

## New year heralds changes at many state papers

Many newspapers are making changes to usher in the new year, some of which were most likely not on their new year's resolutions ;ost.

Lynn L. Martin, publisher of the Alva Review-Courier, wrote that they will change their publication frequency and begin publishing two times per week starting this month.

The Review-Courier will be printed on Friday and Sunday. The Newsgram, the paper's free publication, will continue to be distributed on Wednesday.

The copy price of the Friday paper has been increased to \$1, same as the Sunday edition, Martin wrote.

"While we dislike becoming less than a daily paper, we are glad to be a tri-weekly in print, and a daily on our Web site," wrote Martin.

"Surprisingly, this should mean a much more thorough reading of the three publications each week because the reader will have more concentrated local news content."

The Broken Arrow Ledger has changed to a once-a-week publication after the twice-a-week frequency didn't prevail. The newspaper, which previously had a paid circulation, is now a free distribution paper.

For the Record, a weekly publication in Yale, Okla., is

changing its newsstand prices and subscription rates.

"Due to the continuing rising cost of publishing each week the publishers of For the Record regret to inform the readers that they have no choice but to raise the cost of the newspaper," Publisher Suzy Oberholtz wrote in a Dec. 11 editorial.

"So effective January 8th, 2009, the newsstand cost for this publication will raise to 75 cents per issue," she wrote.

Savings for local subscribers is still \$13 off the newsstand price wrote the publisher.

For the Record co-publisher Mark Oberholtz said weekly expenses for the paper include \$300 for printing, and about \$75 in postage.

To cut costs, the Yale paper implemented a program that lists the expiration date of a subscription on the newspaper label instead of sending out reminders.

"We don't know what else to do, we are sending papers out every week that cost us more to print than we get in subscriptions.... It's this or go out of business," wrote Suzy Oberholtz.

The Drumright Gusher gave subscribers and advertisers one last chance to take advantage of old rates before changing it in the new year.

"It's been five years since our single copy rate increased, and longer than that since subscription and advertising rates have increased," Gusher Publisher Barbara Vice wrote in a Dec. 18 article.

"Yet in that same time frame, postage, printing, labor, utilities and all other costs have increased."

Vice said a new ad rate schedule was designed to offer savings of nearly half off the standard rate by simply agreeing to a certain amount of advertising over a certain time period.

Vice said other changes are in the works for the Gusher.

"A new look plus additional coverage and the addition of more writers will make for a better, more diverse community newspaper," she said.

While Oklahoma newspapers tighten their belts during this economic downturn, community newspapers are still holding their own, said Martin.

"We operate in small towns where everybody knows everybody," said Martin.

"This means a high percentage of our news is about people you know.

"We cover the marriages, divorces, funerals, births, crimes, sports and academic successes of most everybody in town."

## MID-WINTER CONVENTION

FEBRUARY 5-7, 2009 • TULSA, OKLAHOMA



A Thursday Welcome Reception will be held at Tulsa's new BOK Center.

There's still time to register for the Feb. 5-7 OPA Mid-Winter Convention at the Doubletree Hotel in downtown Tulsa – but don't wait too much longer.

This year's program includes an opening session by Bill Ketter, vice president of news for CNHI, and a welcome reception at Tulsa's new BOK Center.

Friday's sessions include a panel discussion titled Marketing Strategies for the Growing Gaming Industry and Gov. Brad Henry's sixth appearance at an OPA convention. The annual Blooper Luncheon is sure to bring some belly laughs and guffaws as we take a look at some of the best faux pas of the year.

Friday afternoon features several concurrent sessions including Adding Videos to Your Web; Classified Advertising Promotions & Trends; Investigative

Reporting, and Online Advertising.

The Friday evening Awards Banquet includes presentations of the Better Newspaper Contest Awards, Milt Phillips Award, Beachy Musselman Award, and Half and Quarter Century Club inductions.

Andrew Spiropoulos will present "An Agenda for Constitutional Reform" on Saturday morning followed by a question and answer session with Oklahoma's congressional delegation.

All educational sessions are sponsored by the Ethic and Excellence in Journalism Foundation. Other sponsors of the 2009 convention are OGE, American Profile, AT&T and OERB.

Complete program information and online registration is available on the OPA Web site at [www.OkPress.com](http://www.OkPress.com).



## Crystal Clear



BY OPA PRESIDENT STEVE BOOHER,  
*Publisher of the Cherokee Messenger & Republican*

OPA's Mid-Winter Convention is just around the corner (Feb. 5-7) and I hope you've reserved a front row seat for all the excitement in Tulsa. I'm really looking forward to my first visit to the Oil Town's BOK Center. Can't wait to see what you can do with \$196 million.

Everyone always has a favorite convention seminar or subject they want to take in and there are a couple on my list. I want to learn more about online advertising from Jeff Mayo, Melissa Mangham and Courtney Chojnacki (there's a trio of last names ready-made for a law firm letterhead). Then I'd like to have a sit-down with Jim Scroggins, executive director of the Oklahoma Lottery Commission, to see if he can give me some tips on Lotto numbers. My retirement, you know.

OPA's Education Committee, with much help from the OPA staff, has put in a lot of time on this year's convention, so I hope they're not too disappointed when I say that my all-time favorite educational activity – whether it be the winter or summer conventions – are the roundtable get togethers. I've stolen some of my best ideas at roundtables.

Seriously, there's a lot of useful information packed into this year's Mid-Winter. But to get something out of it, you have to be there! Time is running out, but I'll bet the OPA staff can still find you a seat if you register online at [www.okpress.com](http://www.okpress.com). However, don't wait much longer to reserve your room at the Doubletree Downtown Hotel. You'll have to register by Jan. 22 to get the OPA rate of \$92 a night.

(crystals, crystals, crystals)

I can't go much further without mentioning that Sonya and I will be celebrating our 23rd wedding anniversary at the Mid-Winter blowout. That's right, we got married on a Thursday evening on Feb. 6, 1985, and then piled into my car or hers – can't remember which – and took off for that year's convention.

It was one of the wisest decisions I've ever made. No, not getting married, but getting married on Mid-Winter Convention weekend so that I don't forget our anniversary. Although I have to admit I have to cheat occasionally and do a little background work to make sure it wasn't Feb. 5 or 7. When the convention plays with my memory, like it's done in the past by scheduling the convention on the second weekend in February, it really plays havoc with my marriage.

Come by the President's Hospitality Suite Thursday or Friday night and I'll pour you a drink in honor of the Booher's anniversary... courtesy, of course, of the suite's sponsor, American Profile.



Finally, I suppose I should mention there's going to be this little get together Friday evening where the OPA hands out prestigious awards like the Milt Phillips and Beachy Musselman. There's even a couple of folks who will receive a presentation for surviving in this business for 50 years; something called the Half Century Club Induction. Now there's a pair who could give Jack LaLanne a run for his money! Another couple of dozen will show their wear and tear by receiving Quarter Century Club induction.

Last, but certainly not least if you care anything about this profession, is the presentation of the Better Newspaper Contest Awards. That's where the best in our business gather in a big room, cheer for each other's accomplishments, and make the rest of us wonder what we did wrong.

All in all, it promises to be a great weekend and it won't be the same without you. So sign up today, make your hotel reservations and gas up the old jalopy while fuel is still under two bucks a gallon. Sonya and I will see you in Tulsa.

## Voices of community newspapers

From everyday life to life changing events, Oklahoma newspapers keep readers informed about what's happening in their community. Following are samples of what's appearing in Oklahoma newspapers.

"No school official anywhere should tolerate a student section that yells out homophobic slurs toward an opposing team.... After all, most school systems have language in their codes that prohibit bullying and encourage sportsmanship. Yet, already in this new basketball season, I had the displeasure of witnessing all of the above actions – plus some not mentioned – occur at a game I was attending outside of my usual Grove/Jay/Fairland/Afton beat recently."

*Guy Ellis, The Grove Sun Daily*  
12-19-2008

"In the past few weeks, a few unseemingly disconnected things have happened that make it clear that our little rural Okie communities can pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. Big federal grants might be nice, but we've seen little happen from some of them without community support. Foremost, Bob Evans is right: It is time to get behind Barnsdall's Osage Emergency Services, a group of volunteer Emergency Medical Responders that has been struggling to form with a great deal of Osage Nation support and, until now, a fairly apathetic display of community interest except by a small but dedicated group of unpaid volunteers who have been buffeted by more public criticism than praise."

*The Bigheart Times (Barnsdall)*  
12-11-2008

"Nearly every year state employees ask for a raise, and a sympathetic capitol press corps steps up to provide the agenda journalism necessary to frame the discussion."

*Brandon Dutcher, OCPA Vice President*  
from The Oklahoman, 12-28-2008

"It's sad news that 2009 will be the final year for the Biplane Expo. For more than two decades, this event has provided a focal point for some of the aviation world's most enthusiastic participants and admirers. The event has been a key element in maintaining Bartlesville's historic ties to aviation, and the national attention it generated enhanced our name recognition and stature."

*Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise*  
12-28-2008

"The subject of parallel parking that was brought up at Tuesday's city council meeting

also brought up some mixed feelings on my part. While I whole heartedly support the action of the council that will do away with the angle parking that makes crossing Main Street on Floral an adventure that should qualify one for hazardous duty pay, I can't help but think back to the time when 'parallel parking' was one of the most frightening terms in the American vocabulary."

*Wennum R. Wallace, Publisher, The Frederick Press*  
12-11-2008

"We are working on our Christmas Edition to be published on Christmas Day, December 25, 2008. We are gathering stories of interest as well as photos. Since postage has really got very expensive, one suggestion would be to purchase a Christmas greeting for less than what it would take to mail out the Christmas Cards plus buying the Christmas Cards."

*Joe Landsden, Publisher, Beaver Herald-Democrat*  
12-11-2008

"There is arguable justification for super majorities in some areas such as raising taxes or amending the United States Constitution. But when it comes to children and schools, we think a majority should be a majority. There are other, more sensible protections against bond abuse. All the 60 percent rule really does is make a naysayer's vote worth more than one cast in the same referendum by a supporter. It's not right and ought to be changed."

*The Countywide & Sun (Tecumseh)*  
12-11-2008

"Yes, I am upset about what happened in Iraq, but I am also upset about our growing lack of respect for each other. We need to rise to the level to voice our concerns with courage and conviction to those we disagree with in an educated and intelligent manner. Disrespect breeds disrespect. Can this happen in a small community like ours? We know that it can happen anywhere. We can stop it by showing respect to others. For respecting others has a tendency to grow and touch many lives, even lives that we may never know we touched. May we grow in respect for each other and even those whom we disagree."

*Roger L. Thompson, Publisher, Okemah News Leader*  
12-11-2008

## Nominating Committee recommends Spitzer as new board member

The OPA Nominating Committee met in Oklahoma City on Jan. 8, 2009, to recommend the slate of officers and directors to serve during the 2009-2010 term, which begins July 1, 2009, and ends June 30, 2010.

The seven member committee is composed of the six most recent OPA past presidents who are still active as newspaper executives and the current OPA president.

Attending were Chairman Ray Lokey, Johnston County Capital-Democrat; Barb Walter, The Hennessey Clipper; Joe Worley, Tulsa World; Gracie Montgomery, The Purcell Register; David Stringer, The Norman Transcript; Stu Phillips, The Seminole Producer, and Steve Booher, Cherokee Messenger & Republican.

The committee reviewed the OPA By-Laws, Nominating Committee Structure, board policies regarding board service

and the board positions to be filled by the committee.

Upon completion of the reviews, the committee recommended the following slate of officers and directors for the year beginning July 1, 2009.

Current OPA Vice President Gloria Trotter, co-publisher of The Countywide & Sun, was recommended to serve as president. Rod Serfoss, publisher of The Clinton Daily News, was recommended to serve as vice president, and Joe Worley, executive editor of the Tulsa World, was recommended to serve a second one-year term as treasurer.

The committee also recommended the renewal of a three-year director term for Jeff Shultz, publisher of The Garvin County News Star.

Dayva Spitzer, co-publisher of the Sayre Record & Beckham County Democrat, was recommended as a new director to serve a three-year term.

Spitzer began serving as editor and co-publisher of The Sayre Record with her husband Brad in 1987. They operated the newspaper from a commercial printing business they established in 1982, only a year after they married.

As soon as The Record achieved legal status in 1989, the Spitzers became active members of OPA.

In August of 1997, the Spitzers purchased The Erick Beckham County Democrat and merged the two papers into The Sayre Record and Beckham County Democrat.

A general election for new officers and directors will be held during the OPA business meeting at 5:15 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 5, 2009, at the Doubletree Downtown Hotel in Tulsa.

Nominations for officers and directors may also be made from the floor.

## OPA members to vote on proposed by-law changes at annual convention

Business members of the OPA will vote on several amendments to the by-laws at the business meeting in February.

The meeting is set for 5:15 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 5, at the Downtown Doubletree Hotel in Tulsa, Okla.

"These are housekeeping amendments that are overdue," said Mark Thomas, executive vice president of the association.

Two years ago the association voted on whether to allow free papers as business members, but the proposed housekeeping amendments do not include any language of that nature, Thomas said.

"At that time, the board felt we should stick to the one basic issue of membership, and take up these housekeeping amendments later," he said.

The language of the proposed amendments will be mailed to each business member at least five days in advance of the meeting, and is also posted on the OPA Web site.

Of the four amendments, Thomas said the most important was probably the change that allows members to count their digital subscriptions sent to the association as dues to the association.

"We have had this provision for printed copies for decades, and members that now send digital subscriptions to OPA should have the same tax benefit. Plus, it is more beneficial to OPA to have the digital copies of the papers so they can be stored and searched digitally," he said.

Other amendments include such items as changing the old name of the Unit-

ed States Post Office Department to the United States Postal Service, changing the requirement that OPA bill the National Newspaper Association dues with the annual OPA dues statements, and eliminates a dues discount provision when a publisher has two separate newspapers in the same town, those papers are printed in the same plant, and the largest paper is an OPA business member.

"These cleanup amendments should have minimal impact on the association and the business membership," Thomas said.

Thomas also encouraged any business member to review the language at [www.okpress.com/opa-by-laws](http://www.okpress.com/opa-by-laws), and to contact him at the OPA office if there are questions about the proposal.

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### 50 years of family ownership

The Johnston County Capital-Democrat in Tishomingo recently marked the completion of the 50th year the publication has been owned and operated by the Lokey Family.

John Lokey put in the first 31 years (1946-1977), while current publisher Ray Lokey has served the last 29 years (1990-2008). The interval between the two was filled by John D. Montgomery, who is now publisher of the Purcell Register.

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**OPA CALENDAR OF EVENTS****FEB. 5-7, TULSA****OPA MID-WINTER CONVENTION**

Join us at the Doubletree Hotel in downtown Tulsa for the annual OPA Mid-Winter Convention, including presentation of the Better Newspaper Contest awards. Bill Ketter, CNHI vice president of news, will discuss "Keeping our wits and wisdom in scary times" on Feb. 5. State experts will discuss advertising and marketing strategies of the state's growing gaming industry on Feb. 6. Other educational sessions include investigative reporting, classified advertising promotions, online advertising, and solutions for adding video to your Web site. Governor Brad Henry and the state's congressional delegation are also invited for their annual sessions. Plan now to attend!!

**FEB. 18****2009 ONF STUDENT INTERNSHIP & SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS POSTMARK DEADLINE**

Applications available at  
www.okpress.com/onf

**FEB. 18, 20 & 21, OKC****OKC GRIDIRON PERFORMANCES**

The 2009 Oklahoma City Gridiron production will be held in the Mary Noble Tolbert Theatre at Stage Center. All shows begin at 7:45 p.m. and seats are \$25. Visit [www.okcgridiron.org](http://www.okcgridiron.org) for more information.

**FEB. 19, OKLAHOMA CITY****ONF WORKSHOP****"GROWING HOME DELIVERY: DON'T ACCEPT THE LOSSES!"**

Bailey Dabney, publisher of the Claremore Daily Progress, will lead this workshop and roundtable geared toward growing circulation through new subscriber initiatives, retention strategies, carrier incentives and single copy sales.

**MARCH 1-7****NEWSPAPER IN EDUCATION WEEK****MARCH 15-21****SUNSHINE WEEK**

Visit [sunshineweek.org](http://sunshineweek.org) for more information about the importance of open government and freedom of information.

**MARCH 26, OKLAHOMA CITY****ONF GOVERNMENT REPORTING WORKSHOP**

Joey Senat, associate journalism professor at Oklahoma State University, will lead this workshop from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For more information on upcoming events, visit the Web site as noted in the calendar, go to the OPA Web site at [www.OkPress.com](http://www.OkPress.com) or contact the OPA Member Services Department at (405) 499-0026 or (405) 499-0040.

# White flag not flying for Mayo brothers

While some say the print medium will end with inked fingertips holding white flags, the Mayo brothers are out to prove them wrong.

In December 2008, Jeff and Jack Mayo, owners of Big Basin Enterprises LLC, bought the Eufaula Indian Journal and the Checotah McIntosh County Democrat from Sumner Newspapers, Inc.

Jeff and Jack, who grew up in Sallisaw, come from a family of newspaper people.

Their grandparents, the late Wheeler and Florence Mayo, started the Sequoyah County Times in 1932. Today, their father, Jim Mayo, is publisher of the Times while Jeff serves as the general manager. Their mother, Becky, works at the Times as a business manager.

Jack, who lives in Redmond, Wash., is a program manager for Microsoft.

Jeff Mayo says they are pleased to have bought the two McIntosh County papers, but added it wasn't an easy decision.

"It was certainly nerve-racking watching the economy slide as we were talking to the Sumners about this last fall," Mayo said.

"Hopefully everything will turn around

**'I didn't get into this business to be out of it in 10 years. I'm in it for my career.'**

— Publisher Jeff Mayo  
Big Basin Enterprises LLC

and we can maintain our local news presence and maintain our readership."

Although the weight of recession has hit metro papers the hardest, Mayo says he has seen things slow down at smaller publications, but not to the extent that it has affected metro papers.

"Looking at the industry as a whole, you have to really segregate out the weeklies and twice-a-week papers from the daily papers," Mayo says.

Mayo believes strongly in the future of community newspapers.

"I'm only 36 and I didn't get into this business to be out of it in 10 years. I'm in it for my career," he said.

In addition to the recently purchased weeklies in McIntosh County, the Mayo brothers also own the Vian Tenkiller News and Eastern Times Register.

However, the Sequoyah County Times in Sallisaw remains as the flagship publication for the Mayo family.

"Our best efforts have been with the Sequoyah County Times," Mayo said, "but that's just because it's the largest paper and we have the most resources behind it."

With a strong presence in eastern Oklahoma, Mayo says that these two new papers help fit in what they were trying to build by serving similar markets and being geographically close to combine efforts.

No major changes are planned for the Democrat and Indian Journal, with the exception of creating Web sites and upgrading equipment and software programs, Mayo said.

"As far as day-to-day activity, the Sumners have done a good job," Mayo said. "I think we've got a great staff so I don't plan on any staff changes."

Mayo hopes to keep off the road to recession with a healthy focus on community news and giving readers a reason to look at their paper.

"I believe a newspaper plays a vital role in helping a community grow," said Mayo. "The key to success is involvement in the community."

## Ardmoreite welcomes two new reporters

The Daily Ardmoreite news staff is extending its family with the addition of two news reporters – Jennifer Lindsey and Keith Howard.

Lindsey, an Oklahoma native, recently graduated from Smith College in Northampton, Mass., where she played basketball and served as the sports editor of the student newspaper, the Sophian.

She will be working as the new education writer, covering everything involved with local schools.

Howard received a Master of Science degree in journalism at Boston Univer-

sity, and his bachelor's degree at the University of Illinois. He has worked at the Boston Weekly Dig, a 60,000 circulation weekly, and written for the Somerville News and the Allston-Brighton TAB, both community weeklies in Massachusetts.

At The Ardmoreite, he will be covering western Carter, Marshall and Love counties, as well as veterans' affairs.

"Jennifer and Keith are excellent young reporters with a bright future in journalism," said Jeff Hall, managing editor of The Ardmoreite.

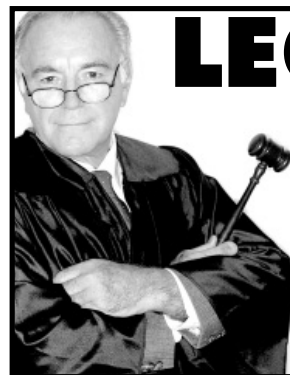
## DEATHS

**ROBERT 'BOB' T. WILLIAMS**, who worked for newspapers in Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas, died Dec. 31, 2008, in Oklahoma City. He was 72.

Williams was born Dec. 6, 1936, in Muskogee. He graduated from Oklahoma State University with a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism in 1962.

He became sports editor of the Southwest Daily Times in Liberal, Kan., in January 1962. After 12 years, Williams left to become sports editor for the Amarillo Globe News. Six years later, he returned to the Southwest Daily Times where he worked until 1990. Williams was general manager and editor of The Perkins Journal from 1991 until 1994. He later became managing editor at the Guthrie Daily Leader.

He is survived by his best friend and companion, Bonnie Long of Guthrie; two sons, Kirt D. Fryer and wife Jill of Tulsa, and Monty H. Williams of Moore; one brother, Richard Tillman and wife Chris of Ponca City; three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.



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# Publishers, programmer partner to produce new product

What began six months ago as a business deal to develop a new Web content management system for the El Reno Tribune swiftly became a partnership.

Tribune publishers Sean and Ray Dyer and software engineer Steve Maddox formed Dyer & Maddox LLC to market their product, Triad EGB, which gives newspapers the ability to publish a Web page economically and easily.

Sean Dyer said the elimination of monthly or weekly fees makes their product unique.

"It's like when you buy Microsoft Word," he explained. "You buy it, you pay for it, but you don't send them a check every time you write a story."

The software was created by Maddox, a software engineer, and his wife, Alex, a Web site developer and designer. Together they own AdsFactory.com, a Web site designing and marketing business.

The concept for Triad EGB began when the Dyers, self-professed newspapermen, and Maddox, who referred to himself as a computer 'nerd', began talking. With the Dyers newspaper experience and Maddox's programming ability, a drag-and-drop system was developed.

For the technically challenged, Triad EGB makes publishing a Web page as easy as dropping a document into a folder.

"As we discussed it, we started thinking that if it was applicable for us why can't other newspapers use it as well," said Dyer. "Then we began thinking in terms of the industry instead of our paper."

The software eliminates the need to know HTML or programming but allows a customized Web site designed for newspapers.

A one-time introductory fee of \$2499 provides the basic package, which includes a customized template, calendar of events, sports, classifieds, video streaming and more.

"Once you buy the software, all you need is a computer," said Maddox. "We'll give you the link to installation and you do it. After that, the program is running. Anything you put in a folder you specify goes on the Website."

Each Web site will be customized for the customer, said Maddox.

"When we set up your template you can chose your 'skin', your colors, your fonts and whatever other information you want

on your Web site," Maddox said. "We want you to be happy with how your Web site looks."

"I want everything to be unique and have it's own look and I think everybody else wants that," he said. "You want to be unique; you don't want to look like everyone else."

The Website framework is designed to accommodate standard IAB ad sizes as well as others.

"The ads can be any size," said Maddox. "The Website rolls around whatever images you put on there."

Users have total control of menus allowing them to add or hide categories.

Sean Dyer said the new software has virtually made the El Reno Tribune a daily again.

"We used to be a daily paper," said Sean Dyer. "In '92 we were a daily, in '93 we became twice-a-week, and now in the year 2009 we are a 24/7."

Dyer said he plans to establish two daily Web deadlines while the print deadline will stay the same.

"If a drug bust happens Sunday afternoon, we should have it on Web as soon as we get information," said Ray Dyer.

The software allows users to update the Web from the office, home or even a phone. It has taken away hours of labor-intensive HTML coding and reduced it to a few minutes of drag-and-drop.

"We want the newspaper with our software to recapture the communication center of each town, like it used to be in the '80s before Internet, texting and e-mail," said Sean Dyer.

"We should accommodate our readers and think of the future."

The entrepreneurial trio is already looking ahead at ways to improve their product.

"Down the road, as we develop and make enhancements, we may focus on this from the advertisers' perspective instead of just the readers' perspective," said Dyer. "We need revenue to sustain any business model. We'll be looking at ways to interact with advertisers, who in turn can interact with readers."

To see Triad EGB in action, visit the El Reno Tribune's Website at [www.elrenotribune.com](http://www.elrenotribune.com) or call the Dyers at (405) 262-5180.



The entrepreneurial trio of Sean (left) and Ray Dyer (right) and Steve Maddox (center) have created a drag-and-drop Web content management system for newspapers. The Dyers are owners and publishers of the El Reno Tribune and Mustang News; Maddox is a software engineer

Ask the Dyers about their "Electronic Web Press" call Sean or Erin at 405-262-5180.

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# Public Service Contest on hold for 2009, may resume in future

The monthly Public Service Contest, sponsored by Public Service Company of Oklahoma, has come to an end.

PSO, which has sponsored the contest since 2006, regretfully informed the Oklahoma Press Association that it would not be able to sponsor the contest in 2009.

"We are proud to have sponsored the weekly writing contest for OPA members over the past three years," said Andrea Chancellor, PSO Corporate Communications manager. "The contest has been a great way to recognize the high quality of news reportage and writing taking place across our state every day.

"Unfortunately, today's tough economic circumstances require that we step back and manage all aspects of our budget very closely. While we will not be sponsoring the OPA competition in 2009, we hope to

resume our sponsorship at some point in the future."

For the past three years, PSO has rewarded newspapers for making their communities a better place through community service and news coverage. Winners were featured in The Oklahoma Publisher as well as on the OPA Web site at [www.OkPress.com](http://www.OkPress.com).

## NOVEMBER 2008 WINNERS

Winners of the November 2008 monthly contest were The Norman Transcript and The Countywide & Sun in Tecumseh.

The Transcript won for its staff effort on a series of reports that put a face on the thousands of disabled Americans living in the community.

The series looked at the topic from architectural, social, business, caregivers and public policy perspective

The Countywide & Sun won for its effort to start Pink Out, a cancer awareness and fundraising event in Pink, Okla. Pink is a rural community in Pottawatomie County – and apparently the only town of that name in the United States.

The effort attracted about 400 people, including about 200 runners, and raised more than \$7,500 for cancer research.

Plans are to make it bigger and better next year, including painting the Town Hall bright pink.

## DECEMBER 2008 WINNERS

Winners of the December 2008 contest were the Muskogee Phoenix and Oologah Lake Leader.

Phoenix staff writer Keith Purtell wrote of how the rapid rise in popularity of off-road vehicles has begun to place a strain on the Gruber Off-Road Vehicle Park east of Muskogee. The park was created by a land grant from the Federal Government's Department of the Interior in March 1990.

The Oologah Lake Leader won for its co-sponsorship of a Holiday Home Tour in December. The tour combines open houses at decorated homes as well as a holiday gift house that allows local merchants to display their wares at a central location.

With the bleak economic climate, the Oologah Area Chamber of Commerce and real estate agents suggested ending the tradition.

However, the Lake Leader staff insisted on moving forward and got busy promoting the event and its community benefits.

In the end, one more house was offered for the tour than could be accommodated and the gift house was packed making the event a success.

Sweepstakes winners, which are chosen from the 12 monthly winners in each division (daily and weekly), will be announced on Feb. 6 at the OPA Mid-Winter Convention in Tulsa, Okla.

## Ken Jones named new publisher at Pryor Daily

The Pryor Daily Times recently welcomed Ken Jones as its new publisher.

Jones, of Vilonia, Ark., came to the Mayes County newspaper from a position in Little Rock, Ark.

He has been a publisher and advertising manager for over 25 years and has published papers in Mississippi, Texas and Arkansas.

"I am extremely pleased to have Ken Jones as publisher of the Pryor Daily Times," said Linnie Pride, vice presi-

dent and division manager of Community Newspaper Holdings, Inc.

Jones said he wants to work toward improving all aspects of the newspaper.

Jones, who grew up on a farm and prefers smaller towns, said the small-town atmosphere was one thing that attracted him to Pryor.

He and his wife, Lois, are enjoying their time in the community.

"I look forward to meeting the people in Pryor," said Jones.

## 'Change' is here – the fat lady has sung

It's January, which means it's almost February, so it's time for the news – or, at least, Gridiron's version of the news.

Remember Bulwinkle's fractured fairy tales? When the Oklahoma City Gridiron Club sets out to roast the political elite of Oklahoma, America and the world, laughter is sure to follow.

This year's show, scheduled for Feb. 18, 20 and 21, hints none-too-subtly at the presidential election year just past: "Change is Here – Or, the Fat Lady Has Sung."

Assuming everyone survives the end of analog TV, Oklahoma journalists and their associates will bring you "news to confuse."

Gridiron performs in The Mary Tol-

bert Theater at Stage Center in downtown Oklahoma City, where the thrust stage allows great interaction between performers and audience.

Proceeds from the Gridiron Show's parody of politics, culture and the news media itself directly support scholarships for Oklahomans studying journalism.

Tickets are \$25 each, and can be purchased online at [www.okcgridiron.org](http://www.okcgridiron.org), by telephoning ticket chairman Don Schmidt, (405) 745-2612, or by sending payment directly to P.O. Box 517, Mustang, OK 73064.

For information about journalism scholarships, or to download an application, please visit: [www.okcgridiron.org/scholarships.htm](http://www.okcgridiron.org/scholarships.htm).



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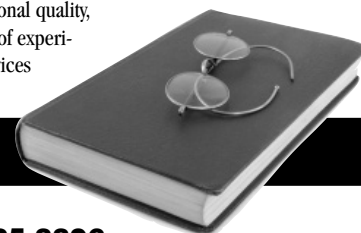
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# THE *OG+E*<sup>®</sup> PHOTO CONTEST



Deasia Posey, 5, flirts with Santa at the Tecumseh Pubic Library during the Old-Fashioned Christmas Gala.

Photo by GLORIA TROTTER, *The Countywide & Sun (Tecumseh)*, Published Dec. 11, 2008

Shawnee High School senior Jordan McClain is comforted by friends after the Wolves were eliminated from the state football tournament.

Photo by GREG MAYBERRY,  
*The Countywide & Sun*  
(Tecumseh),  
Published Nov. 20, 2008



SIMPLY AUTUMN – Chloe Hall of Catoosa plays in leaves scattered throughout the yard.

Photo by PERCY JACKSON II, *Muskogee Phoenix*, Published Nov. 27, 2008



Law enforcement officials investigate an accident scene where longtime Sulphur High School Assistant Football Coach Jeff Nye was killed in a train crash on Dec. 29, 2008. According to officials, Nye did not see the train coming and pulled into the path of the train.

Photo by RANDY MITCHELL, *Ada Evening News*, Published Dec. 30, 2008

NOVEMBER 2008 DAILY WINNER: **PERCY JACKSON II, *Muskogee Phoenix***  
NOVEMBER 2008 WEEKLY WINNER: **GREG MAYBERRY, *The Countywide & Sun (Tecumseh)***

DECEMBER 2008 DAILY WINNER: **RANDY MITCHELL, *Ada Evening News***  
NOVEMBER 2008 WEEKLY WINNER: **GLORIA TROTTER, *The Countywide & Sun (Tecumseh)***

VIEW WINNING PHOTOS AT [WWW.OKPRESS.COM](http://WWW.OKPRESS.COM)

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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.

## Workshop to focus on increasing circulation

The Oklahoma Newspaper Foundation will present "Growing Circulation: Don't Accept the Losses!" from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 19, at the Marriott Hotel in Oklahoma City.

This workshop, which focuses on increasing circulation, will be led by Bailey Dabney and is part of the Raymond and Mildred Fields Memorial Fund Educational Series. Registration is \$40 and includes lunch.

Dabney said the first segment of the workshop will focus on increasing circulation, including methods and sources to gain new subscribers, strategies to retain current subscribers, ideas for direct mar-

keting efforts that get results and incentives for staff.

The second segment will provide 55 things you can do to sell more papers, make your single copy sales efforts more efficient and improve the promotion of your single copy program.

Dabney will also lead a roundtable luncheon, where participants can exchange ideas and solutions with the group.

Attendees are asked to bring samples of their successful circulation promotions or others products to share with everyone.

Dabney, publisher of the Claremore Daily Progress, is a newspaper executive with 20 years experience, having worked for Gannett, Knight Ridder, Lee Enter-

prises and the Evening Post Company. He came to the Daily Progress in July 2008.

He has worked under 12 different paid circulation mastheads and is a winner of Gannett's President's Ring for Excellence, given to the top executives in each discipline.

The Marriott Hotel is located at 3233 NW Expressway, Oklahoma City, OK 73112. Registration deadline is Feb. 16.

Register online at [www.okpress.com](http://www.okpress.com).

For more information, contact ONF Member Services Coordinator Fawn Porter at (405) 499-0040, toll-free in Oklahoma at 1-888-815-2672 or by e-mail at [fporter@okpress.com](mailto:fporter@okpress.com).

## Newsroom layoffs at Tulsa World due to economic conditions

The Tulsa World, Oklahoma's second largest newspaper, is laying off 28 employees — 26 of those in the newsroom.

The World cited deteriorating economic conditions nationwide and in media business as the reason.

In a statement to employees, Publisher Robert E. Lorton III said, "The unprecedented economic catastrophe has been swift, and it has directly affected the bottom line of most American businesses and our newspaper. The terminations, though

painful, will ultimately strengthen our company as a whole."

Dramatic changes in the media industry have resulted in smaller audiences for television, radio, magazines and newspapers, Lorton said.

"We have worked diligently for several years to shape the Tulsa World and [tulsa-world.com](http://tulsa-world.com) as the best and most authoritative, trusted news outlet in Tulsa," Lorton said.

"Unfortunately, in recent months we have seen the local advertising market weakened as Tulsa businesses struggle with greatly reduced sales. Most advertisers' budgets are based on a percentage of sales, so when our partners are hurting, we feel their pain in a very real way."

Employees laid off from the newsroom included two Capital bureau reporters, a police reporter, photographers and employees in the graphics department, among others.

Joe Worley, executive editor of the Tulsa World, said, "The remaining newsroom staff will be challenged to continue to produce a quality product. We still have the largest news staff of any news organization in northeast Oklahoma and we will continue to produce the best possible newspaper and Web site in Oklahoma."

The news staff was informed that the terminations were effective immediately, without details of severance pay and benefits being disclosed by Tulsa World officials.

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# Resolve to build reader trust in 2009

## Clark's Critique

BY TERRY CLARK,

Chairman UCO Mass Communication

Department

TClark@uco.edu

Do your readers trust you?

As we start a new year, amid the technology turmoil turning our business upside down, and the economic mess affecting almost everyone, we need to take stock of where we want to go. It seems to me that we need to shore up the foundation of trust we have with readers.

In the helter-skelter world of The Web, where anything can be put forth as facts, newspapers need to take advantage of our strengths and emphasize our trustworthiness as sources of information and news.

The little book *Building Trust in the News* by Carole Nunnelley for the APME offers 101 ideas for editors from editors.

All trust begins with our reputation for accuracy – spelling people's names right. Here are some hints from that little book on improving accuracy from what other newspapers have been doing:

- Advertise: The Mankato Free Press runs house ads with a headline proclaiming: "To err is human. To fix it is Free Press policy." The ads alert readers to the newspaper's corrections.
- Involve sources and readers—ask for their views on your accuracy.
- Make corrections prominent and easy to read. (Mankato put them at the top of page 2.)
- Create an electronic error form to pinpoint how errors occurred.
- Track errors and look for patterns.
- Train to avoid errors.

There's another way to build trust and that is to use a personal column, at least once a month, to explain the different facets of the newspaper business. We're communicators but we don't spend enough time explaining our business, ethics and importance.

Two months ago, I lauded *The Marietta Monitor* for its election headline: County says "No-Bama."

I heard from the good folks that it caused some controversy among the African American residents. They came in, made their case and the paper ran their entire letter.

That's the way to build trust. I stand by

the headline, however. There have been several plays on Obama's name: "Obam-omics," etc., and the Monitor's head was a clever, non-racial, message.

Most of all, to build trust, we need to cover the news. That should be our new year resolution. Because of The Web, we simply don't cover breaking news any more. All newspapers are now essentially weekly newspapers. We have to cover our communities and that means printing the stuff they can't get anywhere else – city councils, school boards, counties, clubs, schools, churches, businesses, elections, etc. What you should be covering is listed in the phone book.

Five years ago, I wrote the following, and it still stands:

"Look at your most recent issue for a moment.

"Can your readers find out what happened last night or last week? In a context that helps them understand it?

"Is there anything that will provoke thought, through editorials, feature stories, photos? Is there anything that makes them say 'gee whiz'?

"News'paper? What do we provide that others cannot? News you can hold and fold. News of your neighbors. Editorials. Obituaries. Columns. Letters to the editor. Community involvement and investment.

"How long since you counted all of the local names in one issue? I'm not talking about the public records, or about the superintendent, chamber of commerce clones, politicians, et. al. I mean stories about and that affect the real people.

"Names are news. It's not by accident that 'Who' comes first in the five W's of basic news writing.

"Goal for the New Year – give your readers reasons to look forward to reading your paper.

"In this disruptive age, they need stability – someone they can count on. Some newspapers have forfeited or neglected this foundation, but most of us are old friends who can be counted on to deliver reliable, relevant information."

**CLARK'S CRITIQUE:** Here are some trends you can start covering this new year in your communities: Barry Porterfield of the *Pauls Valley Daily Democrat* reported on misdemeanor charges filed on a man after his name was found on receipts in a bag at an illegal dump.

At the *Claremore Daily Progress*, Tom Funk wrote about the crime of stalking. Head: "It's more than just 'creepy.'"

Ideas for next holiday season: Tyrell Albin of the *Lawton Constitution* reported on the changes in letters to Santa – now they're e-mails. Head: "Digital taking over North Pole." Betty Ridge of the *Tahlequah Daily Press* told the story of the different books people received for Christmas.

Kudos to *The Edmond Sun* for covering the demonstration at the state capital by American Muslims calling for peace in Gaza. Courtney Crauthers' story and strong photo brought home the local issue of an international event.

Donny Cofer of *The Seminole Producer* interviewed an author about his new book detailing violence against the Seminoles and other tribes. Head: "Dark History."

Good writing and story telling will always be our soul, and it doesn't take a major event. Here are two examples of Oklahoma journalists lifting everyday people out of the ordinary:

Virginia Bradshaw at the *Shawnee News-Star* tells the story of a local citizen born on Christmas Day. Head: "Son of a carpenter."

Here's her lead: "Early one Christmas morning, many years ago, a baby boy was born in the back of a small country store. His mother was a young housewife and his father, a carpenter. / 'This story may sound familiar to you, but it is a little different than you might think,' Dr. Eldon Gibson once told a hospital chapel gathering of doctors and staff."

M. Scott Carter of the *Moore American* tells the story of a visit to a hair salon. Head: "It's all the buzz."

Here's his lead: "Framed by the large, sun-filled window, Peggy Rose-Smith takes her electric clippers and in one smooth, straight movement trims the top of the man's head. / Buzzzz. She makes another pass. Buzzzz; then a third. / By the time she's finished, her customer has the perfect flattop – smooth, even and precise. His sideburns are trimmed, the back even and, within minutes, he's finished."

**FRONT PAGES OF NOTE:** *The Weleetkan* and *The Hughes County Times* reverted to the practices of yesterday for Jan. 1 issue: A full page ad (against drunk driving.)



We're seeing a lot of changes in newspaper flags these days, but I think one of the most compelling is *The Bigheart Times* (above), which features a different six-column photo every week at the top of the page, with the flag in reverse type.

**HEAD'EM UP AWARDS:** First place, *Guymon Daily Herald*, on a James Pierce story:

*Water Project? Flowing Well*

Second place, *Mustang News*, on a Traci Chapman story about a the county's troubles with an asphalt vendor:

*Officials find not oils well with vendor*

Third place, *Enid News & Eagle*, on a Bridget Nash story, and Candice Budgik photograph, of new year's solutions on losing weight, at a local athletic club:

*The weight of the resolve*

Honorable Mentions: *McAlester News-Capital*, on a photo of OSU's bowl loss, "Duck Soup"; *Inola Independent*, on a Christmas storm, "Grinch strikes Inola"; *Guymon Daily Herald*, On a J.D. Dennis story, "Animal Fees Unleashed"; *Enid News & Eagle*, on a Kasey Fowler story, "Death by Meth."

# Hit the road Jack ... with your computer

## computer notes from the road

by WILMA MELOT

Many publishers are in a constant time crunch and laptops are giving them the ability to be in the office one minute and on the road the next. This versatility can give you everything you need to get a paper published on the road, if needed.

If you're thinking of using this no-huddle business practice, which allows you to take your show on the road within minutes, consider what you'll need in the office or at home, whichever will act as a home base for your computer.

First, the external monitor. Many laptops these days require an adapter for the monitor. Make sure you have the right connection. You can get adapters at an Apple dealer or online at the Apple store. The most common types of connections for a Wal-Mart monitor or an old monitor from the junk pile is a VGA (Video Graphics Array), but newer types are DVI (Digital Video Interface).

Apple's adapters are Mini-VGA on some laptops and Mini-DVI on newer laptops. A few brands that work well

are LG, for durability, and ViewSonic, a Mac supporter for a long time. Others are Samsung, NEC and the wonderful, but pricey, Apple monitors.

All the rage today is the wide screen monitor, which starts at about \$200 for a 19-inch. Most common is the 22-inch, but it starts at around \$300. You can also go to your local store and buy a monitor for a Macintosh computer. Many people buy two – a small one to view style buttons on the side of your program, and a big one for page layout.



If you plan to run two monitors, expect to pay more for the extra video card. But remember, not all Macs, including the Mini, can run two monitors. In a G4 or G5 tower you can add an extra video card in the PCI slot. This can be confusing so check with someone who knows which cards work in which computers. There are online programs that provide this information or call your local dealer.

Another option is one large monitor. However, the bigger the monitor, the bigger the price. A 42-inch starts at around \$1,500.

Now for a new keyboard and mouse. If you've been putting up with a worn out mouse, there's something better. An OSX

Mac can run any PC USB mouse.

Go to the store, try a few and find one that fits your hand.

A USB mouse starts at \$20 and goes up from there.

Avoid wireless keyboards or mice since a low battery can mess with your machine. If you keep fresh batteries in all the time, freedom can be a good thing.

Windows keyboards will work with a Mac, but if you want a Mac layout keyboard look at Logitech and Kensington, as well as Apple's keyboards.

Apple sells two types of keyboards on their Web site, as well as wired and wireless mice. A Kensington SlimType keyboard is \$39.99 and has Apple keys. Kensington has been a Mac supporter for a long time.

Logitech is the bigger brand. They have Mac-labeled keyboards, including the diNovo at \$99, which looks like a good product. This company also makes good mice.

Since a mouse and a keyboard are things you use every day in the office, and now everywhere else, sometimes it's good to go for quality.



## plugged IN

### FTP client software

When several papers began having trouble with Fetch, I started looking at alternative FTP software.

There are a couple of good ones that work with Mac OSX that you may want to use as a backup to Fetch.

First is a software package called Transmit 3.67. The icon looks like a small truck. It's easy to set up and work with. The Shareware price is \$29.95, but you can download it for free to try it. This reliable software can be found at [www.panic.com/transmit/](http://www.panic.com/transmit/).

Another good program for FTP client software is Cyberduck for Mac OSX. It's the fastest of the three, and very stable. You can also find older versions for Mac 10.3 at <http://cyberduck.ch/>. Cyberduck is an open source software so it's free, although it's just a little more complicated to set up.

Another good place to look for software is [www.veriontracker.com](http://www.veriontracker.com). Just click on the link for OS Windows, Mac or even for iPhone software.

### How about some protection?

There's a debate about whether Macs need antivirus protection.

Apple recently took down a Web page about antivirus software saying it was inaccurate.

Mac users aren't accustomed to worrying about antivirus software; we've assumed for years that we're too small of a target to be a real problem.

With the popularity of iPhones, Apple soon became a target for hackers. However, Apple still says there's no need to worry.

If you're worried, look at putting Norton for Mac on your computer. Many business are requesting it for all computers, Mac and PC.

If you buy it, get the box, not the download, which is a good practice for whatever software you want to use.

Norton AntiVirus 11 for Mac is \$49.95 per year, per computer. Look at <http://shop.symantecstore.com/store/>. It's a small price to pay for insurance.

## Here's where to look for used Mac or PC computers

I answer this question a lot, but since you still seem to be asking I thought I would share my bookmarks with you. Many people are still looking for Power PC Macs that run OSX 10.4 and Classic for their older software.

Lately the hot buys on G5s and G4s have been at DVWarehouse.com.

For around \$1,000 you can get a Power Mac G5 2GHz Dual-Core 1GB 160GB Super Drive. These machines are fast and will last a while. You can easily replace parts, which are easy to find, such as the hard drive and memory. DV Warehouse also has G5s for around \$500.

Don't forget to get a copy of OSX 10.4 so OS 9.2 can run. Then up the Ram to at least 2GB, if you can. One gigabyte is now the minimum if you plan to run InDesign CS or Photoshop CS.

Another place to look for used equipment is [www.megawatts.com](http://www.megawatts.com). This is a local store based in Tulsa, but mainly an online dealer that deals both in Macs and PCs. They have a good selection of G4s starting at \$265.

If you're going the used direction, another item to put on your shelf is a generic copy of Mac OSX 10.4, something every paper that wants to keep running Classic should own. If you're a visual person, look for the CD with the black and silver X.

Another place I look for older items is [www.lowendmac.com](http://www.lowendmac.com). They have the lowest prices from Web dealers listed as a comparison. It's a fast way to shop if you know what computer you want or are just browsing.

ProMac Computers in Oklahoma City

often have clean, used computers they take as trade. Check them out at [promac-computers.com](http://promac-computers.com).

On the PC side, I just don't think buying used is a good idea. New PCs are so cheap that buying something used just isn't a good choice. And although you don't want to give up PageMaker, it's not worth buying an old computer.

If you insist on buying a used PC, check with a local dealer. They may know the history of the computer you're interested in.

A full generic copy of XP is a good buy if you plan to buy a new computer. Most new computers only come with Vista.

If you have more questions or recommendations, just give me a call or send an e-mail.

## Enid News & Eagle promotion helps raise money to feed hungry kids

With the help of the Enid News & Eagle, readers contributed more than \$5,500 to the Community Christmas Card, which benefits the Oklahoma Regional Food Bank's Food 4 Kids program.

The Food 4 Kids backpack program helps 367 children in Garfield County. Every Friday, children identified as chronically hungry receive a backpack of non-perishable food items they can eat over the weekend.

For the last four years, the News & Eagle has promoted the program, raising a total of more than \$18,000, including this year's donations.

Donors were to give a minimum of \$1 per name to be published on a Community Christmas Card that appeared in the newspaper. The card included more than 450 names, with many donors giving more than \$1 per name.

"The money is important, but it also

has brought the issue to people's minds and given us a whole lot of visibility," said Gail Wynne, a Regional Food Bank board member who administers Food 4 Kids locally.

Cindy Allen, managing editor of the News & Eagle, said the continued support of the Community Christmas Card by newspaper readers shows people care and like the idea of the money they donate staying inside the community to help those in need.

"It was hard for me to believe there are children in our community who don't know where their next meal is coming from," Allen said. "When I heard Gail speak to our Rotary Club about the need, I thought the newspaper could find a way to help.

"I am so proud of our readers for responding, again, to the Food 4 Kids program."

## New address standards

by BILL NEWELL  
OPA POSTAL CONSULTANT

All mailed Periodicals and Standard Mail (shoppers, TMC, etc.) flats will be required to comply with new addressing standards effective March 29, 2009. They include the following:

1) Minimum type size: All presorted and carrier route flats must be addressed using at least 8-point type. An exception allows the use of 6-point type in capital letters if an 11-digit Postnet or the new Intelligent Mail barcode (IMB) is used. Recommended fonts are Arial and sans-serif.

2) Character spacing: Address characters cannot touch or overlap and the address lines cannot touch or overlap.

3) Placement: With the final fold to the right, the entire delivery address must be within the top half of the paper. The address may be vertical or horizontal. If horizontal, it cannot be upside-down.

If you have any questions, please contact Bill Newell at bnewell@okpress.com or (405) 659-9662. I look forward to seeing you at the Feb. 5-7 Mid-Winter Convention in Tulsa.

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## FERPA tightens access to 'personally identifiable information'

By MICHAEL MINNIS, OPA ATTORNEY



On Dec. 9, 2008, the Department of Education (DOE) announced that it had amended rules that expand what constitutes a confidential education record under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

FERPA, also known as the Buckley Amendment, is a Federal law that restricts access to school records of institutions receiving federal funding. The regulations were published in the Federal Register and became effective Jan. 8, 2009.

FERPA is enforced by denying federal funding to schools that do not comply. However, in the 34-year history of FERPA, no school has been so penalized.

The two changes that brought the most attention and protest from media and First Amendment groups are those made to the definition of "personally identifiable information." Under the new definition, FERPA allows a school to deny access to records even if the records contain no individual identifying information, if:

1. the record "is linked or linkable to a

specific student that would allow a reasonable person in the school community... to identify the student; or

2. the institution "reasonably believes [that the requestor] knows the identity of the student to whom the education record relates."

The Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) and others objected to broadening the FERPA confidentiality requirements asserting that schools and colleges already

abuse FERPA by concealing information such as "audit reports of college programs and travel records of athletic teams." The SPJ is particularly concerned that the new rules will increase the danger to students.

In rejecting these protests, the DOE said it has no need to consider whether FERPA impinges on the public's right to hold agencies supported by public funds accountable for how those funds are spent.

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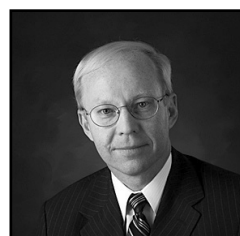
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# CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2008 NOVEMBER & DECEMBER CONTEST WINNERS

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## The Christmas Gift

By all accounts, Charlotte Ann has gone through some rough patches in her 49 years.

She was born the sixth of seven children to a working class family - a sweet-spirited, adorable youngster who blossomed into a pretty, vivacious teenager with a definite preference for partying over studying.

But one subject in which she always excelled was art, frequently signing each painting or charcoal pencil drawing "Carly," an affectionate nickname bestowed on her by her much older brother.

A series of bad decisions left Charlotte pregnant at 17 and in no position either financially or emotionally to consider raising a child.

Her strict Catholic upbringing and personal convictions meant abortion was never even a consideration. So nine months later, she delivered a healthy baby boy who was passed immediately into the arms of adoptive parents Charlotte never even met.

Back in school, she got her high school diploma and started junior college, but left without a degree to get married, giving birth to two more boys in the coming years.

Charlotte suffered through some hard scrabble times financially and weathered two bad marriages, drifting away from her religious upbringing in the process.

But even though circumstances conspired to bring her down, Charlotte remained tenaciously cheerful and endlessly creative: Two qualities that ensured her boys never lacked for love or fun, even though they frequently lacked nearly everything else.

And through all the hard times, Charlotte worked for a better life for her and her boys. She eventually patched things up with God and began attending church. She worked her way into better paying jobs and became a homeowner. She joined a painting class and her love of art flourished once again.

And she met and married her soul mate and best friend, Ron, a fellow born-again believer who shared both her generous spirit and her wacky sense of humor. They became not only regulars at their church, but also its most industrious volunteers, starting a clown ministry and donating to missions.

He even took to calling her Carly, reviving her old high school nickname.

Charlotte's new life continued its upward spiral: She studied to become an appraiser and set up her own business; her marriage brought a stepdaughter, as much like her as any

biological daughter she could imagine; her sons married and the family expanded even further with the births of three grandchildren.

Then the bottom fell out again. Ron was diagnosed with a failing liver. Prayers brought a donor organ in the nick of time but did not eliminate the trauma of transplant surgery and seemingly endless rounds of complications, hospitalizations and additional surgeries that followed.

Even now, nearly two years after the transplant, Ron isn't entirely out of the woods. His weakened immune system means any infection is potentially life-threatening and the possibility of a second liver failure always looms.

Although their faith leaves no room for doubt about Ron's eternal life, the fragility of his earthly life presents daily challenges for both of them.

But you'll never hear that from Charlotte. Her unflappable optimism and good cheer seem to expand in inverse proportion to the troubles that too often fill her plate.

That's why Ron was shocked when the simple act of opening the mail last Monday brought on spontaneous and uncontrollable tears.

Among the bills and junk mail and Christmas cards was a letter in an unfamiliar hand from a North Carolina address: A not-so-stranger named Casey had written to thank her for the selfless and heart-rending decision she'd made 32 years ago - the one that gave him life.

In the rapid-fire e-mail exchange that followed, Charlotte learned Casey is a professional artist with an oddball sense of humor and an infectiously joyous outlook on life, just like his birth mom.

In his e-mailed photos, Casey bears remarkable resemblance to Charlotte's nephews and her late brother. But also peering out from the photos is another surprise: a beautiful flaxen-haired 3-year-old who somehow shares the name of the grandmother she's never met - Carly Ann.

For Charlotte, who's spent at least a few minutes of every day of the last 32 years wondering what became of her first baby boy, it was the best Christmas present imaginable.

And for me and the rest of Charlotte's five sisters, the ache of our mother's absence from our holiday table has been unexpectedly eased by the joyful addition of the nephew none of us ever forgot.

Merry Christmas, indeed.



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