

THE KANSAS PUBLISHER



A MONTHLY PUBLICATION FOR THE KANSAS NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY

AUGUST 6, 2008

INSIDE TODAY

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Tom Eblen shares tips to improve your reporting.

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Doug Anstaett says newspapers need to do what they do best.

KPA CALENDAR

AUG. 8

Western Kansas Mini-Convention, Garden City

AUG. 14

Little Brown Jug qualifier, Salina

AUG. 21

KPA Board meeting, Topeka

AUG. 27

Media and the Law seminar, Great Bend

SEPT. 6-14

Kansas State Fair KPA Booth Hutchinson (Please volunteer)

OCT. 23

KPA board meeting, Junction City

OCT. 24

KPA Advertising Conference, Junction City



Tom Eblen (right) works with members of Taylor Newspapers in southeast Kansas in 2006. Eblen provides the Community Newspaper Tune-up for just his travel and meal expenses.

Tune-ups provide newspapers way to improve reporting skills

The Kansas Press Association's Community Newspaper Tune-ups began on a monthly basis in 2005.

They were an outgrowth of Reporter's Boot Camps held in Topeka, Hays and Moran for groups ranging from as small as two to nearly 40.

It was evident that newspaper reporting training had value for our members, but that value required an available classroom.

So Doug Anstaett, executive director of the KPA, asked Tom Eblen, KPA's news consultant, to see what could be done to reach interested

member newspapers with individualized training. Since then Eblen has visited 36 member papers in all parts of the state.

Cost to the papers? Just Eblen's mileage and expenses. No charge for preparation, time and presentation.

KPA's goal was to provide affordable professional training for individual newspaper staffs – dailies or weeklies.

Each visit began with a detailed critique of one issue of the paper and ended with a review

See TUNE-UPS on Page 2

Advertising conference set for Oct. 24

Jeffrey Hansler will be the keynote speaker at the 2008 KPA Advertising Conference Oct. 24 at the Courtyard by Marriott in Junction City.

Hansler's topic, "You Make It Happen," takes the audience on a humorous journey of building better communi-

cations skills. His stories are designed to encourage, provide insight and teach skills that will work in both professional and personal situations.

The program includes planning, agreement, personality approaches, the power of questions and four specific skills to persuade.

Breakout sessions will include Hansler on "Powerful Sales Presentations" and Toni Boyles on "Coaching for Success."

Advertising awards will be presented during lunch. More information will be available about room rates and times in the next few weeks.

Eblen lists some helpful hints from past newspaper tune-ups

By Tom Eblen

Here is a list of the subjects I often address during tune-ups:

□ Reporters always need to ask the next question. Sometimes stories weren't as fully developed as they needed to be.

□ When obvious sources decline to elaborate, look for other sources who could provide specifics.

□ Writers and editors should pitch coverage forward rather than simply looking backward at what has happened. Stories should look ahead before they get into the nitty-gritty details.

□ Some stories are too long. Break them apart. Readers are more likely to fasten on a separate headline than to wade through a column and a half of county commission coverage.

□ Speaking of headlines, they usually can be better. Treat the reader with a clever headline in good taste. The workbook included 15 headline suggestions.

□ Be sensitive to your readers. It the average age is 60, think about using larger body type. Of course 6-point type has real value when you're trying to squeeze information in, but remember the trifocal wearer.

□ Local rules, whatever the size of the market. It's the one thing that your newspaper has that distinguishes it from other newspapers. Local represents the value your readers are paying for.

□ Stock market listings are vanishing from dailies. However, local commodity markets make good sense for farm communities.



Tom Eblen

ever, local commodity markets make good sense for farm communities.

See TUNE-UP TIPS on Page 3

Tune-ups

Continued from Page 1

of a workbook prepared by the KPA for each participant.

The idea of a detailed critique gave some editors pause. After all, who wants to have the warts pointed out. But Eblen made a point of emphasizing good work as well as suggesting that some things could have been better. The goal was to train, to look for ways to be better more than to criticize.

Eblen provided a written analysis for each editor or publisher to use as he or she saw fit. It was the basis for the critique review, which was conducted with all staff members present.

Not surprisingly, reporting took up the most time, especially for relatively new reporters who had had little journalism

training. Newspapers visited were as small as the weekly Chase County Leader-News, where Jerry Schwilling essentially is a one-man show, to the much larger Salina Journal and Hutchinson News.

So, how are such newspaper critiques received by the staffs of Kansas newspapers?

"It gave our entire staff, from four different newspapers, a chance to gather and listen to someone who truly knew what he was talking about --- for once!" said Rudy Taylor, owner of Taylor Newspapers in southeast Kansas.

"Our employees enjoyed the day. Few of them have enjoyed the privilege of studying journalism in college so this was a special occasion for them. We ran stories in the next week's editions telling about the individual employees attending a conference and studying under one of Kansas' leading experts in the field of newspaper journalism."

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THIS MONTH'S QUESTION

I need demographic information on my home county? Is there a way to get it inexpensively?

Yes. KPA has a contract with a firm that provides such statistics — and we provide it to you at no cost. Just contact Nicole Schings at nschings@kspress and she'll prepare them for you.

Tune-up tips

Continued from Page 2

• The editorial page is an important way for the editor to communicate with readers and for community members to communicate with one another. By all means, discuss vital local issues.

❑ Do readers actually read stories that continue from the front page? Sometimes they don't even read to the jump line. Important news or well-written features can jump as much as you like. If a story isn't special, try to hold it to page 1 and key to a related story on the inside.

❑ Squeeze your writing. Wring out the extraneous words when you can take the time. (Hint. It takes longer, but it helps readers.)

❑ As the price of newsprint continues to make like Jack and the Beanstalk, the value of your newsprint goes up as well. Consider whether you can afford one-inch-deep page headers.

❑ Be sure to credit the source of information that you print. If it comes from K-State or KU, say so.

❑ And speaking of K-State and KU, the official names are Kansas State University and the University of Kansas. Woe be unto the writer who identifies one school when intending another.

❑ Don't hesitate to run good pictures big.

❑ Find ways to run pictures contributed by community members. That's one more way to connect you to community.

❑ Sports coverage should not be limited to boys and girls high school games. Run everything you can get, including weekly standings of kids leagues.

❑ A consistent error – the correct sequence of time-date-place. For example, the meeting will be at 10 a.m. Monday, Sept. 8, at KPA headquarters in Topeka.

❑ Attribution. When a name is introduced, do it this way, said Tom Eblen, news consultant for the Kansas Press Association. That avoids the awkwardness of sticking said, the verb of attribution, alone at the end.

❑ Attribution on second reference: Eblen said, not said Eblen.

❑ Money still matters. When a new public official is hired, be sure to include how much he or she makes.

❑ As a general practice, every story needs at least two sources.

❑ Strive to make every story just as long as it needs to be but not too long. Answer obvious questions, but don't feel as if you must empty your notebook into each story. Deciding what to leave out improves what you put in.

Kansas State Fair gives industry good chance to toot its own horn

Here's an idea that will help you promote the Kansas Press Association and have fun at the same time.

KPA will for the second consecutive year have a booth at the State Fair Sept. 6 through 14. All members are encouraged to send volunteers to help staff the booth. Please contact Emily Bradbury at ebradbury@kspress.com to volunteer.

Last year, we focused almost entirely on the Bill of Rights. This year, we want to provide a varied educational experience for those who stop by our booth.

We'll be touting the importance of open government and the value of newspapers to our communities.

In addition, Kids Voting Kansas, which KPA manages, will also conduct a straw poll of students on their presidential preference for 2008.

Our thanks to the volunteers so far:



Gary and Twyla Mehl of the McPherson Sentinel.

Dale and Linn Hogg of the Great Bend Tribune.

Tom and Jeannie Eblen of KPA.

Ben Marshall of the Sterling Bulletin.

Todd Vogts of the Moundridge Ledger.

Les and Nancy Anderson of Wichita State University.

Deadline nears for Little Brown Jug

The deadline is fast approaching for the Little Brown Jug qualifying tournament that will help us choose the four golfers to compete against the Missouri Press Association in October at Excelsior Springs, Mo.

The qualifying event is scheduled for Thursday, Aug. 14 at the Salina Municipal Golf Course. We have four tee times set up beginning at 11:30 a.m.

As of today, we have nine golfers signed up and can accommodate up to seven more. The deadline is 5 p.m. Monday, Aug. 11. Cost is \$50 per golfer,

which includes greens fees, cart, lunch and prizes.

Here are the golfers signed up:

Tom Broeckelman, Gove County Advocate

Jay Lowell, Jim Lowell and Brad Lowell, Concordia Blade Empire

Ben Marshall, Sterling Bulletin

Jim Misunas, Lyons News

Robin Clasen, Eureka Herald

Rachel Clasen, Eureka Herald

John Settle, Larned Tiller & Toiler

Contact Rachel Willis at rwillis@kspress.com to sign up.

NEWSMAKERS

Sarah Kessinger has left her position with Harris News Service in Topeka to become editor of the Marysville Advocate, owned by her parents, Howard and Sharon Kessinger.

Web and Schmitt Hawkins are at the Life Care Center in Osawatimie after Web was injured in another fall recently. Schmitt continues her treatment for cancer. Cards may be sent to: Web and Schmitt Hawkins, Life Care Center, 1615 Parker Ave., P.O. Box 159, Osawatimie, KS 66604.

The Wichita Eagle announced these promotions: Jean Hays and Tom Shine have been named deputy editors/news;

Michael Roehrman is deputy editor/production and Nick Jungman is deputy editor/interactive, while Dan Loving was named business editor.

Sarah Solomon has retired after 29 years with the Kingman Leader-Courier.

Pam Soetaert of the Russell County News has been promoted to Main Street Media ad manager and will retain her role as assistant publisher.

Michelle Seeber has been named editor of the Russell County News.

Victoria Singer is the new accountant for the Kansas Press Association.

How are you doing? Ask your readers

By Jim Pumarlo

When is the last time readers complained about the accuracy of a story? Or called to say they're pleased with a story but irritated by a headline? Or found fault with how their ideas and statements were conveyed in a story?



Jim Pumarlo

News staffs translate hundreds of facts daily – some information is received firsthand and other secondhand. Some facts are included in comprehensive reports on important community subjects.

Others are part of the daily churn of police reports, obituaries, weddings and en-

gagements, and government meetings.

Through all of these stories, one tenet governs the work of newsrooms: accuracy. If the facts are wrong, the newspaper loses its credibility.

In the pursuit of fairness and accuracy, newspapers should consider implementing a "fact check" sheet. Individuals who either are sources or subjects of news stories are the best judge of how editors and reporters are doing their jobs. So why not ask them directly.

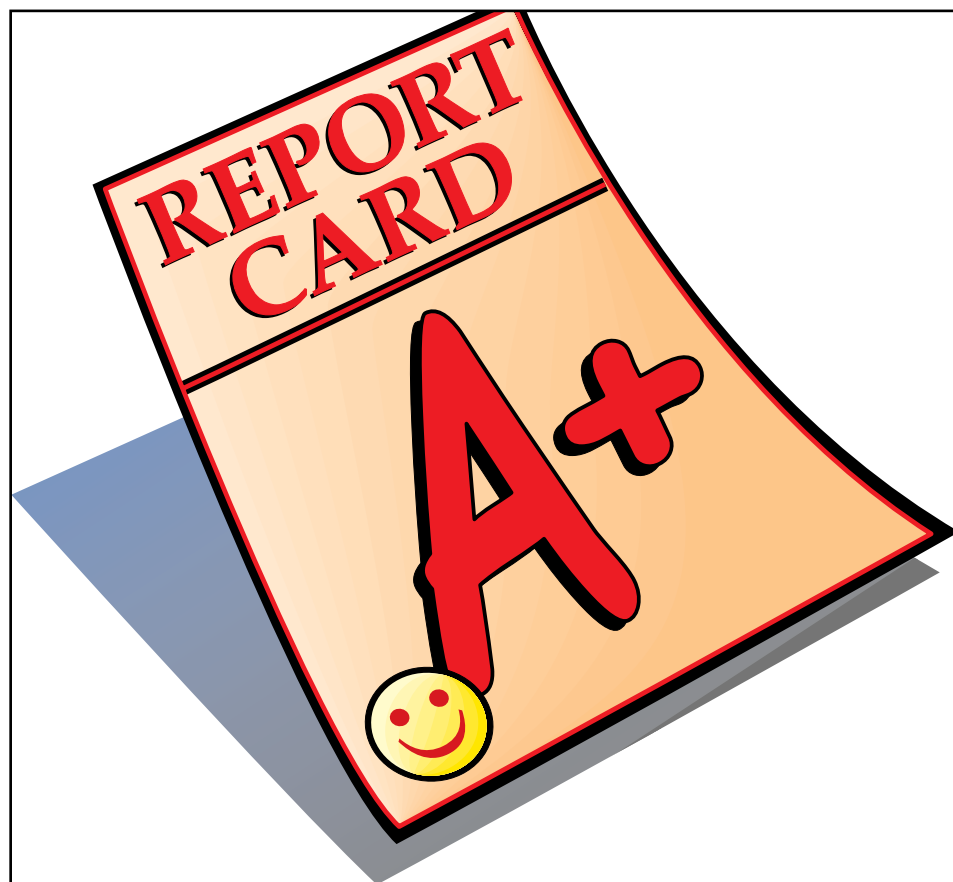
The process can be straightforward. Select a couple of stories from each edition and send a copy to an individual who either was contacted or who might have been identified in each story. Then ask a series of questions. For example:

Are the facts in the story/photo accurate, including spelling of names and addresses?

Were the quotes attributed to you used in proper context?

In general, do you consider this newspaper to be accurate?

Other questions regarding news content can be asked as well. What are the most interesting sections of this newspaper? Do other topics or issues warrant attention? Are any "voices" or constituencies lacking



in coverage?

The "fact check" is an excellent tool to ask additional questions about your newspaper beyond strictly the news product. For example: What's your primary source of news? What other publications/me-

dia outlets do you routinely depend on for information? How long have you subscribed to this newspaper? If you do not subscribe to this newspaper, why not? Can we improve upon customer service – in any

department?

Newspapers should regularly check in with their customers to see how they are doing their jobs. And there are other avenues to do so:

- "Ask the editors" night – Open the telephone lines for an evening to let readers ask anything on their minds. Top-level managers from the various

departments should be on hand with the goal of answering as many questions on the spot as possible. If you don't have the answer, take down the customer's name and telephone number and respond within 24 hours. This is an excellent promotion during National Newspaper Week, but it obviously can be done any time.

- "Brown bag" lunches – Convene a series of conversations with readers. Buy your customers lunch in exchange for their feedback. If you're soliciting comments on overall content, be sure your participants are representative of your community's demographics. Or maybe tailor the session and its participants to a specific content area – for example, agriculture, business or youth coverage.

- Reader boards – Organize a board comprised of readers with rotating membership. The individuals meet with the editor on a monthly basis and offer everything from editorial ideas to a critique of newspaper content.

The "fact check" is most useful as a regular connection with readers. Be sure to vary your selection of stories from

Open the telephone lines for an evening to let readers ask anything on their minds. Top-level managers from the various departments should be on hand with the goal of answering as many questions as possible on the spot.

See DON'T BE AFRAID on Page 5

Every newspaper can use a special ad section

As parents of two teenagers, my wife and I consider the time of mid-May to mid-August as our summer.

And with the 2008 Jackson County Fair now in the history books and the month of August in full swing, we know that our summer is just about over.

We have been busy. In our spare time, we've been attending our kids' baseball and softball games, not to mention their basketball and volleyball games. We estimate we were fans at more than 150 such contests this summer.

Maybe we ran into you at a concession stand. If I ever see another sunflower seed, it will be too soon.

In between newspaper work and ball games, we have been directing our kids' summer jobs — painting the outside of our home. That job, sad to say, is not completed just yet. But it's on my list of things to do.

Here at The Holton Recorder, we have already printed and distributed our 2008



David Powls

"Back to School" guide and are working on the paper's annual "County Fair Results" section.

These special sections are popular with our readers. The Back to School section included half to full page ads from our three districts in the county and stories about who and what's new in the districts.

The county fair results section will include more than 100 advertisements from area business and professional people (each measuring 2 columns by 3 inches) and an equal number of photos of 4-H kids and their exhibits, along with a complete list of ribbon results.

While the month of December has always been one of our busiest months because of the special Christmas Greeting section we produce, July is running a close second.

We've also been busy producing political advertisements and completing our primary election coverage, which featured stories on all the candidates.

Next week, we'll start lining up advertisements for our annual "Fall Sports Photo Section" — team photos of all the middle school and high school teams, cheer squads and dance teams.

We call these extra projects beyond the regular pages of our semi-weekly Recorder "special sections" but they are really

just part of our annual routine. We need the extra projects because of the revenue they generate and because they enhance our news product.

By producing our own photos for these special sections, we also can sell them in full color at our website through a company called dotphoto.

All newspapers need special advertising sections. The Iola Register, for example, produces a "Meet The People" special section each year that contains group photos of many of the local business and professional people, and their staffs, in the Allen County trade area. Of course, each business pays an ad rate for having their photo and a brief write-up in the section.

Here at The Recorder, we produce a "Meet The People" special section every other year or so. The work and time it takes is sometimes exhausting, but if you and your staff could do just one special section, this might be the one to do.

Most of the ideas we've had regarding special ad sections, we've copied from other papers. Next time you're reading through your "exchange" papers, maybe you can find one that fits your community.

David Powls is president of the Kansas Press Association for 2008-09.

Don't be afraid to ask your readers

Continued from Page 4

routine news briefs and meeting reports to in-depth series and feature stories. If applicable, it might be worthwhile to send the same story to two different individuals to see if they offer similar perspectives on the report. Share the feedback with the individual writers whose stories were selected as well as with the entire news staff and other departments.

The concerns or ideas identified on the questionnaires will offer insight into what readers believe your newspaper is doing right and will challenge editors to improve areas where their staffs are not meeting expectations. The goal is to solicit feedback from a range of readers — new and longtime residents, young and old, men and women — and from a geographic representation of your markets.

Newspapers should be sincere in asking readers to be honest and straightforward in their answers, underscoring that the feedback will direct your staffs to strive a stronger product. At minimum, these 'fact

checks" earn newspapers high marks for showing concern about accuracy, fairness and breadth of coverage. The comments often can prompt a follow-up phone call and a fruitful conversation beneficial to both the reader and editor.

Editors also should seize the opportunity to explain to readers in a column what you've heard and what steps will be taken to address the concerns. And for those expectations that might fall short of what can be practically accomplished, explain that to readers, too. In the end, you may not get everyone to agree, but your goal is to help them understand your decisions and operations.

Jim Pumarlo writes, speaks and provides training on *Community Newsroom Success Strategies*. He is author of *"Votes and Quotes: A Guide to Outstanding Election Coverage"* and *"Bad News and Good Judgment: A Guide to Reporting on Sensitive Issues in a Small-Town Newspaper."*

He can be contacted at www.pumarlo.com.

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Use analogies to help explain importance of ad consistency

By John Foust

Analogies can help sales people become more persuasive in dealing with advertisers.

Russ told me about a meeting he had with a real estate advertiser who was thinking about shifting his budget to a new real estate magazine. It was a delicate situation, because he was faced with the task of re-selling a long-time client.



John Foust

"I knew I shouldn't say, 'That's the craziest thing I've heard all week,'" Russ explained. "And I knew the client might become defensive if I openly criticized the new magazine. So I had to figure out a non-threatening way to compare the two publications. I had a hunch that a direct comparison of rates and readership figures wouldn't work, so I decided to use an analogy."

Russ remembered that his advertiser's hobby was fishing, so he started with a simple question: "You like to fish, don't you?"

The client said, "Sure."

"Let's say that there are two lakes side-by-side. You're familiar with the first lake. You've caught fish there, and your friends have caught fish there – so there's no doubt in your mind that the first lake contains fish. But you don't know if there are any fish in the second lake. So the big question is: would you rather fish in a place where you know there are fish, or in a place where there might be fish?"

The advertiser said, "I see where you're

going with this. Of course, I'm going to spend most of my time at the first lake."

"It's the same in real estate," Russ said. "You know from experience that people read our real estate section, because it has generated business for you in the past. On the other hand, this new magazine is an unknown entity. Your prospective customers might read it, but then again they might not."

Russ told me that the advertiser decided to stay with his paper, and put the new magazine on hold. Although he may have eventually made the same decision without the fishing comparison, the analogy gave him a better understanding of his media choice.

Here are a couple of points to ponder:

1. Use the word "like." By definition an analogy is a comparison between two unrelated things. In selling, it's a matter of comparing something which is new or misunderstood to something which is familiar to the client. Think about how you would finish these analogies:

☐ Using a testimonial in an ad is LIKE...

☐ Advertising on a consistent basis is LIKE...

☐ Leaving the price out of a product ad is LIKE...

2. Use visual images. Close your eyes and think of your best friend. What do you see – a name or a face? Of course, you see a face. That's because it's human nature to think in pictures. It was easy for Russ' advertiser to visualize those two lakes.

Good sales people understand this trait of human nature and use it to communicate more effectively. They use analogies which are easy to see in the mind's eye.



E-mail **John Foust** for information about his training videos for ad departments: jfoust@mindspring.com.

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KPA CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

NEWS

The **Parsons Sun** needs a sports editor. Cover high school and community college sports; designs pages. Send resume, clips and cover letter to Ray Nolting, rnolting@parsonssun.com or to P.O. Box 836, Parsons, KS, 67357.

Who says newspapers are dying? The **Hutchinson News**, Hutchinson, KS, needs a very alive and experienced reporter for its award-winning print edition. And the right candidate also should embrace the ever-expanding reporting opportunities for the newsroom's online edition, hutchnews.com. We need a journalist who can report and write, and one who can work with a team of talented reporters, editors, designers and photographers. The Hutchinson News is the flagship paper of the Harris Group, which owns four other dailies in Kansas and one in Iowa. The News offers a competitive salary, a PSP, 401(k) and other benefits. Please submit a letter of application, a resume and five clips by Aug. 4, 2008, to: Janet Brown, Human Resources Assistant, The Hutchinson News, Box 190, Hutchinson, KS 67504-0190 or e-mail jbrown@hutchnews.com.

The Topeka-based **Harris News Service** has an opening for a senior correspondent/investigative reporter to cover state government for five Harris newspapers in Kansas. Applicant should have at least five years reporting experience with strong reporting and writing skills. Journalism or related degree required. The ideal candidate must be an aggressive journalist who understands the open records as well as FOIA process; be creative, a strong writer, a good communicator and have solid news judgment. We're looking for someone to swim beneath the surface of Topeka's news scene and break compelling investigative stories as well as contribute to the daily news reports. We need a self-starter who can see under water at the capitol, courts and state government. The winning candidate will be able to demonstrate enterprise in investigating stories and creativity in story-telling. If you're looking for a desk job, this is not the job for you. The ideal candidate will relish being out in the field working face-to-face with sources, digging for stories and finding the real people who are impacted by the stories we cover. The candidate also will have strong computer-assisted reporting skills and a proven track record of developing a strong source network to provide hard-hitting enterprise reporting. Experience in photography and producing content for online platforms a plus. Ability to work under deadline and on a flexible schedule important. Exemplary communication skills and previous experience working in a team environment desired. This full-time position, which is part of a two-person watchdog reporting team, offers a competitive salary and benefit package. Send cover letter, resume, salary requirements and four news clips to

Want to advertise in the Publisher?

Contact Nicole Schings at KPA for rates and availability at:

(785) 271-5304
or
nschings@kspress.com

Jeanny Sharp, editor/publisher, The Ottawa Herald, 104 S. Cedar, Ottawa KS 66067 or via email to jsharp@ottawaherald.com. No phone calls please.

The **Southwest Times**, a top award-winning three times a week newspaper in Liberal, KS, has an immediate need for a reporter. We are looking for a third person to complete our writing staff. Good pay, good benefits, and management has the highest commitment to excellence. This will be the kind of newspaper where you can really make a difference. Contact James Gutzmer at editor@swdtimes.com or call the Times at 620-624-2541 for more information.

The **Garden City Telegram** is seeking a reporter who can cover the law enforcement/courts beat in southwest Kansas, in addition to helping out with general news and feature stories. Ideal candidates will have sharp reporting skills, the ability to go beyond superficial coverage and experience with, or the desire to learn, multimedia skills. Experience at a daily newspaper a plus, but recent college graduates ready to hit the ground running will be considered. Candidates who are bilingual in Spanish preferred, but not required. The Telegram, part of the six-newspaper Harris Group, offers a generous salary and benefits package, a chance to work with an outstanding staff and opportunity for advancement. We are an afternoon daily with a Saturday morning edition. The Telegram is an Equal Opportunity Employer. To apply, send resume, cover letter and work samples to: Brett Riggs, managing editor, The Garden City Telegram, 310 N. Seventh St., Garden City, KS 67846. For more information or to express interest in the position, send e-mail riggs@gctelegram.com.

Experienced Reporter/Editor: The **Smithville Herald** (suburban Kansas City, Mo.) has immediate opening for Smithville editor. Responsibilities include reporting, making story

budgets, taking photos, proofing pages, supervising PT reporter, etc. Candidates must have newspaper reporting experience. The Smithville Herald is a division of NPG Newspapers, a family-owned company based in St. Joseph, Mo. To apply, send resume, cover letter and clips to publisher Matt Daugherty at mdaugherty@npgco.com. For more information, see our ad on journalismjobs.com. EOE

PRODUCTION

Immediate opening for a full-time press operator for a Harris V15A press. The ideal candidate will have more than 3 years of offset web press experience to print our daily newspaper and commercial printing jobs. Darkroom and plate-making experience are a plus. Salary commensurate with work experience. This position offers a competitive benefit package, primarily daytime hours with the exception on an alternating Friday evening shift and a team-oriented fast-paced work environment. Only those with a good work ethic and solid attendance record need apply. Please submit an application and/or resume to the attention of Jeanny Sharp at The **Ottawa Herald**, 104 S. Cedar, Ottawa KS 66067 or via email to jsharp@ottawaherald.com.

CIRCULATION

Weeklies — attract more subscribers and turn your circulation into CASH with the proven Hometown Sweepstakes circulation development program. Cheaper & better than telemarketing with a no-fee guarantee! Now booking fall '08 promotions. See more at www.hometownsweepstakes.com, or e-mail Dane Hicks at dhicks@garnett-ks.com.

UNIVERSITY

Photographer, **KU University Relations**, Lawrence campus. Full-time. \$30,000-\$33,000/yr plus full benefits. Required: three yrs full-time professional photo exp plus associate's degree or higher. Application deadline: 8-07-08. For full position description and application instructions, go to <https://jobs.ku.edu> and search by position 00000462. An EO/AA employer.

Communications/government: legislative & communications manager, **KU University Communications**, Lawrence campus. \$45,000-\$50,000 annually plus full benefits. Organize and expedite workflow for Govt Relations & Univ Communications. Required: bachelor's degree, 2 yrs exp w/database, calendaring, and spreadsheets, exp w/public, 2 yrs exp in PR, legislative, govt or non-profit office. For full position description and application instructions, go to <https://jobs.ku.edu> and search by position 00203127. An EO/AA employer.

Newton educator pens new book on William Allen White

He won two Pulitzer prizes, he received honorary degrees from Harvard and seven other universities, he advised presidents and he was acclaimed by LIFE magazine as “an American institution.”

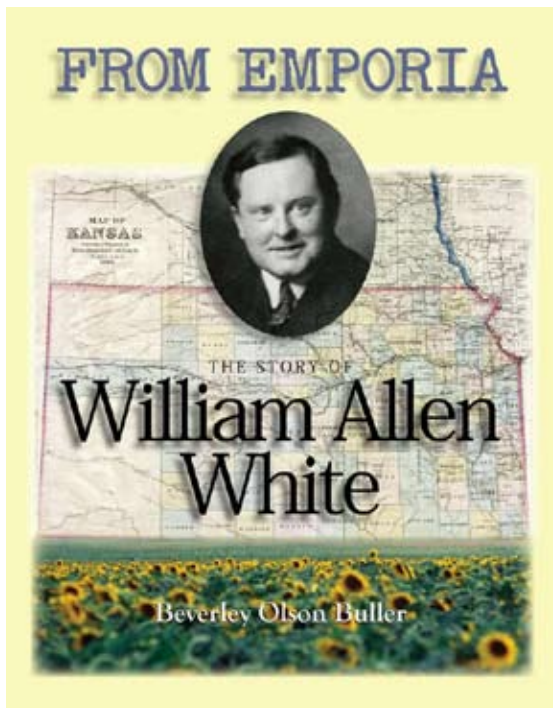
Yet for William Allen White, home was always Kansas, and his primary role was editor of the Emporia Gazette. In a half-century on the job, his engaging and perceptive writing brought the world to Kansas and Kansas to the world.

A new book is re-introducing William Allen White to Kansans of all ages: “From Emporia: The Story of William Allen White.”

Author Beverley Olson Buller is an educator in Newton, Kan., a lifelong Kansan and vice chairman of the selection committee for the William Allen White Children’s Book Award.

The illustrated biography takes its title from White’s introductory editorial for the Gazette in 1895:

“He hopes to always sign ‘from Emporia’ after his name, when he is abroad, and he trusts that he may so endear himself to the people that they will be as proud of the first words of the signature as he is of the last words.”



White was born in Emporia in 1868. He spent his childhood years in El Dorado, Kan., before his family moved back to Emporia.

After a brief stint at The Kansas City

Star, White returned again to Emporia and lived there until his death in 1944. Along the way, he crafted some of America’s most memorable editorials. Among them was “What’s the Matter With Kansas?” a scathing and witty denunciation of the Populist movement; it brought him to national attention in the late 1890s.

Another was “Mary White,” a poignant memoir about his irrepressible daughter, written after her death in a horseback accident. Twenty of his books were published in his lifetime. Twice his writing was turned into movies and twice it won a Pulitzer prize.

It’s available for about \$20 in bookstores and on the web through the KC STAR store, Barnes & Noble, Watermark Books, Town Crier bookstore and others.

Buller said: “While I wrote the book for students to learn about WAW, an amazing number of adults come to my signings and tell me they’re buying the book for themselves.”

Buller’s page is at <http://www.newton.kansas.edu>.

Let’s try to refocus on what we do best

There’s much doom and gloom in the newspaper industry right now, enough to scare even the most seasoned of veterans.

Certainly, there are some dark clouds out there that cannot be ignored.

But I found during a recent tour to about 20 newspapers in southeast Kansas that there are some real success stories out there as well.

The Taylor family, which publishes newspapers in Caney, Oswego, Sedan and Howard, has tried a different approach that is working well.

As you might know, they combined their newspapers in Edna, Chetopa, Altamont and Oswego into what they call Labette Avenue.

They’re also instituting new approaches to news coverage and community service, and it seems to be working well.

Joe and Rita Relph aren’t locking the

doors at Fredonia, either. Joe showed me his new negative processor and plate burner and said a new color press unit is on the way to the Wilson County Citizen.

JoAnne Harper, editor and publisher of the Neodesha Derrick, has a diversified operation that includes a gift shop and a coffee and tea bar. I told her it was the “neatest” newspaper office I’ve ever visited. The newspaper operation is tucked away in the back.

Despite a down economy, Jola Casey also has fixed up a building for her Madison News operation, and Robin Clasen is working hard to follow in the footsteps of her late father, Dick Clasen, at the Eureka Herald.

Susan Lynn said the Iola Register is still doing well despite horrific losses from last year’s flood, and the Humboldt Union, which has been an on-again, off-again operation for the past few years, is being revitalized by new owner Cliff Ralston.

I did run into a few stories of woe on the trip, but most were because of the natural disasters that struck southeast Kansas last year more so than what is happening in general to the newspaper’s business

model. We’re a resilient industry, going through tough times that are accentuated by rising newsprint and gas prices.

What I discovered was that readers still value their local newspaper and believe it is an indication their community is strong and has an identity.

No one can do what we do better than we do it — if we do it right, of course.

So, the next time you hear the doom and gloom, try to refocus on what newspapers do best. We keep the community’s history, provide a record of achievements, shortcomings, good news and bad, and we provide our readers with something they cannot get in one package anywhere else.

Newspapers, whether in printed form as they are now or in digital form — which is where we’re headed — are still a part of the day for a majority of the households in America.

You don’t earn that kind of loyalty by underserving your customers.

We’re doing lots of things right, and it’s time we tooted our horns about that.

Doug Anstaett is executive director of the Kansas Press Association.



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