

Publisher

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WEEKLY



TALKING FOIA | Ryan Owsley, right, Assistant Attorney General of Arkansas, makes a point during the Freedom of Information Act presentation last Thursday at the Garland County Library in Hot Springs. Elected and appointed officials attended the session, along with public records custodians and other interested parties were among the roughly 50 persons attending the two-hour session.

2011 Ad Conference starts in two weeks

The annual Arkansas Press Association Advertising Conference starts Mar. 17, just two weeks from today, and runs through midday Friday, March 18. Coinciding with St. Patrick's Day, this year's meeting carries the theme "Go Green," playing on both the Celtic holiday's essential color and the money that can be made from advertising revenue.

The site of this year's conference is the Arlington Resort Hotel & Spa on historic Bathhouse Row in Hot Springs National Park.

To date over 50 have registered to attend one or more of the sessions of activities on tap for the event. (In addition to training sessions and idea exchanges there are the "APA Day at the Races" and the "World's Shortest St. Patrick's Day Parade" with **John Corbett** serving as grand marshal). The deadline of March 14 looms large, and the following have already signed up (listed alphabetically by city/town):

- *Batesville Daily Guard*: **Randy Harris, Mike Smith**;

- *Camden News*: **Sabra Hudman, Robyn Yarbrow**;

- *Dumas Clarion*: **Debra Conrad, Heather Lawrence**;

- *Harrison Daily Times*: **Steve Edwards, Todd Edwards, Jason Overman**;

- *Hot Springs Village Voice*: **Bill Elderton**;

- Jasper, *Newton County Times*: **Kim Mefford**;

- Jonesboro, *The Sun*: **Lisa Lynn**;

- *Nashville News*: **Donna Harwell, Morgan Jones**;

- Horseshoe Bend: *Pacesetter Times*, **Karen Johnson, Randy Sherrell**;

- Little Rock, *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*: **Michelle Cothorn, Ric Duvall, Sheila Harrod, Leanne Hunter, Arshia Kahn, Debbie Kiser, Staci Miller, Veronica Oxendine, Kristen Stewart, Scott Stine, Eddie Telford, Breanna Wells, Sandra Ward, J.D. Yancey**;

- Little Rock, Arkansas Press Association:

News-Editorial Contest deadline is Mar. 31

The deadline for entering the Better Newspaper News-Editorial Contest, sponsored annually by the Arkansas Press Association is Thursday, Mar. 31. Those planning on competing are urged to begin making preparations to submit entries.

The new rules for 2011's contest and entry forms have been mailed to all member newspapers, and extra copies are available at APA's website (www.arkansaspress.org) in the "APA News" section on the front page.

The winners of the competition will be announced at an Awards Dinner during this summer's SuperConvention in Hot Springs. For more information contact **Terri Cobb** at APA (501.374.1500).

Sunshine Week 2011 begins Mar. 13

It may be just a coincidence but the combination is apropos: Sunshine Week begins Sunday, March 13, the same day that Daylight Saving Time returns. National Sunshine Week is an annual event emphasizing the importance of open government, citizen access and oversight and the role of newspapers in keeping their readers informed about government activities on the national, state and local level.

The Arkansas Press Association encourages members to call attention to the week-long observance. For that purpose there is a toolkit of promotional materials at the official site: www.sunshineweek.org. There visitors will find various logos, editorial cartoons, the official proclamation, op-ed pieces on the importance of Freedom of Information and Sunshine initiatives and infographics. All are free to use for the duration of the week.

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Tom's

Potpourri

APA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TOM LARIMER

The annual APA advertising conference is now just over two weeks away. The annual gathering will be held March 17-18 at the Arlington Hotel in Hot Springs.

The APA "Day at the Races" will be held Thursday, March 17, (St. Patrick's Day) at Oaklawn Park in Hot Springs for an afternoon of thoroughbred racing, good eats, and networking with other APA members.

This will be the third year for the "Day at the Races" event, which has proved to be a very popular event. It's a fun outing and a great way to view the century old tradition of thoroughbred racing at the Oaklawn Park facility.

The Oaklawn event will again be held in the Jockey Club. The wearing of the "green" is certainly encouraged and appropriate for St. Patrick's Day, but just remember the gentlemen are required to wear jackets, and jeans are not permitted for anyone in the Jockey Club.

Dig out your green stuff and join in the fun, then plan on staying over for the advertising conference. It just doesn't get any better than is.

The 2011 SuperConvention July 20-23 in Hot Springs is going to be another stellar event, one that APA members will not want to miss.

The convention committee met Friday at the convention center in Hot Springs, site for the 2011 gathering, to fine-tune the programming for the convention. Several good ideas were added to the mix at the convention meeting, and others will be added as the programming for the convention is completed.

The goal is for the conventions to have something for everyone and I know the 2011 edition will be no different. There will be opportunities to learn a thing or two, discuss issues and challenges that face APA newspapers in 2011, and to have some fun along the way, too.

A good convention is not all work and not all play, and the 2011 SuperConvention will offer a good mix of both with the focus on improving the lot of all APA members by connecting with each other. In my view, the "connect" part is one of the most important aspects of any convention. Networking with other APA members to talk shop can lead to some very helpful information to take back home.

It's always been that way, and this SuperConvention will be designed to facilitate that sort of sharing. Please don't miss it.

Thanks again to the SuperConvention committee, **Gary Troutman**, chairman, **Bill Elderton**, **Mary Fisher**, **Nat Lea**, **Terri Leifeste** and **Clark Smith**.

Earthquakes in Arkansas are shaking things up a bit. Pardon the pun. Or not.

There's been an outbreak of them in recent months, mostly centered in the Central Arkansas area. Coincidentally, the U.S. Geological Survey would have us believe, the earthquakes have nothing to do with the ongoing natural gas exploration in the Fayetteville shale play largely also centered in Central Arkansas.

Maybe so, but the 4.7 quake Sunday night that was felt by many in Central Arkansas was the largest registered since 1976. Me? I felt nothing. I apparently had just fallen asleep at the 11 p.m. time of the first

shake, and I'm apparently not sensitive enough to feel the subsequent after shocks.

I'm okay not feeling the earthquake. I experienced my share while living in Southern California, a state that reportedly leads the league in such occurrences. I find these shakes quite disorienting, actually, so I'm glad I missed this last one.

Commuting to work one day up Murphy Canyon Road in East San Diego my car started to shimmy violently. I thought I'd lost part of the front-end suspension. I started to move to the shoulder, glancing in the rear view to make sure nobody was about to run over me. To my surprise everyone else was stopping, I figured, to give me a hand. How nice.

But when I did get the car stopped on the shoulder, it was still shimmying. Strange feeling that. I was disoriented the remainder of the day. There's something about having your world shaken, the stable norm interrupted, that's just unsettling.

Newspapers in the area were quick to post responses to the earthquake. I saw accounts on a few newspaper websites, too.

There are likely some good stories to come in APA member newspapers on the recent earthquake, along with some educational pieces on the causes of the quakes themselves. I doubt there will be any great damage photos to publish with the stories, but that's a good thing. There will likely be lots of graphs and illustrations about the earth's substructure to enhance the coverage.

Maybe there's even a special section in all of this. Earthquake clearance sales would be a novelty and a natural to co-opt for a healthy special section on the quakes. There's a contest entry in there for sure, no doubt.

The earthquakes are definitely a topic to generate some good reading for newspapers, and I fully expect to see some of that from APA members in coming days and weeks.

APA has received an application for membership from a start-up, paid circulation weekly newspaper in Washington County. This is news, as it comes at a time when newspaper consolidations or outright furling of flags has become commonplace in Arkansas and across the country.

This is the first application APA has received for a paid, legal newspaper membership since 2006, and, if approved by the APA Board of Directors, will bring the APA membership total back to 131 newspapers.

The *Washington County Observer* was launched in February of 2010 by **Steve Winkler** and **Susan McCarthy**, and has published weekly since out of their West Fork office. They list a paid circulation of 915 on their membership application.

The APA Board will consider the application at its annual spring retreat to be held April 28-29 at the Lake DeGray State Park lodge.

Have a great week!

Tom



Legislative Report

APA is monitoring the following bills of interest to our industry and the public:

Bill No./Author	Short description	APA Position	Current status
HB 1017 Garner	Creates The Arkansas Open Checkbook Act, requiring the Finance and Administration Department to develop a website for public access to all state agency expenditures, including those of colleges and universities.	Monitor-Approve	01-19-11. Meeting set for 10:00 a.m., House State Agencies Committee.
HB 1044 Altes	Requires state, county and local law enforcement to maintain the confidentiality of motor vehicle accident reports for 90 days.	Oppose	01-18-11. Withdrawn from further consideration.
HB 1185 English	Provides procedures for improvement districts that use county collectors for improvement district assessment collection, including requirements for annual reporting and delinquent levies. Adds improvement districts to the Freedom of Information Act.	Support	02-24-11. Passed Senate, 35-0. 02-23-11. Amendment 1 adopted. 02-22-11. Do pass as amended, Senate City, County and Local Affairs Committee.
HB 1771 Altes Committee.	Allows 100% of donations to eligible K-12 scholarship-funding nonprofits to be deducted as an income tax credit. Would provide scholarships to private schools for K-12 students with household incomes less than 200% of the poverty level. Includes Freedom of Information Act exemption for information identifying individual taxpayers.	Opposed-Negotiating	03-03-11 Meeting set for 10:00 a.m., House Revenue and Taxation
SB 204 Taylor	Expands the denial of access to public records of the Departments of Correction and Community Correction by inmates, denying access to all public records to inmates and their representatives other than the inmate's attorney.	No position	02-24-11. Passed House 89-0. 02-16-11. Do pass, House State Agencies Committee.
SB 219 Lamoureux	Extends the exemption of certain records of public water systems from provisions of the Freedom of Information Act to July 1, 2013.	Neutral	02-23-11. Signed by Governor, Act. 99. 02-21-11. Passed House, 92-0.
SB 221 Dismang, McLean	The Arkansas Transparency Act, requiring the Department of Finance and Administration to create and maintain a database of state agency expenditures that is available to the public on a website.	Monitor-Approve	03-03-11. Meeting set for Upon Adjournment, House State Agencies Committee. 02-15-11. Passed Senate, 29-1.
SB 295 Malone, P.	Exempts all public records relating to an investigation by the Pharmacy Board of license holders or applicants for an act or offense from disclosure requirements of the Freedom of Information Act.	Opposed	02-28-11. Withdrawn from further consideration. 02-14-11. Referred to Public Health, Welfare and Labor Committee.
SB 302 Harrelson, Williams	Creates a revised Uniform Unincorporated Nonprofit Association Act; authorizes unincorporated nonprofit associations to designate records as confidential.	Objection withdrawn as amended (APA's amendment)	03-02-11. Do pass, House Insurance and Commerce Committee. 02-23-11. Amendments 1 and 2 adopted.
SB 318 Malone, P.	Makes unlawful disclosure of data or information from records of child advocacy centers a Class C misdemeanor.	Opposed-Negotiating	03-02-11. Meeting set for 10:00 a.m., Senate Judiciary Committee.
SB 325 Malone, P.	Provides criminal penalties for the unlawful disclosure of interview information from a child safety center or child advocacy center.	Opposed-Negotiating	03-02-11. Meeting set for 10:00 a.m., Senate Judiciary Committee.
SB 345 Malone, P.	Requires the State Board of Health to create a prescription drug monitoring program. Creates new exemption to the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act.	Opposed	03-01-11. Amendment 5 adopted. 03-01-11. Do pass as amended no. 5, Senate Public Health, Welfare and Labor Committee.



Ad Conference attendees

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Terri Cobb, Pam Larimer, Tom Larimer, Ashley Wimberley;

• Little Rock, Stephens Media/Arkansas News Bureau: **Dennis Byrd**;

• Mountain View, *Stone County Leader*: Mountain View; **Bill Corder, Linda Kroon VanDiest, Neal Fraser, Rusty Fraser**;

• *Stuttgart Daily Leader*: **Claudia Ahrens, Danni Jo Bueker, Jim Kennedy, Moira Kennedy, Emily Smith**;

• North Little Rock, *The Times*: **Colleen Baird**;

• Peoria, Ill., MultiAd: **Mark Plebanek**;

• Salem, Areawide Media: **Vanessa Padgett, Kathy Pierce, Donna Smith**;

• Walnut Ridge, *The Times Dispatch*: **Shantelle Prater, Angie Skimahorn**.

The Conference will conclude with the much-anticipated Awards Luncheon featuring the announcements of the winners of the 2011 Better Newspaper Advertising Awards. For more information, flyers and registration forms, visit the APA website (“Upcoming Events”) or contact the APA headquarters: 501.374.1500.



A visit to the governor’s mansion is virtually a click away

BY REBECCA BROCKMAN
THE DAILY RECORD, LITTLE ROCK

Receiving a personalized, gold-embossed invitation to visit the governor’s mansion in the historic Quapaw Quarter isn’t something that arrives in the mail everyday. Actually, it might never arrive. But now there is a way to visit the mansion without leaving home and the comfort of your chair.

The Arkansas Newspaper Foundation (ANF) recently launched a virtual tour of the state’s landmark. The tour is designed for kids, but after visiting the site, everyone can benefit from the user-friendly, educational tool.

ANF Executive Director, **Karen Brown**, hosted an event at the governor’s mansion on Feb. 22 to officially announce the tour. Brown told the audience, which included members of the Arkansas Press Association and various other guests, that the tour included nine rooms and the gardens surrounding the mansion.

The rooms on the tour include: the formal living room, state dining room, library, grand foyer, atrium, lower atrium and the grand hall. “Kids really like interactive learning experiences. They go through it so fast,” Brown said as she snapped her fingers three times.

On the tour, the user student will encounter hot spots, which show up on screen as little white and yellow bursts. The hot spots are areas of interest and when clicked on, provide a close up photo and history facts.

For example, in the state dining room, when you click on the hot spot on the rug, a separate box pops up and reads: “The exquisite Persian rug was donated by Gov. Rockefeller and Jeanette Edris Rockefeller when he left office in 1970.” Users also have the option of zooming in and out during the tour and making the tour full screen. View the tour displays a 360-degree of each location. I suggest hitting the pause button (on the far right) and then choosing a hot spot. In the matter of a few minutes, I learned quite a bit about the mansion and Arkansas’ history!

Mansion Administrator, **Ron Maxwell**, said during the launch, “The virtual tour is a great idea and provides a rare opportunity to visit the governor’s mansion. Things are always changing, but the tour is factually correct.”

In addition to the virtual tour, ANF has compiled an extensive collection of teaching materials based on the tour. There are vocabulary building activities, word search puzzles, a tour questionnaire and a place to make a postcard.

Brown brought some of the completed proj-

ects with her and it was so neat to see how each child connected with a different part of the mansion. During the learning exercise, the kids learn about Viper, the first dog. I’ve never seen Viper, but apparently, he is a German Sheppard and is part of the first family.

At the end of Brown’s presentation, she showed two videos of students who had participated in the tour and composed a brochure. Both students were in fourth grade and took the project seriously and did a great job. During one video, the student froze and told the person holding the camera, “I don’t know how to pronounce it.” The person tapping the video, who was probably the teacher, whispered, “Atrium.” The girl smiled and said, “This is a picture of the atrium!”

Afterwards, Brown pointed out that tours are indeed educational and provide a good way for children to learn new words. The vocabulary lists for primary grades include words such as: garden, president, Quapaw, residence, meetings and artwork. The complete list of activities can be found at www.arkansaspress.org (click on the Arkansas Newspaper Foundation tab).

The project was made possible in part by a grant from the Arkansas Humanities Council and the Department of Arkansas Heritage.

When you are ready to take the tour, visit www.arkansaspress.org and click on the Arkansas Newspaper Foundation tab at the top of the page, scroll down to the middle of the page and click on ‘Take a virtual tour of the Governor’s Mansion’ link. When the new page appears, click on ‘Show Virtual Tour’ and then select the ‘Welcome’ tab on the far right side or whichever room you would like to tour first.

If you are motivated to see the actual mansion after the virtual experience, rest assured that the mansion does schedule personal tours. Tours are scheduled on Tuesday mornings, from 10 to 11:30 a.m., and Thursday afternoons, from 1 to 2:30 p.m. Times are subject to house availability. The tours include visits to all public rooms. There is no admission fee. To make reservations, call 501-324-9805.

The Arkansas Newspaper Foundation was founded in 1982 as a nonprofit educational arm of the Arkansas Press Association (APA). The Arkansas Newspaper Foundation raises funds through tax-deductible contributions and disburses those funds for the purposes named in its mission.

APA encourages members to send news of staff changes or additions at their newspapers for inclusion in this publication to: **Tres Williams** (tres@arkansaspress.org) or **Brian Fellone** (brian@arkansaspress.org).



VIRTUAL WEBSITE - **Karen Brown**, ANF Director, unveils the virtual tour website of the Governor’s Mansion Tuesday. Members of the press were invited to attend. The website is www.arkansas.gov.