goal of the bill is admirable — to keep people from being photographed when they have a “reasonable expectation of privacy” — the language is too vague. It’s not difficult to imagine situations in which a news photographer would be put in the position of breaking the law if he or she were to shoot victims of the Mizpah Hotel fire in Reno, for example, fleeing the flames in their underwear.

Two bill drafts are of interest to open-government advocates.

Those are BDR 462 from Sen. Terry Care, D-Las Vegas, which would toughen the open-records law, and BDR 892, from Assembly Speaker Barbara Buckley, D-Las Vegas, which would clarify the state Tax Commission’s standing under the open-meetings law. Neither had been drafted yet.

Care says his bill will reiterate that records are presumed to be open and require an agency to respond to a records request within three days. If it denies the record, it must cite the statute in Nevada law that supports the denial. And if agency is challenged in court, it can use only the defense it cited.

As for the Tax Commission, the Nevada Press Association has been supporting the Attorney General’s Office in its litigation to bring the commission under the open-meeting law. That case is headed to the Supreme Court; no hearing date set yet.

In the meantime, the Tax Commission has approved a temporary regulation that helps bring its decision-making process into the open. When coming out of a closed hearing with a taxpayer who has requested confidentiality, the chairman of the Tax Commission will restate the motion, give the vote and poll the members on how they voted.



Reno Gazette-Journal photographer Lisa Tolda zooms in on Gov. Jim Gibbons during the State of the State address.

This is still quite a ways from having an open hearing, but the attorney general lost that issue in Carson City district court. Judge Michael Griffin ruled that a “closed hearing,” which the commission may hold, also includes deliberating and voting. Thus, the Supreme Court appeal.

Tax commissioners worry that they are required by law to protect the confidentiality of taxpayer records, and if they have an open discussion they’ll be violating that trust.

Buckley’s bill likely will define “confidentiality” for the Tax Commission, so that only sensitive company financial records, proprietary information, trade secrets and the like will be protected. The rest can be discussed in the open.

Many other state boards and commissions must comply with confidentiality laws — particularly those dealing with medical records — so the Tax Commission should be able to find a way to work out the conflicts.

Other bill drafts we’re following fall into the broad categories of ethics and reform. There may be issues we’ll need to address; there may not.

During the session, Trevor Hayes of the Lionel Sawyer and Collins law firm, will be working for the Nevada Press Association as a lobbyist. Executive Director Barry Smith will also be working as a lobbyist (Badge No. 254) in the same manner as former director Kent Lauer. But with Hayes, we’ll have double the coverage.

A goal of the NPA board is for the organization to have a higher profile at the Legislature, being more proactive on issues we want to promote.

To that end, March 8 will be Newspaper Day at the Capital, when we are inviting all of you to join us for a luncheon and reception with legislators.

It’s our every-other-year chance to stand together as an association and show there are a few things, at least, on which we agree.

Newspaper Day at the Capital

March 8

- **Noon luncheon, Room 3100, Legislative Building with lawmakers. Hear from Senate and Assembly leaders**
- **5:30 p.m. reception, Nevada Press Association. Mingle and drink.**

Bills, drafts on NPA's watch list

BDR/ Bill#	Legislator	Description
SB10	Cegavske	prohibits video voyeurism
6	Cegavske	drivers' licenses
17	Titus	community notification of sex offenders
55	Wiener	government accountability
63	Titus	disclosures related to contributions to candidates
35	Buckley	children
36	Buckley	records in child abuse and neglect cases involving death
101	Tiffany	ethics in government
SB13	Care	banners and signs carried or displayed on public sidewalks
146	Conklin	prohibits release of home address of peace officer
150	committee	various changes concerning meetings of the Parole Board
168	committee	ethics
169	committee	lobbying disclosures
171	Koivisto	forfeit office for three breaches of ethical duties
172	Koivisto	public officers and employees
202	Hogan	lobbying disclosure requirements
217	Carpenter	divorce cases
24-237	Townsend	elections
19-299	Nolan	Homeland Security
322	clerks	elections
408	Gansert	elections
447	Cegavske	elections
462	Care	public records
469	assessors	property taxes
470	counties	property taxes
496	Treasurer	unclaimed property
499	Attorney General	community notification of sex offenders
517	Attorney General	Open Meeting Law
542	Secretary of State	election laws
559	Public Safety	duties of the Records Division of Public Safety
566	Ethics Commission	ethics
608	Horsford	public disclosure of legal opinions by local school districts
636	Veterans' Services	prohibits demonstrations at state veterans' cemeteries
652	Supreme Court	filing of candidacy for a judicial office
688	Angle	initiative petitions
14-715	Holcomb	publication of information on registered sex offenders
739	Angle	elections
774	committee	protection of personal identifying information
892	Buckley	Tax Commission open meetings
905	Titus	ethics

Some advice for new legislators

Executive Director Barry Smith was among panelists speaking to freshmen legislators on a recent afternoon as they attended an orientation for their new positions in Carson City.

Here's what he told them about dealing with the press:

- **Establish relationships.** Professional, of course, but you and a reporter need to arrive at some level of mutual trust. Reporters have different personalities, different beats, different experience and different bosses. You won't get along with all of them. But politicians and reporters both tend to be very good at finding common ground when they talk with people.

- **Understand the story.** This has to do with deadlines, assignments from editors and the nature of the publication. Is a reporter under the gun to get one quote into a story before he files it on deadline? Is this a week-end piece in which he's going to in-depth and has time to do the full research? Is it the business reporter? The entertainment reporter for the alternative weekly? The political reporter? An opinion columnist? People who don't cover the Legislature won't be as informed as the reporters who cover it as their beat, so you might have to start from scratch.

Why don't we just put public notices on the Internet?

Here are some points to make when somebody asks, "Why don't we just put public notices on the Internet?"

- They *should* be on the Internet — more notice is better. But they should be on sites widely seen by the public, and the best places to reach them are newspaper web sites. Nevada has a long-standing precedence of putting public notices in publications of general interest, which gives them the greatest opportunity to be seen.

- They shouldn't *JUST* be on the Internet. Sure, lots of people nowadays have access to high-speed Internet. In some communities, the number of households is approaching 35 percent. But those are some of the most wired-in places in the country, like San Jose, and in most of Nevada the penetration of broadband Internet doesn't come close to approaching the reach of the local newspaper.

- By the way, the Internet isn't "free." You have to own a computer, and you have to pay a monthly fee to an Internet provider. It's free about the same way your telephone is free. What that means is the folks least likely to have access to the Internet are poor, elderly and living in rural areas. Let's not shut them out from public notices.

- Government web sites are too often the most confusing, least easy to navigate of any on the Web. Some do a wonderful job, sure, but others can be mighty frustrating. And they're certainly not as easy to navigate as your hometown newspaper. You already know where to find the notices.

- A key aspect of public notices (also known as legal notices) is the independent verification of their publication by a party not affiliated with government — that is, the privately owned newspaper. It wouldn't do much for accountability to have a government agency certify to itself that it did, indeed, publish that notice. That's neither a check nor a balance.

- **Be aware.** Everything you say is on the record. That's the trust I'm talking about. If you want something off the record in a private conversation, you and the reporter need to be very clear about the ground rules. In general, you will be treated fairly by the Capital Bureau reporters and others who need to deal with you in the future. Around Nevada, you will generally be treated fairly. If somebody calls from out of state, or from one of the national media outlets, they could care less because chances are they'll never have to talk to you again.

- **Feed the beast.** Aside from the Capital Bureau reporters, who represent the biggest papers, and the Associated Press, which serves the dailies and some weeklies, there's another group of papers out there from Moapa Valley to Hawthorne to Lovelock looking to fill their pages with news. Press releases, guest columns, letters to the editor have good chances of finding their way into those papers exactly as you present them.

- **Get ahead of the curve.** Because you don't call back doesn't mean there won't be a story. There'll be a story — it just won't have your point of view in it. Be proactive.

Editors tell reporters, "Don't tell me what happened; tell me what's going to happen next." That's your chance to put your 'spin' on a story. The best politicians and public managers at dealing with the press are the ones who tell reporters what's going on before the reporters call to ask. "Yes, there's been a disaster. Now let me tell you how we're going to fix it."

Longtime editor retires in Lincoln County

Connie Simkins has retired after 27 years as editor of the Lincoln County Record in Caliente. The announcement in the Jan. 4 edition notes that Morris Workman, who is also a principle in the new Mesquite Local News, has been named as editor of the Record by the owners, the Thompson family.

Simkins has been a familiar face at Nevada Press Association events for many years, and we trust her retirement will allow her to keep busy doing what she wants without the grind of producing a weekly newspaper.

Also note that the Record now has a web site, www.lcrecordnews.com. According to the announcement, Workman was sports editor for the Desert Valley Times in Mesquite before leaving to help form the Mesquite Media Group last February. That group includes Cindi Delaney and Sue Hurley and, in addition to the Mesquite Local News newspaper, operates mesquitelocal.com and RadioMesquite.

Nevada Press raises rates for NVCAN, 2x2 ads

The prices for two ad networks operated through the Nevada Press Association will rise on Feb. 1.

Nevada Classified Ad Network ads will go to \$149, and 2x2 display ads will cost \$690. They are the first price increases in five years for the networks, which are a major source of funding for the NPA as well as money-making opportunities for member newspapers.

Executive Director Barry Smith said the modest increases not only help catch up with inflation, they reflect growing circulation among member newspapers.

Newly designed brochures for both networks are available for download at www.nevadapress.com.

Classified ad network now available online

The Nevada Press Association has joined with an online venture called matchbin.com for placement of classified ads via the association's new web site, www.nevadapressads.com.

Customers now may place NVCAN ads — which then appear in 20 newspapers statewide — by going to the web site and filling out the required information, then paying by credit card. They also can place an online classified for free.

Matchbin.com, based in Utah, is providing the service to press associations at no charge as a means of building up its network. Utah, Wyoming and Oklahoma are among the state press associations also participating.

Matchbin.com's concept is to leverage the strength of local newspaper classified ads with the reach of the Internet.

NAA unveils new campaign in Vegas

The Newspaper Association of America's annual marketing conference was taking place in late January at Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas and included the unveiling of a new newspaper ad campaign with the tagline: Newspapers: The Multi-Medium.

For more on the campaign, check out the link at www.nevadapress.com.

Dates to remember

- **Feb. 5 — Nevada Legislature opens 74th session**
- **March 1-3 — Inland Press Foundation Weekly Newspaper Conference, Tucson, Ariz.**
- **March 8 — Newspaper Day at the Capital**
- **March 10 — Deadline for dues payments from member newspapers to NPA**
- **March 11-17 — Sunshine Week**
- **March 31 — Deadline for entries in National Newspaper Association's annual Better Newspaper Contest**
- **April 1 — Nevada's Better Newspaper Contest entry packets sent to member papers**
- **April 21-24 — NEXPO 2007, Orlando, Fla.**
- **May 6-9 — Newspaper Association of America annual convention, New York**
- **June 1 — Deadline for entries to NPA's annual Better Newspaper Contest**
- **June 4 — Last day of Legislature**
- **Sept. 28-29 — Annual Nevada Press convention in Reno**

Newspapers investing heavily in technology during 2007

By Kevin Slimp

My e-mail has been filled lately with requests from large newspapers to train their staffs in the InDesign/InCopy (LiveEdit) workflow. After a little digging, I learned that at least two of the largest newspaper chains in the U.S. are making wholesale conversions to workflow systems utilizing InDesign and InCopy.

That explains all the requests. While smaller newspapers have been moving to InDesign in large numbers, it now looks like many of our larger brethren are following suit. It will be interesting to see how Quark responds to this movement in our industry.

GIMP offers no-cost alternative

Quite often, when I'm speaking about new technology at a newspaper conference, someone will ask how I feel about some of the open source software available in OS X. I decided to take a look at one of the most popular open source applications, GIMP.

GIMP is the GNU Image Manipulation Program for Mac OS X. Freely distributed, GIMP is also available for Windows-based machines. First released by two Berkeley students in 1996, GIMP has since grown into a powerful image editor since that time.

While not as feature-filled as Adobe Photoshop, GIMP includes many of the tools newspapers and photographers use in their daily work. GIMP offers the ability to adjust levels, hue & saturation, color mode, size and many other features used to edit photos for newspapers.

I've spent some time editing photos in GIMP, and the process is very similar to the method I use in Pho-



The GIMP desktop looks a lot like Photoshop. It doesn't cost, but there are some drawbacks.

toshop. I did run into a couple of issues. One, while attempting to save a file as EPS with a preview, I continually received an error message and no file was created. I was able to create EPS files without previews, however. I was also unable to open Camera Raw images. GIMP saves files in most formats including eps, tiff, jpeg and even PSD (Photoshop format).

Because GIMP is an open source application, it is designed to be reinforced with plug-ins and scripts to increase its capabilities. Some of its built-in features include: editable text layers, alpha channel support, layers and channels, text layers, several transformation tools, a full suite of painting tools and more.

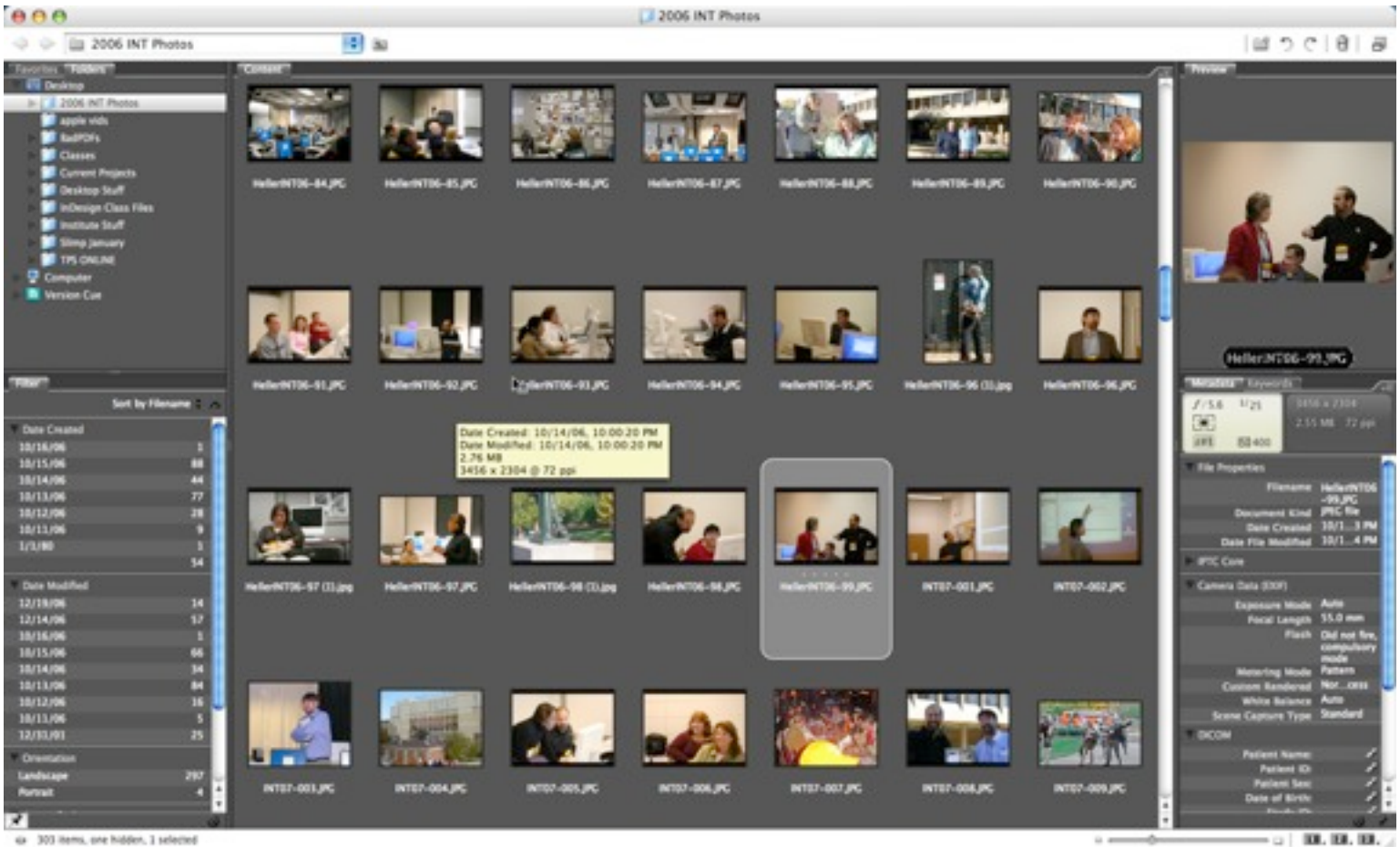
While not a replacement for Photoshop, GIMP is worthwhile for designers who wouldn't normally have Photoshop available on their computers.

To download GIMP or learn more about the various versions of the application, visit www.gimp.org.

Adobe's Christmas present

Adobe played Santa over the holidays by offering users of Photoshop CS2 a free copy of the beta version of Photoshop CS3. A beta is a version of software used by software companies before it actually makes its way to the marketplace.

This release is especially valuable to Mac users who have recently purchased Intel-based computers, only to watch Photoshop suffer, compared to applications created to run on Intel-based Macs. Many Mac users, myself included, have held off purchasing a Macbook (Mac laptop) until the new version of Photoshop became available.



Photoshop CS3 offers an interface with several changes from earlier versions.

I'm guessing that Adobe took a nod from the very popular public release of its new Lightroom software beta in 2006.

I plan to write a detailed review of Photoshop CS3 when it makes its way to the shelves sometime in mid 2007. Till then, let me tell you what impressed me most about the beta. The first thing I noticed was how much faster Photoshop and the Bridge run, compared to the CS2 versions. Raw images, which used to crawl to the screen in earlier versions of the Bridge and Browser, now pop up quickly on my screen. This increase in speed makes it realistic to shoot most of my photos in RAW format rather than in JPEG. In addition, many functions happen much faster.

A new tool, the Quick Selection Brush, is very impressive. With it, I can make a very quick selection. For instance, I used the new tool to click and drag on an area of my son's face in a photo. Immediately, his entire face was selected. I dragged the brush over a red plate with food, and Photoshop created a perfect selection of the plate and the food. Users will love this one.

Adobe further improved the program by adding a couple of Lightroom features to Photoshop's RAW image editor. Combine this with several non-destructive filters and interface changes, and Photoshop users are sure to flock to the new version.

And for my Christmas present to myself, I purchased a 15" MacBook Pro. It works great with the Photoshop beta.

Anyone with a valid copy of Photoshop CS2 can download and install the new beta from <http://labs.adobe.com>.



Inside the riddle of 'objectivity'

By Jim Stasiowski

Winston Churchill once described Russia as "a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma," and that's exactly my thought about our devotion to so-called objectivity.

As a principle for reporters, objectivity sounds admirable. If I go interview someone, and I think he is despicable, I probably shouldn't start the story with, "Joe Schnorz is despicable."

On the other hand, if Joe is despicable, and I can prove he is despicable, I am lying to readers if I portray him as anything other than despicable.

The problem with objectivity, of course, is that we fool ourselves into thinking we can achieve it in some pure form. Our intellects, backgrounds and experiences combine to form our judgment, and all of us have different intellects, backgrounds and experiences.

For instance, if three reporters interviewed Joe Schnorz, even if all three strive to be objective, can there be any doubt that each of the resulting stories would differ from the others?

The broad topic of objectivity would take far too much space to explore meaningfully, so I'm not going to tackle it today. Instead, I'm going to narrow my focus to our floating standards.

When we discuss the dangers of bias, we usually are talking about stories that will make people, their businesses, their organizations or their communities look bad. Frankly, our record on doing such stories is spotty.

Sometimes, we write what we found. We show no favoritism.

My real gripe with objectivity has little to do with the principle itself. It sounds good, but we use it selectively.

That is our best work.

Other times, wishing not to anger sources, we soften the story. We rationalize, using the slippery standard of objectivity. We say that even though we do not like the people (business, etc.) we're writing about, we must remain neutral. Usually, that means we soft-pedal the negative.

Softening makes the writer more comfortable, but comfort rarely produces excellence.

But objectivity has another side. We swear we strive for objectivity in the case of the bad person, but what about the good person? The good business? The good cause?

Ahhhhh, in those cases, we cavalierly abandon objectivity. We fall in love with good people and their causes. Then, we write a typical sweet, unchallenging story.

I recently read two different stories from two different newspapers, and both fell into the same trap of failing to look critically at their topics.

One reporter wrote about school fund-raisers for charities. The story was predominantly lighthearted, a look at offbeat tactics school principals and others use to motivate students to sell, sell, sell for the good of the community.

I was not bothered that the principals dressed up in goofy cos-

tumes. Here's what did bother me: Should schools be using students to raise money? Is that a proper strategy? Shouldn't schools focus on educating children, and leave the fund-raising to others?

I know charities need money. But instead of questioning whether principals should dress up in goofy costumes, shouldn't we be questioning whether schools should turn children into sad-eyed beggars?

If asking such a question offends people, that's a price we must pay.

A different reporter took an uncritical look at a new program started by a women's group. The program's goal is to persuade girls to look into careers that they ordinarily would not pursue. The goal is admirable, to break down society's mindlessly constructed barriers.

The problem: There is no actual program. Some well-meaning women truly wish to steer girls toward non-traditional careers, but the women have only an idea plus -- this is the part I object to -- a \$20,000 grant from the state government.

Before giving a grant, shouldn't a state demand more than just an idea? Shouldn't the women be required to show they have a specific

action plan that has a chance to succeed?

As with the schools' using kids for fund-raising, I am not saying the women are wrong or their program is bad. I am saying we should be asking whether taxpayers' money should go for a program that is a program in name only.

We write a difficult, probing story about a bad person or an unpleasant topic, and we defend it by insisting that we diligently dug up the facts, and that we treat everybody objectively. Then, to avoid

writing a difficult, probing story about a good person or noble-sounding project, we drop objectivity and beg for approval like love-starved puppies.

And that, ultimately, is the curse of so-called objectivity. Sometimes it is our inviolate principle; other times, it is a principle dressed up in a goofy costume.

THE FINAL WORD: I confess, I am an addict: When I speak, I find myself saying "sort of" way too often, as in, "It was sort-of a sur-

prise party, and a few people got sort-of drunk."

When I write, I avoid such a softening of my meaning. However, whatever becomes popular in speech eventually creeps into our writing. I am seeing "sort of" as a softener pop up often in newspapers these days. I think we should, you know, kind of stamp it out.

Writing coach Jim Stasiowski welcomes your questions or comments. Call him at 410 796-0210 or write to 6310 Bayberry Court, No. 1007, Elkridge, Md. 21075.

Developing the Best of the Best

By Chuck Nau

Why do individuals look to newspapers for employment?

Although compensation and benefits are important, many new employees joining a newspapers staff have indicated that status in the community, opportunity for career development (e.g. training - BOTH onsite and within the industry), flexible hours, an immediate contribution (... and recognition!) to their newspaper and the identification and pursuit of a specific career path (e.g. reporting, editing, sales, managing, distribution) in the newspaper business are just as important if not more important to their interest in newspapers.

What do new employees expect with their employment at your newspaper?

Newly hired employees, needless to say, hope to achieve many of those things (as outlined above) that initially interested them in the newspaper industry.

As a publisher or manager you have learned and (long ago!) recognized the importance of fostering

an environment of open and honest communication, with a strong, supportive, and encouraging attitude that inspires creativity ('... when is your creative time?'), risk taking and high motivation by building confidence that leads to trust which in turn generates employee satisfaction.

With all of this in mind, allow me to reiterate some strategies for building a relationship with a new employee or employees ...

- First and foremost, reiterate to your new employee why she was hired. In some cases, it may be not only to sell advertising but to assist you as a manager in motivating and encouraging your sales team to take risks (... she's high spirited, willing to take risks). Then again, in addition to selling advertising, her role may be to slow down, bring some maturity to a young, impulsive sales team (... she's a seasoned salesperson who has sold in the newspaper and other media industries) ... share your vision for your team and identify her role within the team.

- Clarify that he understands your performance expectations. This is an excellent opportunity for you to review with him a written job description of his new position. Also outline how YOU will support his performance (... are your rewards based on performance, NOT effort?) plus what coaching and training you and your team (whether it's managers or some of his peers,) anticipate contributing to assure his success. ... share your expectations matched with your contributions to his career expectations for personal development and growth.

- Encourage and reassure your new employee that open and honest communication exists within your newspaper ... what's your availability and that of other key managers at your newspaper? When questions or problems arise, be sure she understands and is encourage to bring them forward to you or other managers for timely resolution and feedback ... give your permission to employees to ask questions, explore a new opportunity or method, to act on their own initiative. En-

courage ALL employees to give honest and timely feedback ... eliminating innuendoes, rumors and confusion while reinforcing excellence.

- Outline your newspaper's structured feedback (e.g, performance reviews) and steps when his performance (your expectations) or his expectations (your performance) are not in agreement. What needs to happen, how, and when? Clarify again that goals are specific, measurable, agreed upon, realistic, and timely. Encourage risk taking by articulating again and again, that support in failure is available on your team ... offer direction and guidance and suggest ways to prevent failure again ... repeated failure demoralizes an employee AND threatens your entire team.

- Reinforce the vision and journey that you and your team have embarked upon. Everyday, you and your team are striving to foster an environment of open and honest communication, with a strong, supportive, and encouraging attitude which inspires creativity, risk taking and high motivation. Share with her that your newspaper staff is still learning ... making some mistakes (NOT the same mistakes!). Let her know that it is OK for her, as it is for ALL your staff, to openly and honestly communicate to each other ... at times, being the giver of constructive comments and at other times, being the receiver of constructive comments.

... teamwork in planning, problem solving, and increased responsibility enhances individual growth and contribution, thereby assuring

your newspaper's growth and success.

Don't forget, like some of the best symphonies, some of the best employee relationships we have are unfinished!

Chuck Nau of Murray & Nau, Inc. is a Seattle area based publishing consultant and sales and management trainer. He has been a speaker for and conducted advertising, marketing, management and sales training workshops with newspapers, niche publishers, publishing groups and press associations, throughout North America.

Comments and questions are welcome and may be directed to Chuck via email: murnau@nmlink.com. or at (425) 603 - 0984.

Nevada Press Association
102 N. Curry St.
Carson City, NV 89703
nevadapress.com

President
Matt Huffman

Las Vegas Sun

First Vice President
Nancy Streets

Sparks Tribune

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Lahontan Valley News

Ken Kliewer

Ely Times

Holly Rudy-James

Humboldt Sun

Rhonda Zuraff

Elko Daily Free Press

Executive Director

Barry Smith

775-885-0866, nvpress@callatg.com

NNA seeks entries for its 2007 contests

COLUMBIA, MO—The National Newspaper Association is calling for entries in its 2007 Better Newspaper Contest and Better Newspaper Advertising Contest, the premier national contests for community newspapers.

“Each year we are incredibly proud to recognize the best in community journalism and advertising,” said NNA President Jerry Tidwell, publisher of the Hood County News in Granbury, TX.

Participation is limited to NNA member newspapers published Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 2006, with one exception: web site categories, which are judged “in place.” There is no limit on the number of entries that may be submitted to the contest or in any one category.

All entries must be postmarked by Mar. 31, 2007. Each entry must be accompanied by a completed entry form and \$20 entry fee. The rules and forms are available on NNA’s web site at www.nna.org/Contests/bncmain.html.

Copies of the rules and entry forms will also be included in the January and February issues of NNA’s Publishers’ Auxiliary.

“The National Newspaper Association’s Better Newspaper Contest has made us a better newspaper,” says Larry Atkinson, publisher of the Mobridge (SD) Tribune and 2006 contest winner. “By competing with the best community newspapers in America each year, it continually raises the bar for all of us on the Mobridge Tribune staff to constantly strive to publish a better



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paper for our readers. It's our readers who benefit the most, but it also raises the morale of our staff by being recognized by our peers for our efforts. Everybody wins in that scenario," he said.

Early-bird incentive: Newspapers submitting contest entries postmarked by Mar. 1, 2007 will be given a chance to win one free registration to NNA’s Annual Convention & Trade Show and a ticket to the Toast to the Winners awards reception and ceremony in Norfolk, VA, Sept. 26-29, 2007.

Additional incentives: Newspapers that submit more combined entries to the 2007 BNC/BNAC than they did in 2006 will receive \$5 in NNA Bucks per additional entry. Newspapers that did not submit any entries last year can receive \$25 in NNA Bucks if they submit at least five entries

Contest bucks can be used toward the cost of your 2007 convention registration, to help pay contest entry fees in 2008, or to purchase NNA logo items or books.

Questions? Contact Sara Dickson at (573) 882-5800.

Is it *our* truth or *their* propoganda

by Randy Hines

Faculty, just like journalists, get tons of unsolicited materials. One booklet I received early in 2007 is intriguing for both of the above professions. Titled “How to Detect Media Bias & Propaganda in National and World News,” the publication provides much food for thought. “The Thinker’s Guide for Conscientious Citizens on ...” is its subtitle kicker.

Published by the Foundation for Critical Thinking, the 50-page treatise is aimed at helping readers detect bias in national and international coverage.

The journalism school debate about the impractical nature of total objectivity is explored.

“If objectivity or fairness in the construction of news stories is thought of as equivalent to presenting all the facts and only the facts, objectivity and fairness is an illusion. No human knows more than a small percentage of the facts and it is not possible to present all the facts” (Page 4).

Since the media tell readers what’s important to them, then the public is also irrational when it comes to objectivity, according to the book. So the issue of human objectivity is considered an unattainable ideal.

Nevada journalists should know how the public is urged to achieve objectivity by the booklet’s four suggestions.

- Identify the point of view from which a news story is constructed;
- Identify the audience it is written to;

- Recognize what points of view it is negating or ignoring; and
- Distinguish the raw facts behind the story from the journalist’s interpretation and spin.

We all know that other countries’ viewpoint on international stories is much different from our own. Their citizens see things from a unique point of view and read different stories than we do. The global approval rating of the U.S. is almost as bad as Bush’s in this country.

Rather than U.S. citizens condemning the biased foreign press coverage, the booklet urges them to consider that their own media could be biased.

“Every nation’s press coverage of the ‘news’ appears to the mass public of that culture as expressing self-evident truth – because the news is routinely presented within the world view of the mass public that ‘consumes’ that news” (Page 10). So all media present a biased world view, based on their own cultures and audiences. Citizens who are naturally inclined to have a national bias develop a prejudice toward other viewpoints.

The publication lists 20 underreported or ignored stories that U.S. readers will not see in the mainstream media here. These include:

- Do respected countries in the word consider the U.S. a danger to world peace?
- Does the U.S. have a responsibility to live in accordance with the international treaties it signs?
- To what extent has America been involved in crimes against humanity?

• Did the United States try to block a U.N. anti-torture vote?

• Did the U.S. try to defeat the World Health Organization-sponsored treaty to ban cigarette ads worldwide?

Offered as alternative news sources, beyond the mainstream, are Counter Punch, Common Dreams, The Guardian, Harpers, Mother Jones, The Nation and The Village Voice.

“Every citizen in the world needs access to news sources and commentary that question the self-image maintained by the home culture through its own mass media. ... For most U.S. consumers of the news, the self-image of the U.S. as a defender of human rights, individual freedom, democratic values, and social justice is unquestionably justified. ... Most consumers of the news media do not know how to bring forward ‘buried’ information. They do not know how to read the news critically. Most have never seriously questioned their country’s image. Therefore, they see no reason to seek out dissenting stories or to question highly nationalistic self-portraits” (Page 37).

Written by Dr. Linda Elder and Dr. Richard Paul, both staff members of the California-based Center for Critical Thinking, journalists may want to see what their readers are being told. The Web site is www.criticalthinking.org.

Dr. Randy Hines teaches in the Department of Communications at Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove, Pa. 17870. He may be reached at (570) 372-4079 or randyhinesapr@yahoo.com.