Readers of The Cleveland American were in for a surprise when their June 12 edition arrived.

For the first time in its 90-plus year history, The Cleveland American was published in a tabloid format.

For eight weeks this summer, readers got the same news content The American has always provided, but in a different package.

The idea began to form as publisher Rusty Ferguson was having trouble finding a news-writing intern for the summer as part of Oklahoma Newspaper Foundation’s internship program.

“All my serious leads (for a writing intern) dissipated, so I took a fresh look at the list of available interns,” said Ferguson. “I saw the name Jackie Dobson – an OSU student. Only thing is, she was looking for a photography internship and I wanted a news writer.”

Ferguson decided to hire her. With a photography intern coming to Cleveland, Ferguson began to think of ideas to not only give her intern experience and material for her portfolio, but also to reinvigorate his passion for the paper.

“First idea: go tab for 8 weeks,” said Ferguson. “Why? I could use a change. For 3 years now we’ve been ridiculously understaffed due to the economy, and my motivation to give my best – week after week – was waning. I thought approaching the weekly product a little differently would help rejuvenate things around here.”

Rusty’s father, Larry, who ran the paper for 25 years, was the inspiration for the ultimate decision to switch to a tabloid.

“I remembered my dad telling me on a few occasions that ‘back in the day’ he had wanted to print a tab version of The American and make the front page nothing but a big photo,” said Ferguson. “So, the more I thought about having an intern who is a photographer and going tab for the summer, it all made sense.”

The first tabloid was published June 12, accompanied by a short column by Ferguson explaining the change.

“I was truly pleasantly surprised, or shocked, actually, at the positive response we received,” said Ferguson. “Everywhere, and I mean this quite literally, everywhere I’d go during the first 2 to 3 weeks of the new tab paper, people would stop me and not only tell me how much they liked the new look, but they would explain why.”

Explanations ranged from it being easier to read in bed to the ads being more noticeable.

Compliments far outweighed complaints, Ferguson said, and some readers were wishing that he make the tabloid a permanent format.

As for the big front-page photo, every week Rusty and Dobson would meet to plan page one. Often times this would be accompanied by a related photo collage on page 2.

Having a staff photographer on hand also allowed Rusty to plan some new photo features for the paper. This included a travel page called “Jackie’s Jaunts” where Dobson would travel on short day trips to landmarks and attractions around Cleveland and shoot pictures to give readers ideas for day trips they could take on their own.

One reaction Rusty received from readers was the thought that the paper switched to the tabloid as a way to save money on printing costs.

“They didn’t realize that it was the same size paper, just turned on its side,” said Ferguson. “Actually, all 8 issues were 28 pages, which equals 14 broadsheet pages and we were averaging only 12 broadsheet pages before that...so they were actually getting more for their money.”

The American returned to a standard broadsheet the first week of August, but Rusty isn’t sure he wants to stick with that forever.

“Honestly, between now and January, I will be contemplating returning to tab for the new year,” said Ferguson. “Ideally, I’d prefer a taller tab that offered more full-color pages, but would have to find a new printing location to make that happen. So, there’s a lot to consider.”
As I sit here writing this column, my dog, Nemo, is working hard to catch a fly. Ears up, mouth open, neck extending and then CHOMP! But the golden retriever misses. Nemo is about nine years old and he has slowed down over the last few years. His interest in things just isn’t what it used to be, unless you are a fly, that is.

His ears perk back up and with eyes focused, he CHOMP’s again! And misses. And again he CHOMP’s, and again misses. Lots of effort, little perceived improvement.

For Nemo, this is play instead of work. His work involves lying under my desk or patrolling the office for an employee in need of stress reduction or emotional reassurance. As I watch him waste time and energy on this fly, I see this: A member of an email newspaper editors forum responding to a question about how to stop a reporter from posting stories on Facebook that reflect his own agenda: “You gotta love the way ‘employees’ find their voice on the Internet, the ‘journalism delivery system of the future,’ as long as they keep getting paid with print ad dollars.”

I am sure many of us have felt this sentiments, if not about the agenda, at least about the free news going on Facebook. It makes Facebook more valuable to Facebook shareholders, but at best only delivers traffic to our website.

Just like Nemo and the fly, if we are not converting ‘fans’ to readers, is Facebook adding to the value of our newspaper? If we take all the time spent chasing Facebook fans and used it to improve our newspaper, what would we get?

A SMALL CHANGE in our newspaper’s uploading process for OPS will yield big changes for us as OPS moves from Arcasearch to Tecnavia to host our clipping service PDFs. The board voted to move a few months ago. OPS members should have received an email from Keith Burgin, manager of the clipping bureau, at the beginning of August instructing them to change the address they upload pages to via FTP.

This change redirects us to Tecnavia’s servers.

This ends a six-year run with Arcasearch that, when we started, put the Oklahoma Press Service at the forefront of digital newspaper clipping. This enabled the OPS to deliver clippings faster and allow clients to search for themselves, if desired.

When a reader calls to complain or compliment(!!) me for a story we published, I have gotten in the habit of quickly searching for it either on our website or through Arcasearch. That way I can read the story as we talk. There have been times where this quick reference helped me read ahead and be ready for the complaint during the discussion.

The move to Tecnavia is another large step forward. The old capabilities will remain, but a new interface will make searching easier and more versatile. You will be able to search on a desktop, laptop, iPad, iPhone, tablet or other smartphone. Now when you’re sitting in a city commission meeting and need to look up an old article to confirm quotes before asking a new question, you can use your smartphone.

I have looked at other newspapers using Tecnavia, and it has a great feature. When you click on a story, the story is enlarged in its own box to the right of the full newspaper page. And you do not have to wait for the whole page to download to read a story!

For those of us with newspapers that do not have an active website or other PDF edition, Tecnavia will be another vendor to consider.

MARK AND I WILL BE STARTING our newspaper tours this week with a trip to northeast Oklahoma on Wednesday and Thursday, Aug. 14 and 15.

I am excited to visit our member newspapers and I will be reporting back to you what I find.

Until then, keep your computer backed up and your power bill paid.

Records decided on case-by-case basis

The Oklahoma Corporation Commission decided in July that it will determine the release of telecommunication companies’ records on a case-by-case basis.

This was said to be in an effort to balance the interests of the consumers with the interest of telecom firms.

The three-member commission voted 2-1 to dismiss a proposal to make a general determination about what records would be kept confidential while still complying with the state Open Records Act.

Commissioner Bob Anthony cast the “no” vote. He said that while the law authorizes the quasi-judicial commission to keep trade secrets and certain records confidential, he saw nothing in the law to authorize the commissioners to issue protective orders to keep a company’s proprietary information secret.

The commission uses information in annual reports by telephone companies to review which companies are doing business in a particular exchange and to determine the public utility assessment fee for each company.

Officials say they want to comply with the law while providing the protections needed to sustain a competitive telecommunications market in the state.

“These are difficult, complicated issues,” Commissioner Dana Murphy said.

Anthony said consumers need information about a telecom’s company in order to decide which company’s service to use.

He also complained that the commission was moving toward keeping more records secret.

“I think that’s not in the public interest,” Anthony said. “It’s just another way to block information from the public. They need to make choices.”

Oklahoma Watch applies for OPA membership

Oklahoma Watch has applied for a sustaining membership in the Oklahoma Press Association. Oklahoma Watch is a nonprofit corporation that produces in-depth and investigative journalism on important public policy issues facing the state.

The application lists the office address as 395 W. Lindsey, Suite 3120 D, Norman, OK 73019. The phone number is (405) 325-3529.

David Fritze is executive editor of Oklahoma Watch.

The Oklahoma Press Association Board of Directors will vote on the application at its next meeting on Sept. 12, 2013. Any current member wishing to object to the application of Oklahoma Watch must do so in writing to the OPA at 3601 N. Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK 73105-5499, by Sept. 4, 2013.

OPA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Complete Listing of Events at www.OkPress.com

THURS., SEPT. 26, 10 A.M. TO 4 P.M.
HYATT PLACE – AIRPORT, OKLAHOMA CITY
ONF WORKSHOP
CIRCULATION CONFERENCE

Single copy sales, home delivery, direct mail, crews and kiosks...Newspaper circulation professionals have their own language and set of problems. Come meet with other circulation managers and publishers to talk shop, exchange ideas and learn from one of the best in the business at an all-day event on circulation issues and marketing promotions. Pryor Times and Claremore Daily Progress publisher Bailey Dabney will discuss how to reach circulation goals along with OPA Postal Consultant John McCann. Registration $35. For more information or to register, go to www.OkPress.com/events-calendar.

THURS., OCT. 10, 10 A.M. TO 4 P.M.
HYATT PLACE – AIRPORT, OKLAHOMA CITY
ONF WORKSHOP
SOCIAL MEDIA TRAINING

Social media can be a great tool to increase connections with sources, bring readers to your website and print products, and cover breaking news. This workshop will include a number of Web tool demonstrations and handouts that offer step-by-step instructions. Even if you don’t know a lot about the Web, you can make a difference with social media at your community paper. Tulsa World web editor Jason Collington directs award-winning digital media products. Before being named web editor, he was web content manager and a feature writer. He also teaches web and social media classes for the School of Media and Strategic Communication at OSU. Registration $35. For more information or to register, go to www.OkPress.com/events-calendar.

For more information on upcoming events, visit the OPA website at www.OkPress.com or contact Member Services Director Lisa Potts at (405) 499-0026, 1-888-815-2672 or email LPotts@okpress.com.
Tourism Department releases sale contract

The Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department recently released a previously-deemed confidential contract for the sale of 1,002 acres of state park land at Lake Texoma to a private developer.

The contract was penned in 2008 by state tourism officials with Oklahoma City-based Pointe Vista Development for the sale of 1,022 acres of land in lake Texoma State Park that includes a public campground with views of the lake.

Pointe Vista planned to build a four-star hotel, water park and retail areas, hoping to bring more tourism dollars to the area. Progress of the project has been at a standstill since the land was purchased in 2008.

Until July 31, the tourism department declined to release the document, citing a confidentiality clause in the contract.

The Tourism Department voted at a public meeting in 2008 to approve the sale, but officials said the agreement was confidential and cannot be released without Pointe Vista’s consent.

The Oklahoma Open Records Act states that most contracts involving taxpayer money and public land are public documents.

“I don’t see how the state can keep secret a contract to develop taxpayer owned property,” said Joey Senat, an advocate for open records with FOI Oklahoma Inc. and an associate professor for Oklahoma State University’s School of Media and Strategic Communications.

Pointe Vista is led by Chaparral Energy CEO Mark Fischer and former Chesapeake Energy CEO Aubrey McClendon. The company already finalized the purchase of 758 acres of park land at Lake Texoma for $14.6 million.

The additional sale of 1,022 acres of park land to Pointe Vista that was negotiated with the Tourism Department in 2008, has yet to be finalized. Pointe Vista has not completed an environmental impact study required by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to transfer some of the land that is owned by the federal government.

This funding of the environmental impact study has been a point of contention between the developer and the state. However, Pointe Vista has finally decided to fund the study.

“In light of our decision to fund the environmental impact study, we are hopeful to meet with (the Tourism Department) as soon as possible to move the project forward,” Pointe Vista said.

The land was sold after the Tourism Department was faced with a range of budget cuts and deferred maintenance problems at Lake Texoma State Park. The department thought a private developer creating a resort-like atmosphere could bring more tourism to the area.

The contract states that there is a May 2014 deadline for construction of a hotel, however the only remedy for the state is a clause that allows the state to sue Pointe Vista to enforce the contract.

“Unfortunately, due to decisions made by previous administrations – not current state leadership or personnel – the state has little recourse,” the Tourism Department said.

“Nevertheless, the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department and Commissioners of the Land Office are pressing forward, trying to find both short- and long-term resolutions to this protracted and difficult situation.”

Tulsa World’s long-term strategy includes layoffs

The Tulsa World announced in July that it would be reducing its workforce by 50 jobs. Twelve positions in the administrative, information technology and production departments were eliminated immediately.

“We looked at all of our expense streams and made some hard choices that will allow us to be as efficient as possible in the future,” said World publisher Bill Masterson. “And despite those choices, we continue to be in a position to provide a great product to our readers, subscribers and advertisers.”

Masterson said, “but these changes are making operational changes that are consistent with widespread industry norms. For example, circulation will develop “distribution centers” where newspapers are picked up by carriers. This will eliminate the need to transport bundles of newspapers to individual drop points throughout the region.

The World also will begin to move toward software systems that are used throughout the industry, rather than creating proprietary software.

“The fact that we are separating from some employees makes this a sad day,” Masterson said, “but these changes are an important part of our long-term strategy and will help to strengthen our newspaper for decades to come.”

During this reorganization process several positions throughout the company will be shifted to provide corporate support for BH Media Group, the World’s parent company.

So far, positions for nine World employees in Information Technology were eliminated. However, they have been transferred to BH Media. Those employees will still be based in Tulsa.

“The Tulsa World is a franchise with a respected history in this community, and that is not changing,” Masterson said.

“Our management team and our employees are dedicated to continuing the proud tradition of this news organization as we continue to provide service to our community.”

Tulsa World changes comment policy

TulsaWorld.com is now allowing comments from all readers. However, all commenters will be required to use their first and last name as well as their city and state. Users also can post comments through their Facebook accounts. Anonymous comments are no longer permitted.

Considering a sale?

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Official Publication of the
Oklahoma Press Association

PUBLISHER
Mark Thomas
mthomas@okpress.com

EDITOR
Jennifer Gilliland
jgilliland@okpress.com

OPA OFFICERS
Jeff Mayo, President
Sequoyah County Times
Jeff Funk, Vice President
Enid News & Eagle
Gloria Trotter, Treasurer
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Ted Streuli, The Journal Record
Ray Dyer, El Reno Tribune

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Owasso city councilor sues city for open records

An Owasso city councilor filed a lawsuit against the city on Aug. 6, alleging violations of the Open Meeting and Open Records Acts.

He claims an investigative report on a former city manager Rodney Ray was collected from councilors at a June executive session to sidestep state Open Records Act inquiries.

Following an executive session at a special meeting on June 25, the city council approved a resignation pact for Ray. The pact included a severance package worth $185,073. Ross was the only councilor of five that voted against the agreement.

Ray was suspended with pay on May 24, the same day the council ordered an investigation into his office to look into an undisclosed employee complaint.

Tulsa attorney Guy Fortney, who conducted the investigation of Ray, sat in on about half of a city council executive session on June 21. Following the meeting, City Attorney Julie Lombardi told the Tulsa World that neither the council nor the city has received a written report from Fortney.

In his lawsuit, Ross alleges that the findings of Fortney’s investigation were distributed during the June 21 executive session, then collected before the session’s end.

Ross also claims in his lawsuit that Mayor Doug Bonebrake told councilors that that was the only time the panel would get to see the report.

“During the meeting I heard Mayor Bonebrake make the statement that ‘we’re going to make sure this is in the personnel file the city maintains for Ray,’” wrote Ross in the lawsuit.

On June 23, councilor Jeri Moberly emailed Ross, saying “Doug (Bonebrake) and the rest of us (on the city council)” had already decided “to do all in our powers to keep (Ross) from disclosing (the results of Fortney’s investigation).”

Ross’ lawsuit claims that email indicates that Moberly had previously met and/or communicated individually with other members of the council to obtain a consensus decision to make the results of Fortney’s investigation confidential, in violation of the Open Meeting Act.

Judge orders town of Disney to release requested records

A Disney resident recently won a lawsuit against the town of Disney for the release of Open Records.

Ron Coats filed the lawsuit in January, alleging the town had denied him access to records that are, by law, public.

He requested records from the Disney Fire Department, which are kept and can only be obtained at the Disney City Hall.

Coats is seeking records from several area towns as well.

NewsOK receives first Emmy award

NewsOK.com took home its first Emmy award in July.

The Heartland Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences announced the results of its 2013 Emmy Awards Competition on July 13 at the University of Central Oklahoma’s Nigh Center in Edmond.

NewsOK.com received its Emmy in the Commercial-Single Spot Division for a commercial titled “Thunder Coverage: Pictures in Motion.”

Kyle Roberts, NewsOK.tv’s video editor/animator, accepted the honor for NewsOK. He was the lead editor and animator on the video.

In addition to Roberts, photographers for The Oklahoman had a large part in the award, as well as David Morris and the rest of the NewsOK video team.

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Purcell proceeds with annexation

The fight between Purcell and Goldsby for unincorporated land along Interstate 35 ended Friday when three Purcell City Council members voted to annex the property.

Six years ago, the two municipalities both vied to annex the property. Purcell officials staked their annexation claim through a legal notice in The Oklahoman.

After the notice ran in an Oklahoma City paper, Goldsby sued Purcell.

The case made it all the way to the Oklahoma Court of Civil Appeals, which in 2010 upheld a McClain County District Court ruling against Purcell.

Purcell City Manager Dale Bunn said the city followed proper legal procedure this time by publishing two legal notices for the proposed annexation in The Purcell Register.

Officials in both towns say they sought annexation into their respective municipalities at the request of citizens living in the area to be annexed.

Goldsby Town Clerk Virgie Andrews said the Goldsby town board received a petition from “several people” requesting to be annexed by the town.

City council members in Purcell were given documents showing that all the landowners whose property was to become part of Purcell supported the city’s action.
ADA NEWS
Dan Marsh is the new editor at The Ada News. He is a 25-year veteran of the newspaper industry.
He has experience working for papers in Texas and Arkansas and began his newspaper career at age 19 as a reporter while still in college.
“My belief is that nothing matters more than local news,” said Marsh. “I also happen to believe, even more strongly, that the newspaper should reflect positively on the community it serves.”

THE ARDMOREITE
The Ardmoreite recently hired Lynn and Brenda Adams as the paper’s new managing editor and advertising director, respectively.
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Blake Colston was recently hired by The Lawton Constitution as a sports writer.
Colston began his journalism career as the sports editor for The Elk City Daily News. He briefly worked at the Piedmont-Surrey Gazette before taking the position with the Constitution.
“I’ve gotten plenty of different responses from people when I tell them I’m moving to Lawton, but mine has stayed the same,” said Colston. “I’m excited to be a part of the Lawton sports scene. I’ve followed Lawton sports since I was young and have always been impressed with the amount of talent that the town produces.”

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Nowata Printing, a division of Community Publishers Inc., has named David E. Guay as director and senior executive for Nowata Printing.
Guay is a 24-year veteran of the newspaper and commercial print industry. He has held multiple positions with Howard Publications, Community Newspaper Holdings Inc. (CNHI) and Lee Enterprises, Inc. He was director of production and operations in upstate New York and Kentucky for Howard, and production director for CNHI at Triangle Press in southeast Texas.

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Carrie Carberry is the new advertising manager at the Sequoyah County Times. She comes to the Times from The Duncan Banner, where she had served as advertising and marketing director since 2011.
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She claims at some point in her career she has assisted in every department in a newspaper from circulation and distribution to layout/design and all duties in between.
“Carrie brings a wealth of experience and new ideas to the table for us and we could not be more excited to welcome her to our team,” said Jeff Mayo, associate publisher and general manager.

TULSA WORLD
Tulsa World publisher Bill Masterson announced at the end of July that Wayne Greene has been promoted to lead the Tulsa World’s editorial team after the retirement of former editorial page editor David Averill.
Ultimately, Masterson said he decided to promote from within.
Greene joined the World in 1987 after spending nearly a year as business editor of the Enid Morning News.
In the more than 25 years since he started at the World, he has been a police reporter, covered state government and worked as city editor from 1995 to 2008. He spent a stint as editorial writer before returning to the newsroom in 2011 as senior writer.
“The Tulsa World’s editorial section is going to reflect its community, engage its readers, and lead,” said Greene in his introductory column.
Executive Editor Joe Worley and Managing Editor Susan Ellerbach will also be joining the editorial board.
Also joining the World staff as its new controller is Martin Reese, a longtime corporate accountant. Reese previously spent 12 years as regional controller for BH Media Group’s North Carolina Community Group.
“We are extremely pleased to add Martin to our management team at the Tulsa World,” said Masterson.

PROMOTIONS, NEW HIRES

END NEWS & EAGLE
Dale Denwalt has joined the Enid News & Eagle as a city reporter.
Before his time in Enid, Denwalt spent two years as news editor of The Daily Elk Citian.
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He has already filled the role of an investigative reporter for his work uncovering questionable credit card charges at a regional council of governments and for investigating a client’s death at Northern Oklahoma Resource Center of Enid.

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Executive Editor Joe Worley and Managing Editor Susan Ellerbach will also be joining the editorial board.
Also joining the World staff as its new controller is Martin Reese, a longtime corporate accountant. Reese previously spent 12 years as regional controller for BH Media Group’s North Carolina Community Group.
“We are extremely pleased to add Martin to our management team at the Tulsa World,” said Masterson.
BOOHER ELECTED TO SERVE SECOND TERM AS ONF PRESIDENT

The Oklahoma Newspaper Foundation Board of Trustees met on June 13, 2013, at the Reed Center in Midwest City.

Trustees attending were president Steve Booher, Cherokee Messenger & Republican; vice president Ray Lokey, Johnston County Capital-Democrat; and treasurer Gracie Montgomery, The Purcell Register.

Trustees attending were Terry Clark, University of Central Oklahoma; Sean Dyer, El Reno Tribune; Carolyn Estes, Oologah Lake Leader; Rusty Ferguson, Cleveland American; John Hruby, Marlow Review; Derek Manning, Daily Elk Citian; John D. Montgomery, Purcell Register; Tom Muchmore, Ponca City News; Wayne Trotter, Countywide & Sun; Barbara Vice, Drumright Gusher; Barb Walter, Hennessy Clipper; Joe Worley, Tulsa World; Rod Serfoss, Clinton Daily News; Jeff Shultz, Garvin County News Star; and Mike Strain, Tulsa World. Three trustees were absent – Kim Noc-Lehenbauer, Norman Transcript; Stu Phillips, Seminole Producer; and Jerry Quinn.

Staff attending was executive vice president-secretary Mark Thomas and member services director Lisa Potts.

Booher called the meeting to order and asked the board to review the consolidated case. The board acknowledged receipt of the OPA and LSP financial statements and investment reports, and the consolidated case.

Booher asked the board to review the monthly report of the OPA and LSP legal services. The board also reviewed and acknowledged receipt of the following bank statements:

- Dues for the month of April 2013
- Dues for the month of May 2013
- Dues for the month of June 2013

The board also considered the following dues for the month of June 2013:

- Non-profit sustaining members pay $650.
- Business sustaining members pay $1,000.
- Community sustaining members pay $500.
- Associate sustaining members pay $300.
- Associate members pay $55.
- Non-profit sustaining members pay $200.
- Non-profit sustaining members pay $200.
- Associate (retired) members pay $55.
- Non-profit sustaining members pay $200.

A list of dues amounts for the 189 OPA business members also was reviewed. OPA is in the fourth year of a five-year plan to change the dues structure of OPA. The dues structure is now the cost of a full-page of advertising at the local rate, plus 2 percent of net ad payments sent to the newspaper in the previous calendar year. To help members financially adjust to the new dues formula, the board spread the increased cost over multiple years.

The board also considered the following costs for the current fiscal year:

- Dues for the month of April 2013
- Dues for the month of May 2013
- Dues for the month of June 2013

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- Dues for the month of April 2013
- Dues for the month of May 2013
- Dues for the month of June 2013

In other business, Shultz thanked outgoing past president Ferguson and outgoing treasurer Montgomery for their many years of service to OPA and OPS.

OPS BOARD MEETING

President Shultz called the meeting to order. The board approved the minutes of the April 4, 2013, meeting. Receipt of the financial statements for the period ending April 30, 2013, and a summary of 2012-13 year-end projections were reviewed and acknowledged by the board.

Thomas submitted a written request for the purchase of new computer equipment including a server, nine computer stations and corresponding software. Thomas also said staff email will be moving to an online cloud system. The board approved the capital expenditure request.

Board members reviewed the Did-Not-Run Advertising Report for March to May 2013, showing 90 DNRs from 54 newspapers in the amount of $12,683.07.

The board also discussed the OPA clipping department’s proposal to change its provider from Arcasearch to Tecnavia. Thomas said Tecnavia would convert the clipping department’s approximately 2.5 million searchable images, with fees payable over a three-year period. The normal monthly fee would be paid to Arcasearch while Tecnavia creates the new system. After further discussion, the board unanimously approved a motion to enter a contract with Tecnavia, and agreed to pay a transition fee to Arcasearch.

President Shultz called the meeting to order at 11:42 a.m. Board members approved the minutes of the April 4, 2013, meeting. Receipt of the financial statements for the period ending April 30, 2013, and a summary of 2012-13 year-end projections were reviewed and acknowledged by the board.

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In other business, Shultz thanked outgoing past president Ferguson and outgoing treasurer Montgomery for their many years of service to OPA and OPS.

The Oklahoma Press Association Board of Directors met at 10:30 a.m. on June 13, 2013, at the Reed Center in Midwest City.

Officers attending were president Jeff Shultz, Garvin County News Star; vice president Jeff Mayo, Sequoyah County Times; and treasurer Gracie Montgomery, The Purcell Register.

Directors attending were past president Rusty Ferguson, The Cleveland American; Jeff Funk, Enid News & Eagle; Robby Trammell, The Oklahoman; Dayva Spitzer, Sayre Record & Beckham County Democrat; Brian Blan- sett, Shawnee News-Star; Mike Brown, Neighbor News; and Ted Streuli, The Journal Record.

Guests at the meeting were treasurer nominee Gloria Trotter, The Countywide & Sun, and director nominee Ray Dyer, El Reno Tribune. Staff members present were executive vice president/secretary Mark Thomas; member services director Lisa Potts; and clipping manager Keith Burgin.

Shultz called the meeting to order and asked board members to review minutes of the April 4, 2013, meeting. The minutes were approved as presented.

In a review of the OPA and LSP financial statements, Thomas said OPA professional service legal fees were higher due to an amicus brief filed in support of the Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise’s video case. The board acknowledged receipt of the OPA and LSP financial statements and investment reports, and the consolidated case.

Board members also reviewed and acknowledged receipt of year-end projections for FY 2012-13.

The current list of 45 sustaining members and 12 associate members was reviewed at the meeting. For-profit sustaining members pay annual dues of $400; non-profit sustaining members pay $200; and associate (retired) members pay $55.

A list of dues amounts for the 189 OPA business members also was reviewed. OPA is in the fourth year of a five-year plan to change the dues structure of OPA. The dues structure is now the cost of a full-page of advertising at the local rate, plus 2 percent of net ad payments sent to the newspaper in the previous calendar year. To help members financially adjust to the new dues formula, the board spread the increased cost over multiple years.

The board also considered the sustaining membership application of eType Services. The company is a vendor providing digital newspaper websites for community newspapers. The protest period to object to the application ends on July 22. The board unanimously approved eType Services’ membership application pending a successful completion of the protest period.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

In the Education Committee report, Spitzer reviewed the annual convention schedule, budget and amount of sponsorships. Potts said attendance was expected to fall below 300 for the second year because college students are not able to attend the convention in the summer. However, the number of full convention registrations increased compared to last year.

Trammell called on Thomas for the Government Relations Committee report. Thomas reviewed the status of bills at the conclusion of the 2013 legislative session, which ended in May.

In the Legal Services Plan Committee report, Brown reviewed the current cases and the plan’s finances. Thomas said all LSP members renewed and paid membership dues for the 2013-14 plan year.

Funk reported that the Marketing Committee discussed two house ad campaigns to promote newspaper advertising – power for business and value to readers.

In other business, Shultz thanked outgoing past president Ferguson and outgoing treasurer Montgomery for their many years of service to OPA and OPS.

In the Legal Services Plan Committee report, Brown reviewed the current cases and the plan’s finances. Thomas said all LSP members renewed and paid membership dues for the 2013-14 plan year.

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Committee reports

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OPA members receive awards in national newspaper contest

Two Oklahoma newspapers received honors in the National Newspaper Association’s Better Newspaper Contest. The Countywide & Sun, a weekly newspaper in Tecumseh, and The Hennessey Clipper both placed in the national contest.

Wayne Trotter, co-publisher of The Countywide & Sun, received second place in the Best Humorous Column event with his entry titled “Sure, Elvis is really dead – but so is Siri.” “Just a fun read,” the judges commented. Trotter also received honorable mention in the Best Editorial event with his entry “Just Fix It.” The judges said Trotter made good points and his arguments were presented logically.

Barb Walter, co-publisher of The Hennessey Clipper, received third place in the Best Humorous Column event. Walter’s entry was titled “Husband brings home another girl friend.” One judge commented, “We love our cats. Nice going.”

All winners in the NNA’s Better Newspaper Contest and Better Newspaper Advertising Contest will be recognized on Sept. 14 during NNA’s 127th Annual Convention & Trade Show at the Arizona Grand Resort in Phoenix.

There were 1,777 entries in the Better Newspaper Contest and 375 entries in the Better Newspaper Advertising Contest for a total of 2,152 entries. A total of 544 awards were won by 140 member newspapers in 41 states.

Judging was performed primarily by active community newspaper editors and publishers and included retired university journalism professors and retired or former newspaper men and women.

Miami News-Record building for sale

The building housing the Miami News-Record has been placed on the real estate market. Rick Rogers, regional operations director for the Oklahoma/Kansas region of American Consolidated Media, parent company of the News-Record, said the newspaper and its website are not for sale — only the building. The decision to put the building on the market and look for new office space was based on the needs of employees.

Currently, said Rogers, the News-Record staff only uses a little more than half of the building’s square footage.

“With today’s technology, many of the job functions that required large amounts of square footage a decade or so ago now can be done with a small desk and a laptop or even remotely in the field using an iPad and a WiFi hotspot or a cell connection,” Rogers said. “Today, our reporters no longer need to spend hours in the office filing their stories for the print and digital editions. Now they can do so using mobile technology. Jim Ellis, our sports editor, is a great example of how using an iPad has changed his job functions.”

In addition to the News-Record, ACM also owns the Grove Sun, Delaware County Journal and Cherokee County News-Advocate in Oklahoma.

ACM owns and operates more than 80 publications and websites in nine states.

Phoenix is destination city for NNA’s convention & trade show


The event will be held at the Arizona Grand Resort & Spa, an all-suite, AAA Four-Diamond property situated on the doorstep of South Mountain Preserve.

Rob Curley from the Orange County Register will be the keynote speaker. He will address attendees during the Opening Breakfast and Flag Ceremony on Friday, Sept. 13.

Curley has a great passion for community journalism and will send you away with lots of new ideas.

In addition to a great lineup of topics ranging from legal issues to how to reach the new generation of consumers, there’s also the annual exhibit hall featuring services geared to the newspaper industry.

There’s also plenty of time for entertainment including the Friday Night Extravaganza.

Phoenix is the fifth largest city in the U.S. and has much to experience from the Desert Botanical Garden to Camelback Mountain.

For more information about the convention or to register and make your hotel reservation, visit NNA’s website at www.nna-web.org.

OSAE presents awards to Thomas and Burgin

The Oklahoma Society of Association Executives presented its Key Award to Mark Thomas, executive director of the Oklahoma Press Association, at the group’s 50th Anniversary Gala on July 8.

The Key Award recognizes a significant event or contribution that benefits either the association community or the community in general.

Keith Burgin, director of clipping/archives for Oklahoma Press Service, also was honored at the event. Burgin received the Excellence in Innovation Award.

Thomas worked for seven years as assistant advertising manager at OPA. He then accepted the position of executive director of the Colorado Press Association where he served from 1989 to 1995. He returned to Oklahoma in 1995 to lead OPA.

Burgin joined the OPA staff in 2009 as an assistant in the creative services department and was later promoted to his current position.

Oklahoma Society of Association Executives was established in 1963 to unite association professionals in the State of Oklahoma.

Today, OSAE has a diverse membership sharing the common goal of excellence in association management.
Start saving money... for OGE's new SmartHours® Price Plans.

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Members of the Moore Medical Center staff embrace as they tour the damaged building the morning before it is demolished.

Photo by KYLE PHILLIPS, The Norman Transcript, June 6, 2013

This mutton buster found the going tough when he came off the sheep at the 55th Annual Siloam Springs Rodeo held June 20-23.

Photo by TRAVIS AKEHURST, The Delaware County Journal, June 26, 2013

JUNE 2013 DAILY WINNER:

KYLE PHILLIPS
The Norman Transcript

JUNE 2013 WEEKLY WINNER:

TRAVIS AKEHURST
The Delaware County Journal

ENTER AND WIN A $100 CHECK FROM OGE ENERGY CORP.
The June 2013 contest was judged by a member of the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame.

OGE/OPA PHOTO CONTEST RULES

• To be eligible for the contest, photographers must be staff members of an OPA member newspaper and photos must have been published. Photographers may enter one photo per month.
• Include name of photographer, name of newspaper, photo cutline and date photo was published. Email your photo in electronic format (TIF or JPG, 200 dpi or higher) to Photos@OkPress.com.
• All entries for the previous month must arrive at the OPA office by the 15th of the month. Winners will receive a Certificate of Achievement and the photo will be published in The Oklahoma Publisher. Sweepstakes winners will receive a plaque and have photo published in The Publisher.

View contest rules and all winning photos at www.OkPress.com/OGE-Photo-Contest

It’s time ... for OGE's new SmartHours® Price Plans.
The Pioneer Woman Museum in Ponca City reopened last month after undergoing several months of remodeling.

The museum was closed to the public in January of this year to begin the approximately $200,000 project. This is the first time the museum has been updated since its expansion in 1998.

The remodeling project was funded by the Oklahoma Historical Society, Friends of the Pioneer Woman Statue and Museum, Inc., and the Gaylord Family Foundation.

The remodeled museum features a new exhibit called Breaking News: Women in Oklahoma Journalism. The exhibit features biographies and photos of 35 women journalists who have had an impact on Oklahoma and the world of journalism.

"Most of the women that we focused on were chosen for their longevity or significant contribution to journalism," said Larry O’Dell, OHS special projects director. "We consulted with the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame, the Oklahoma Historical Society, and the Tulsa World, as well as our own knowledgeable staff, notably Oklahoma Historical Society Executive Director Dr. Bob Blackburn."

Those honored in the display include: Louise Abercrombie, a reporter for the Ponca City News for 45 years.

Gerry Bonds, a longtime fixture of the Oklahoma City news media.

Becky Dixon, one of the first females to report national sports stories for ABC and the Wide World of Sports.

Pam Henry, the first female news anchor at WKY-TV, Channel 4 in Oklahoma City.

Joyce Jackson, an African American woman who broke barriers to establish a successful career in television in Oklahoma during the 1970s.

Karen Keith, a 26-year television news veteran.

Carole Lambert, a Tulsa newswoman who anchored KTUL, Channel 8 news for more than 30 years.

Pam Olson, the first woman prime-time anchor in Oklahoma City, who then moved to jobs at CNN and CBS News.

Glenda Silvey, who worked at Tulsa’s KOTV for 21 years and helped to promote Tulsa’s artistic environment.

Bella Shaw began her career as a TV reporter in Oklahoma and now works for CNN.

Vivian Vahlberg, a 40-year journalism veteran who has worked for newspapers across the country.

Other women featured in the exhibit are Ann Marie DeFrange, Beth Rengel, Billie Rodely, Carole Lambert, Clara Luper, Drusilla Dunjee Huston, Edith Kinney Gaylord, Elva Shartel Ferguson, Freda Ameringer, Ida B. (Blackburn), Ivy Mae Coffey, Jane Jayroe, Janet Pearson, Jennifer Reynolds, Julie Del Cour, Linda Cavanaugh, Lola Hall, Malvina Stephenson, Mary Jo Nelson, Mary Kay Dyer, Ora Eddleman, Sue Hale, Susan Ellerbach, Teresa Black and Wauhillau Lahay.

The idea for the project came from Dr. Bob Blackburn, who is executive director of the Oklahoma Historical Society and is part of a larger OHS focus on more modern history.

“The Oklahoma Historical Society has recently been focusing on 20th century history and more pop culture exhibits as the Society gears up for the proposed OKPOP museum in Tulsa,” said O’Dell. The multitude of successful women journalists inspired the OHS to start gathering this part of our history, which hopefully will be expanded in the new museum.”

The project also included a reorganization of space within the museum’s lobby area, an updated gift shop, textile arts demonstration, new ceilings and two new exhibit gallery areas that feature displays on the history of the Ponca City area.

The Pioneer Woman Museum is located at 701 Monument Road in Ponca City. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Admission is $4 for adults, $3.50 for seniors, $1 for students. Children under 6 are free. For more information about the museum, visit the website at pioneerwomanmuseum.com, phone (580) 765-6108 or email info@pioneerwomanmuseum.com.
New editor plans to boost paper’s social profile

The Tahlequah Daily Press has created a new position to expand its social media footprint.

Sheri Gourd has joined the newspaper and its website, tahlequahdaily-press.com, as multimedia editor. One of her primary responsibilities will be to act as gatekeeper for the Daily Press’s social media platforms.

Gourd said she was introduced to social media in 2005, after she and her husband, Kris, moved to Tahlequah.

As she learned more about other social media platforms, she began volunteering to help community organizations boost their profiles on social media.

She’s acted as a volunteer administrator for the “In Tahlequah” Facebook page; served on the board of Tahlequah Mainstreet to help increase its web presence; served four years on the Tahlequah Recreational Soccer Club Board assisting with social media; and started Facebook and Twitter pages for The Northeastern, the local university’s student publication.

Engaged in the Facebook community since 2009, Tahlequah Daily Press boasts nearly 7,200 “likes” on its page at facebook.com/tdpress. Recently it added Twitter (@TahlequahTDP) to its social media arsenal.

Gourd said Twitter is especially important because of its immediacy.

“It’s more about micro-blogging in short bursts, and it’s great for news updates,” she said. “The demographics for social media vary, so with a variety of sources, we’re getting a better reach into the community and the world.”

Most recently, TDP established a presence on Instagram and Pinterest, and Gourd will be brainstorming with other staff members on how to most effectively use these sites.

When Publisher David Compton took the helm in February, he brought with him the understanding that newspapers must evolve to survive in today’s rapidly-changing media environment — and that means offering several ways of engaging readers.

“Our ultimate goal is to engage readers where they are most comfortable. Sheri has a proven track record of community involvement and branding through social media and digital platforms,” said Compton.

“We are glad to have her on our team as we continue to be the leader in Tahlequah and Cherokee County for news, information and marketing.”
Learn how to keep subscribers at Circulation Conference

One of the major questions newspapers ask is how circulation managers can make subscriptions grow and preserve reader loyalty. Getting a new subscriber is only half the job.

At Oklahoma Newspaper Foundation’s Circulation Conference, “Ideas That Deliver,” Bailey Dabney will explain how to keep subscribers.

“I’ll start with a session that will include cost justifications, some content and social networking, a little about price increases and relationship building with your market,” Dabney said.

The workshop gives you an opportunity to meet with other industry professionals from all over the state to discuss circulation problems and solutions.

The day starts with an idea exchange roundtable where attendees can show off their own successful direct marketing, telemarketing and sales promotions ideas. Bring examples of your circulation campaigns and get ideas to take back to the newspaper.

John McCann, OPA’s new postal consultant, also will be there to answer questions on the rules and regulations of reaching subscribers outside your community.

Dabney has served as publisher of the Claremore Daily Progress since 2008, and of The Times in Pryor since 2012. He has 22 years of newspaper experience. Dabney won the Gannett President’s Ring for Excellence in 1995 and also is the recipient of the Knight Ridder “Best Practices” awards. He also teaches for Inland Press Foundation.

OPA postal consultant McCann answers member newspapers’ questions on postage rates and circulation. McCann has 31 years of service with the USPS, beginning as a letter sorting machine operator and moving into the periodicals department.

Prior to joining the OPA team, he served 11 years as Periodicals Specialist for the state of Oklahoma.

Registration for the Circulation Conference is $35 per person. For more information or to register, visit the events calendar at www.okpress.com. For questions, contact member services coordinator Eli Nichols at (405) 499-0040 (toll-free in Oklahoma at 1-888-815-2672) or by email at enichols@okpress.com.

PLAYER PROFILE

NAME: WILLIS JOE LANSDEN, PUBLISHER, THE HERALD-DEMOCRAT (BEAVER)
EDUCATION: Graduated from Beaver High 1958; Oklahoma State University 1963
NEWPAPER BACKGROUND: All I have ever done is work for The Herald-Democrat. My son and daughter-in-law, Brent and Christie Lansden, help me with the newspaper. The newspaper is 127 years old and some days, I can feel it.

Q: What about newspaper publishing gets you out of bed in the morning?
A: Getting to look at past history of Beaver County from old files. And going over old photos I took years ago.

Q: What’s the biggest obstacle you’ve overcome in your career?
A: Learning how to write. Being consistent.

Q: What are you most proud of?
A: The World Championship Cow Chip Throw during the Cimarron Territory Celebration. That draws much interest and people.

Q: What are your hobbies?

Q: Does your newspaper have a website?
A: Yes, Beavercowchipnews.com and ePaper

Q: What type of annual events is your newspaper involved in?
A: Beaver County Free Fair, Cimarron Territory Celebration and World Championship Cow Chip Throw. Many Chamber activities.

Q: What challenges are facing your newspaper today and in the future?
A: Keeping up with technology.

Q: What civic activities are you involved in?
A: Running a newspaper, one gets involved.

Q: My Dad and Mom – Willis and Merlee Lansden, former teachers.

Q: What would you describe as the three most important responsibilities of your job?
A: Providing news and advertising for a small community; staying healthy; and watching grandchildren.

Donate to ONF

A donation to the Oklahoma Newspaper Foundation will support its efforts to improve the state’s newspaper industry and quality of journalism. ONF’s programs include training and education for professional journalists, scholarship and internship programs for journalism students, and Newspaper in Education efforts.

ONF relies on donations and memorial contributions to fund these programs. If you would like to make a donation, please send a check to:

OKLAHOMA NEWSPAPER FOUNDATION
3601 N. Lincoln Blvd.
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

IN MEMORY OF OUR FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES

Lloyd Thomas Clawson, July 24, 2012
Deanna Kay Foster, July 25, 2012
Omer Gillham, July 9, 2012
Jesse Ray Turner, July 10, 2012
Geoffrey Holladay, Aug. 21, 2012
Philip Edwin Stout, Aug. 26, 2012
Buying barcodes, building macros and Photoshop settings

First, practice the steps you want the program to perform. Then go to view macros and tell it to start recording. On a Mac, go to Tools > Macro.

Name your macro and repeat the steps you practiced earlier. For example, your macro might include select all > change to the newspaper's body style for text > put in three-column format > deselect the type by using the down arrow.

When all the steps are completed, return to view and stop recording. Remember to select all copy before you change styles, even if there's no text in the document yet.

You may get an error if you run the macros with a fixed column width, especially if you run the same copy more than once.

Macros are easier to create with preset paragraph styles. To change a style go to Change Styles > Paragraph Spacing > Custom Paragraph Styles, located under Home. Click Edit tab and check every place that says New Documents Based on this Template. When you change the style, be sure to click the button that says Add to Quick Style List.

Click the modify button to change the style, making sure all the above buttons are checked so all new documents will have this style.

If you want Word to use the new styles you create in each new document, simply change the Normal template file.

Photoshop settings & tips

In the Photoshop workshop I presented earlier this month, we went over some basic settings that might work for your newspaper.

Here are some of the tips we covered at the workshop, in no particular order:

• First we talked about a good image resolution for printing photos on newsprint. Color and grayscale should be at least 200 DPI. Although there are many formulas for arriving at this number, 200 DPI covers the bases.

• As far as file format goes, you can use PDF, TIFF, JPEG or EPS. Show new employees which format your newspaper prefers. TIFF is a simple format that doesn’t fail often, but it creates a bigger file than the JPEG, which is a compressed TIFF file.

• Graphics and line art are often saved as EPS files at 300 DPI.

• If you’re trying to hold fine screens while scanning a photo, use 600 to 1200 DPI, then lower that setting after processing the photo for print. The higher resolution brings in details that are hard to get otherwise.

• To get the best color, always use CMYK for final reproduction on a web press. You can easily make the conversion in Photoshop.

• Setting up the workspace to understand what you want to create will help Photoshop display and create a photo that looks better on the web press.

In the latest version of Photoshop, look for the CMYK setting under Edit > Color, then go to custom and change the setting to SWOP Newsprint.

With Photoshop’s new type feature you can create paragraph styles along with 3D features to add depth to the ads you are creating.

The use of outer glow or drop shadows FX features gives you the ability to set type off from the background, making it readable in newsprint. Another new feature lets you wrap text along a path.

In the workshop, we used some gradient screens as masks for parts of a photo so the type would show well in that part of the background. A white to nothing screen works well to mask the back part of the photo. Then bring back the highlights of the photo by erasing part of the screen with different brushes. New brushes in the latest versions are compatible with the same basic keyboard commands of the bracket keys – [ ] – to increase or decrease the size of the brushes while working.

We also reviewed the selections tools that now lets us delete an object in one step. Photoshop fills in the delete button with a content aware method that takes the surrounding background of the photo in just one step. The example at left shows how Photoshop filled in the missing pumpkin with leaves.
Value content regardless of how it’s presented

That InterWeb Thing
by Keith Burgin
kburgin@okpress.com

By 2013, between email, social media, digital photography, texting and cloud storage, you’d think people would be beyond the “if you can’t touch it, it’s not real” mentality. We clearly aren’t.

People still tend to discount the value—sometimes to zero—of digital content, not only by behavior but also by attitude, which encourages others to do the same.

Entire articles lifted without permission find their way to new, virtual homes beyond the “if you can’t touch it, it’s not real” mentality. We clearly aren’t.

As will marker on your face, (yes, I fell asleep on the bus headed for a high school wrestling tournament) I think it will eventually wear off. But the mindset started with content creators and, in my opinion, the shift has to start with content creators.

Creators have to value content regardless of how it’s presented.

If you’re printing on paper, there’s a cost involved: ink, paper, personnel, delivery, etc. You know, overhead. But the paper and ink, while part of the product, is not what makes the publication marketable.

It’s the content you’re selling: it’s the culmination of the footwork, the interviews, the research, the experience it takes to tell a story and the talented writing. So why is any of that less valuable on the Web?

The good news is that the culture is shifting, albeit slowly. The value of online content is beginning to make its way to the marketplace, due in large part to publishers.

Folks who see value in their work are sharing the responsibility of protecting and marketing that work. One creator might call out a thief to the community, link to a well-written opinion from another or promote a discussion.

In short, publishers are networking…using what the Internet does best, what it was created for, to build buzz, community and value. Consumers love belonging to a community. That’s why social media is such a phenomenon.

What’s the future business model for online content? Who can say? Perhaps it’s a subscription-based community made of multiple content creators each taking a piece of the pie, each contributing to the unique makeup of the whole. Perhaps it’ll be something entirely different.

I’ll say this: in my opinion, the foundation will be an acceptance of just how valuable your work is, regardless of the form in which it appears. And whether you can touch it or not…that’s real.

Animals to fear in the newsroom jungle

BY ED HENNINGER

You’ve heard the expression before: “It’s a jungle out there!”

Sometimes, it’s a jungle in here. And “here” is our own newsroom.

During my more than 24 years as a consultant, I’ve encountered just about every animal in the newsroom zoo.

You may not have all of these in your newsroom…but I’m willing to bet you’ve identified at least a couple of these where you work.

Here they are:

Ursa obstructionensis: The obstructionist is best recognized by body position: sitting back, arms folded, a quiet yet defiant sneer. This is the newsroom animal who dares you to try to accomplish anything—especially in its square acre of jungle.

Mentus nongottus disguisus: This mammal is distinguished by the fact that it mimics real motion and thought. How-ever it has been brain-dead for years.

Esteemus nongottus survivus: This bottom-dwelling organism chooses to go through life like a clam, always closing tightly when challenged.

Meetingus eternalissimus: Its body locked in a permanent sitting position, this organism survives by attending every gathering of the group—and then going into a self-induced coma between those gatherings.

Nonparticipatimus bitches: This jungle denizen lies in wait for others to create something of value—never taking part in their effort but always first to find fault with the result.

Writissimus compulsus: Distinguished by a deep and passionate love for creating written documents of inordinate length, this vertebrate lives with the illusion that the sole purpose of newswriting is the act of writing itself, and not the imparting of useful information to readers.

Paralyzus perpetuallis: This hairy arachnid makes a lifelong endeavor of devising ways to forestall movement. Instead, it waits its victims, tiring them with its infinite patience and its inbred inability to make the first move. It rarely leaves its web. However, it kills just as effectively—if more agonizingly and slowly—by practiced delay.

Tempus fugitardimus: A mollusk whose chief characteristic is the ability to always take much more time than is allotted for a specific task. Researchers have observed this being driving others in the newsroom to insanity by its instinct for doing everything at a pace so slow that it cannot be measured by even the most sophisticated scientific instruments.

Deynus whinissimus: This invertebrate surrounds itself with colorful objects (usually produced by others of its type) and is known to emit harsh and drawn-out nasal sounds when approached. Those sounds are its defense mechanism against any being or event that challenges it to consider designing something different.

Paginatus assemblitudicus: A voiceless mammal possessing two legs and only a vestigial brain. This being will respond only when given clear and point-by-point instructions on placement of elements in its area of responsibility. It is absolutely incapable of coloring outside the lines.

Managissimus microns: A crustacean easily recognized by its elongated neck—the result of cons spent peering over the shoulders of other newsroom inhabitants and constantly criticizing and altering their work. This being has never been known to have an original thought, yet it spends its days belittling the work of others.

So...there you have it. The newsroom zoo. Perhaps there are other animals who should join them. Suggestions?

ED HENNINGER, an independent newspaper consultant and the Director of Henninger Consulting, offers comprehensive newspaper design services including redesigns, workshops, staff training and evaluations. Email: edh@henningerconsulting.com. Or on the web: www.henningerconsulting.com. Phone: 803-327-3322.
Dig deep for answers during interview

Your job is to get them talking.
I'm talking about the key to your good reporting – interviewing.
I'm convinced our readers are hungry for answers, and for stories, and as journalists we're responsible for providing those, so we should pay more attention to getting that information.

I see two basic types of interviewing – those for straight news stories, and those for feature stories, but the techniques have common ground.

There's too much news release writing today that readers just skip over. They want human answers, just like they don't want to talk to a recording on the phone.

If it's breaking news, or more routine news such as a city council meeting, providing readers with basic facts involves more than just the “who-what-when-where” answers. Readers need and want the “why” and “how.”

Here are a few tips on getting the “why” and “how” that give newspapers a distinctive advantage over other media.

Be prepared. If it's a city council story, you should have the agenda ahead of time, and know what the main issues are. You should make a list of what your readers want to know, and have time to ask officials those questions. That may involve some Internet work if it's a trend story, or it may just be reading related stories in past issues.

If it's breaking news, like a car wreck or fire, your best hope is to be prepared by having cultivated the sources you need to answer questions.

Think about what you want to find out. Make a list, and put it in an order that gets to the most compelling part of the story. Remember, you want good quotes – not the long official PR quotes, but those direct from your sources. You must be alert to those in every interview – they may be the heart of the story. Remember, you want good sources, and to get a conversation or story, the more important it is to find ended questions.

"No," questions, you won't have much depth. Besides, you don't want to have to listen to the entire recording again. To be a good interviewer you have to multitask. You have to listen, and write, and make eye contact all at once. You have to be listening for other questions. You have to be able to mark up your notes with stars or boxes when something really stands out.

If possible, don't start with the difficult or controversial questions. Ease into them.

Always have a couple of throw away questions ready. When they're through talking but you're still writing, ask them to repeat what they said. Or explain that it's only to ensure you get the quotes and facts right, and put it unobtrusively to the side. But that doesn't mean not to take notes. Note-taking is essential to your thinking and organizing the story. Your notes are gold. Besides, you don't want to have to listen to the entire recording again.

Toward the end of the interview, ask if there's anything else you should have asked, or anything else they want to say.

My experience is that some of your best quotes and material come toward the end of interviews when they've loosened up and warmed to the topic.

If it's a fairly long interview for news and or feature, go back through your notes and confirm what they've told you that you're considering as direct quotes. Ask for contact information – phone, email – so you can contact them later if you have questions.

Go back home or to the office, and transcribe your notes immediately.

In the spotlight this month is a great headline on the front page of The Country Connection News in Eakly; a dramatic front page in The Oklahoma Eagle; The Pawnee Chief's 4th of July photo; another great headline from the Spiro Graphic, and a nice rodeo layout in The Dewey County Record.

viewpoints...that will lead to follow up questions.

LOOKIN'EM OVER:
Oleta McDowell
95, Dallas cowboys fan,
Made "famous" pecan pies
Wayne Bulidek
71, loved building things
With his hands
Those obituaries caught my eye in the Chaffee County Times at Buena Vista, Colo., last month.

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Per se libel cannot rely on supposition or innuendo

Legal Notes
by Michael Minnis
OPA Attorney

A recent Texas appellate decision succinctly discusses the differences between libel per se and libel per quod. Most libel plaintiffs allege that they have been per se libeled because the proof of damages allowed for per se libel is considerably looser than for a per quod libel.

A per se libel is a publication to a third party that is clearly defamatory on its face without resorting to any other information outside of the publication itself. All other libels are per quod. If the libel alleged is per quod, the plaintiff must allege and prove special damages; that is, he or she must be able to prove a direct monetary loss from the publication of the per quod libel.

In the Texas case, the plaintiff alleged per se libel and argued that the defendant’s publication “insinuated that she embezzled over $3 million and therefore falsely imputed criminal behavior to her.” In response to the insinuation-imputed argument, the court pointed out that “media defendants cannot be liable for varying subjective impressions that may have been generated from the broadcast of true statements.”

The defendant also contended that damage to her reputation was shown by reliance on third party comments posted on a website. Rejecting the website argument, the court stated that in a per se libel, “the defamatory nature of the alleged statement must be apparent on its face without reference to extrinsic facts or ‘innuendo’.”

Accordingly, the court, in an interlocutory appeal authorized by the Texas SLAPP law, reversed the trial court’s denial of a motion to dismiss and was ordered to dismiss the suit.

Clark’s Critique
Continued from Page 14

They were about 14-point name lines with 12-point bold Helvetica sub lines, at the top of traditional obituaries of ordinary people.

Instead of just running a person’s name at the top of an obituary, and saving real headlines for the so-called “prominent” people in town, why not do it this way? Everybody’s got something people remember them for. Doesn’t have to be mushy, just factual.

Thought you’d like to see this. Time was, anytime I stopped in a town, I’d buy a newspaper. Don’t do it as much anymore, but this one added value to the vacation trip. Don’t you know the paper’s readers love this?

Other ideas? Check Sarah Shepherd’s compelling lead on social media impact in Bethany’s The Tribune, under “Yolo – So why learn to spell?”

“Has communicative technology created a society of people unable to communicate?” As someone who as recently as last week deleted the Facebook and Pinterest apps from my phone, I’ve been pondering over the use of social media and technology and how they affect our daily communication.

“Young people today get phones early, often smartphones with an inexhaustible wifi connection. They’re able to be reached anywhere at any time. With children, this is probably the point. Some parents go so far as to put GPS tracking on their child’s phone in order to know their whereabouts at all times.

“The issue with technology, however, isn’t that we can be reached. The issue is that we can reach the expanse of information available to us at a moment’s notice, and more importantly how we use the technology that produces it. “Have you been out to dinner with friends lately?”

“How many times did they look down at their phone?”

Here’s a good lead in the The Seminole Producer by Cheryl Phillips and Karen Anson with excerpts from Cole Perryman: “Lucy Hill is a lady of few words. At almost 101, she’s heard them all and used most of the words in the English language. / “I became a teacher because…”

The Sequoyah County Times is doing what newspapers are supposed to do, because it is being done by anybody else. Gina Smith is writing a series on felonies that have taken longer than three years. She has communicative technology cre-...
Dark moments in a clean, well-lighted place

It was time. I had dwelt in the dark ages long enough.

It was time for me to join millions of my fellow humans and enter the world of the mobile, the connected, the tech-savvy.

It was time for me to obtain a tablet.

Granted, when I was first confronted by the possibility of obtaining a tablet, my first question was, “Big Chief or aspirin?”

For those of you too young to remember, the Big Chief tablet was a writing notebook utilized by generations of young Americans. It was the old man’s deafness as a symbol of the isolation from the rest of the world, a condition imposed upon him by his advanced age.

I just knew I wanted one, and I was not alone.

Aspirin you know, you take it when you get a headache.

And you can download apps for them. I have very little idea what that means, but it sounds cool.

But when told we were inter-ested in an iPad, his face brightened.

Presently we were greeted by an assistant master her own iPad. She then swiped my credit card through a device attached to the phone. That’s all it took.

Finally I freed the device from its cardboard carton and held it proudly in my hands. In a moment of panic I realized I had no clue how to turn the thing on.

While you’re reading this, she’s already engaged with a 40ish woman trying to master her own iPad.

“I’ll be with you in a moment sir,” said the young fellow. “Why don’t you go ahead and turn your new iPad on?”

She turned me over to a another peerier fellow who couldn’t have been old enough to drive. He was the setup assistant, and he was already engaged with a 40ish woman trying to master her own iPad.

“I’ll be with you in a moment sir,” said the young fellow. “Why don’t you go ahead and turn your new iPad on?”

I hadn’t even taken the damn thing out of the box yet.

That was no easy feat in itself, since the container was shrouded in plastic. As I struggled to open the box I saw the young man shoot me a look. I swear I saw pity in his eyes.

Eventually I turned it over to a girl even younger than me. She was an iPad specialist, who could answer my every question. I didn’t even know enough about the thing to ask intelligent questions, a fact I attempted to hide from her, without much success.

No matter, she seemed cheerily content to point out the device’s various features.

So I decided to buy one of the things, plus a case. Instead of leading me to a cash register, she whipped out an iPhone and punched in some numbers.

Immediately one appeared, as if by magic. She then slapped my credit card through a device attached to the phone. That’s all it took.

Then she asked if I would like help setting up my iPad. I jumped at the offer. Lord knows I need all the help I can get.

Want to know an iPad from a mattress pad. Even the food court. But when told we were interested in a tablet, his face brightened.

Presently we were greeted by an assistant manager, an impressively young, earnest fellow whose name I didn’t quite catch. He asked how he could help us.

His expression said he thought we had barely become lost looking for the food court. But when told we were interested in an iPad, his face brightened.

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