

news clips

OCNA board looking to future – which includes digital distribution

By Don Lamont
Executive Director

Most years, the OCNA Board of Directors devotes extra time to reviewing its business plan during the June meeting. That way we develop ideas to test with members during the annual member survey conducted in the summer and to incorporate into the annual budget and operating plan, which is approved in the fall.

On June 2, the board reviewed the trends, new developments, feedback from members and the progress made over the last year, and essentially opted to stay the course with the current plan, with some important adjustments.

The key thrust behind the plan is to elevate the image and profile of community newspapers among advertisers and governments to increase our industry's market share, now at nine per cent of the media spending pie. We are striving to affect a renaissance akin to what the wine industry has achieved in Canada in recent years.

Here are the board's priorities:

1. Promote the community newspaper

industry to advertisers

2. Strengthen government advocacy

3a. Build relationships with corporate members

3b. Help independent to optimize opportunities to make their businesses successful.

4. Recruit and satisfy multilingual members

5. Distribute information about digital distribution

6. Work with other newspaper associations to share resources and integrate services

One key adjustment confirmed at the June meeting concerns priority 5, regarding digital distribution. Last year the plan was to simply step up the amount of information distributed to members through Best Practices, e-clips and NewsClips about new developments in the digital distribution of news and information. At that time, we didn't see ourselves in the business of providing any direct service of this kind, but now thanks to a product developed in Alberta we foresee opportunities to enable members to archive digital editions, sell digital copies by subscription, offer media monitoring services to governments, companies and interest groups



Toronto Community News Publisher Betty Carr participated on an Industry Leaders panel with CCNA President Peter Kvarstrom during a combined session with publishers from Les Hebdomas du Quebec during the CCNA Convention in Ottawa/Hull at the beginning of June.

OCNA photo

and at the same time respond to the growing demand for digital tearsheets.

We'll be telling members more about this exciting opportunity and other programs to mobilize these priorities in the upcoming months as plans progress.

DiCocco brings back Transparency Act

By Don Lamont

In June, Liberal MPP Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton) reintroduced her Private Member's Bill entitled the Transparency in Public Matters Act, 2004 (Bill 99). When sitting in opposition back in 2002, Di Cocco introduced Bill 95, the Ethics and Transparency in Public Matters Act, 2002 that would require open meetings and more stringent conflict rules for provincial and municipal boards, commissions and

other public bodies. Even though the bill passed the House at second reading, the Eves Government killed the bill by refusing to call for third reading.

Just after the new Liberal government was elected, OCNA met with Caroline Di Cocco to encourage her to reintroduce her bill. During the meeting, Di Cocco said she was counting on support from the newspaper industry because she expected stiff opposition from the public bodies covered by the bill namely,

Continued on Page 2

legislation

Providing open access to public meetings

Continued from Page 1

municipal councils, boards of education, hospitals, boards of health, universities and colleges. Second reading of the Transparency in Public Matters Act, 2004 will take place in early fall. After that it will go to committee for hearings, perhaps in the fall or in the winter of 2005.

Below are key excerpts from the new bill. Members are encouraged to contact Don Lamont or Anne Lannan at OCNA to provide feedback.

Transparency in Public Matters Act EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Bill requires specified provincial and municipal councils, boards, commissions and other public bodies, as listed in the Schedule to the Bill or as prescribed, to hold meetings which are open to the public. The public can only be excluded from meetings of the body if certain specified types of matters are going to be discussed by the body. Minutes of meetings open to the public have to be made available to the public in a timely fashion, and must contain sufficient detail.

The body is also required to set rules respecting public notice of its meetings and the meetings of its committees, the availability of minutes to the public and the availability of the body's rules. The body is required to appoint a person responsible for compliance with the rules. Section 8 imposes a penalty for failure to comply with the requirements for notice, minutes and rules.

Bill 2004

An Act to require open meetings for provincial and municipal boards, commissions and other public bodies

Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows:

APPLICATION AND DEFINITION

Application and definition

1. (1) In this Act,

“Information and Privacy

Commissioner” means the Commissioner appointed under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Application

(2) This Act applies to,

(a) designated public bodies,

(i) listed as designated public bodies in Part I of the Schedule to this Act, and

(ii) prescribed as designated public bodies by the regulations made under this Act; and

(b) types of designated public bodies,

(i) listed as the type of public body that is a designated public body in Part II of the Schedule to this Act, and

(ii) prescribed as a type of designated public body by the regulations made under this Act.

Committees

(3) Sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 apply, with necessary modifications, to the committees of designated public bodies.

OPEN MEETINGS

*Purpose

2. (1) The purpose of this Act is to provide public access that is as open as possible to meetings of designated public bodies and to the minutes of those meetings.

*Meetings to which Act applies

(2) This Act applies to any meeting of a designated public body if the purpose of the meeting is the making of a decision or recommendation, the taking of an action or the giving of advice in respect of any matter or matters within the jurisdiction or terms of reference of the public body and,

(a) a sufficient number of the members of the public body are invited to attend to constitute a quorum; or

(b) a sufficient number of the members of the public body attend so as to constitute a quorum.

*Meetings – open to the public

3. (1) Meetings of designated public bodies shall be open to the public.

*Exception

(2) Despite subsection (1), a designated public body may exclude the public from a meeting or part of a meeting if,

(a) financial, personal or other matters may be disclosed of such a nature that the desirability of avoiding public disclosure of them in the interest of any person affected or in the public interest outweighs the desirability of adhering to the principle that meetings be open to the public;

(b) a person involved in a civil or criminal proceeding may be prejudiced;

(c) the safety of a person may be jeopardized;

(d) personnel matters involving an identifiable individual, including an employee of the designated public body, will be discussed;

(e) negotiations or anticipated negotiations between the designated public body and a person, bargaining agent or party to a proceeding or an anticipated proceeding relating to labour relations or a person's employment by the designated public body will be discussed;

(f) litigation affecting the designated public body will be discussed or instructions will be given to or opinions received from solicitors for the designated public body;

(g) matters prescribed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council under clause 13 (b) will be discussed; or

(h) the designated public body will deliberate whether to exclude the public from a meeting or part of a meeting, and the deliberation will consider whether one or more of clauses (a) through (g) are applicable to the meeting or part of the meeting.

*Motion stating reasons

(3) A designated public body shall not exclude the public from a meeting before a vote is held on a motion to exclude the public, which motion must clearly state the nature of the matter to be considered at the closed meeting and the general reasons why the public is being excluded.

*Taking of vote

(4) The meeting shall not be closed to the public during the taking of the vote on the motion under subsection (3).

*Minutes

(5) The minutes of a designated public body shall record any motion moved under subsection (3), including the nature of the matter to be considered and the reasons for excluding the public that are stated in the motion.

*Offence – exclusion from meeting

4. (1) If a designated public body excludes the public from a meeting or part of a meeting and none of the circumstances listed in subsection 3 (2) apply, each member of the designated public body who was in attendance at the meeting or part of the meeting is guilty of an offence and on conviction is liable to a fine of not more than \$1,000.

*Defence

(2) A member of a designated public body is not guilty of an offence under subsection (1) if he or she,

(a) objected on the record to excluding the public from the meeting; or

Continued on Page 3

legislation

Fines in the thousands part of proposed Act

Continued from Page 2

(b) did not object on the record to excluding the public from the meeting in the good faith belief that one of the circumstances listed in subsection 3 (2) applied.

***Offence - head or chairperson**

(3) If the person who is convicted of an offence under subsection (1) is the head or chairperson of the designated public body, the maximum fine that may be imposed is \$2,500 and not as provided in subsection (1).

***Rules**

6. (1) By the end of its third meeting after this Act comes into force, each designated public body, having regard to the purpose set out in section 2, shall make rules respecting,

(a) how public notice of its meetings and the meetings of its committees shall be given;

(b) how the minutes of its meetings and the meetings of its committees shall be made available to the public; and

(c) how rules made under this subsection and amendments made under subsection (2) shall be made available to the public.

Amendment or revision of rules

(2) A designated public body may amend the rules made under subsection (1) at any time.

***Compliance with rules**

7. By the end of its third meeting after this Act comes into force, a designated public body shall appoint a member of the body to be the person responsible for overseeing compliance by the body and by committees of the body with section 5 and with the rules made under section 6.

***Offence – minutes and rules**

8. (1) A person appointed for a designated public body under section 7 or under subsection 10 (3) who fails to be

reasonably diligent in overseeing compliance with section 5 and the rules made under section 6 is guilty of an offence and on conviction is liable to a fine of not more than \$1,000.

***Offence – head or chair**

(2) If the person who is convicted of an offence under subsection (1) is the head or chair of the designated public body, the maximum fine that may be imposed is \$2,500 and not as provided in subsection (1).

Same

(3) Subsection (2) does not apply unless the court is satisfied that the person who is convicted was, at the time of the offence, the duly elected, appointed or selected, as the case may be, head or chair of the public body.

***Complaint re: failure to make rules**

9. (1) Any person who believes that a designated public body has failed to make its rules in accordance with section 6 may complain in writing to the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

***Request for copy of rules**

(2) Upon receiving a complaint under subsection (1), the Information and Privacy Commissioner shall investigate the complaint and may request that the designated public body provide a copy of its rules to the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

***Request for appointment**

(2) Upon receiving a complaint made under subsection (1), the Information and Privacy Commissioner shall investigate the complaint and may request that the designated public body make the appointment required under section 7 and provide minutes of the appointment to the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

***Appointment of investigators**

11. The Information and Privacy Commissioner may appoint investigators

for the purposes of investigating complaints made under this Act and of ensuring compliance with it.

SCHEDULE

PART I

1. The following are designated public bodies for the purposes of this Act:

Name of Designated Public Body
Legislative Basis for Designated Public Body

1. Ontario Municipal Board Section 4 of the Ontario Municipal Board Act

PART II

2. The following are types of designated public bodies for the purposes of this Act:

Type of Designated Public Body

1. A district school board or school authority as defined in section 1 of the Education Act.

2. A board of health as defined in section 1 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act.

3. A commission as established under section 174 of the Municipal Act, 2001.

4. A council of a municipality.

5. The board of directors, governors, trustees, commission or other governing body or authority of a hospital to which the Public Hospitals Act applies.

6. The board of directors, governors, trustees or other governing body or authority of a university in Ontario and any affiliated or federated college of a university that receives operating grants from the Government of Ontario

7. The board of governors of a college of applied arts and technology

Website and contact information:

Full Bill online at:

http://www.ontla.on.ca/documents/Bills/38_Parliament/Session1/b099_e.htm

DiCocco's e-mail:

cdcocco.mpp@liberal.ola.org

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member news

John Morris left mark with wit, tenacity

By OCNA Staff

Industry people across the province are mourning the loss last month of one of their most engaging, dedicated and colourful contributors to community newspapers.

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of John Morris, 68, publisher/owner of newspapers in Prescott, Winchester, Manotick, Barrhaven, and Osgoode who passed away June 5 after a lengthy illness.

The second-generation newspaper man, who was OCNA President in 1990, will long be remembered for his quick and razor-sharp wit, colourful personality and commitment to the community newspaper industry and his community. He purchased his first newspaper in Kemptville at the age of 20 and, over the years, has been recognized with many honours, including a Gold Quill

Award and the Queen's Jubilee Medal. One of John's major accomplishments was the researching, writing and publishing of Morris's History of Prescott – 1800-2000, the second edition of a history book his father, Jack, had written many years prior.

John Morris leaves wife Beth and chil-

dren Lisa (Mrs. Scott Taylor) of Maitland and Jeffrey and his wife Jennifer of Seattle, and five grandchildren. Brother of Robin (OCNA President 1999) of Morrisburg, Connie Clark of Belleville, and Deborah Allan of Toronto. Predeceased by his parents, Jack (OCNA President 1964) and Ida Morris.

The funeral service was held at St. John's Anglican Church on Thursday, June 10. For those wishing, the family would appreciate donations to the Restoration Fund at St. John's Anglican Church, Prescott. Condolences and donations may be sent online at www.chrislater-funeralhome.com.

In true John Morris style, with printer's ink in his blood, one of his final wishes was to have his ashes mixed in the ink that printed his obituary. His family appreciated the sentiment but had to decline.



John Morris, left, as Out-going OCNA President in 1991, passes the gavel to Lorne Eedy of St. Marys. In typical John Morris



style, the gavel is a bun on a stick. Enjoying the prank are Past President Don Smith of Bracebridge and John's wife Beth. Left is Morris (far right) with Prime Minister Trudeau, and, right, he is shown in Kemptville in the late 1950 in his beloved sports car with typewriter and press hat.



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On hand to officially open the Mackenzie Heritage Printery May 29 were, from left, Niagara-on-the-Lake Lord Mayor Gary Burroughs, Lou Cahill, Niagara Parks Commission Chair Jim Williams, Regina Foisey of the Wine Council of Ontario, and Debi Pratt from Inniskillin Wines.

Anne Lannan, OCNA

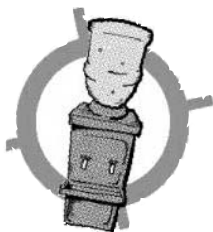
CLASSIFIEDS

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Water Cooler

compiled by
Carolyn Mullin

- Jeff Mitchell joined the **Metroland Durham Region Media Group** May 17 as crime/court reporter. Jeff was a senior reporter with the Metroland York Region Newspaper Group since August 2001 and was previously managing editor of the Port Perry Star. He replaces the late Stephen Shaw.
- **Kingston This Week** welcomes a new reporter to the team. Paul Gurnsey, a Kingstonian, recently graduated from the accelerated print journalism program at Humber College and has a B.A. in English Literature from Concordia University. His experience includes writing for community newspapers and magazines.

send updates to c.mullin@ocna.org

CLASSIFIEDS

Political Affairs Columns

Looking for a column on Ontario government and politics? Eric Dowd, who has been a member of the Ontario Press Gallery for more than 40 years, writes a column that is available on the OCNA website in the News Release section/Syndicated Work folder (http://www.ocna.org/cgi-bin/afsp7.pl?l=/Syndicated%20Work/Columnists/FOR_FEE_Eric_Dowd) and is posted every Friday. The cost is \$10 per column whether you choose to publish them weekly or less frequently. Call Eric at the Ontario Press Gallery, 416-325-7933, to make arrangements.

Reporter/Photographer available

Reporter/photographer available. Applied Photography Certificate from Mohawk/Sheridan Colleges. Have worked freelance for a number of community newspapers. Contact Ray Yurkowski at raywy@mountaincable.net or (905) 575-3750.

Paper Purchase Wanted

Looking to purchase a small market newspaper in Ontario, preferably by or close to the water. Father of three looking to relocate back to the province to raise family and operate a newspaper with a circulation of 10,000 or less. Please send information to Looking to Purchase Paper, C/O OCNA, 103-3050 Harvester Rd. Burlington ON L7N 3J1. Will keep any offers in strictest confidence.

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member news

Members making headlines at home

CHRISTMAS IN JULY



HOCKEY NEWS IN JUNE



TOP: The VOICE of Pelham's editor Sarah Gibson is this year's recipient of the Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA) George H. Carver Memorial print media award, presented in recognition for invaluable coverage of minor hockey by a newspaper in Ontario. Sarah was nominated by the Pelham Minor Hockey Association (PMHA). The award was presented at the OMHA annual general meeting luncheon June 12 in Toronto. With Sarah are OMHA rep Dominic Calouri and Andy Gearing, Pelham resident and recipient of the Wally Scott bursary.

LEFT: The Napanee Beaver won the MetroCreative Graphics Best Christmas edition competition. As reward this image is featured on the July cover of the MetroCreative catalogue of images.

Photos courtesy member papers

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member news

Perspectives in Hull



CCNA convention delegates enjoy the Friday night event in Ottawa's byward market last month. Shown here, right to left, are Joanne Burghardt, Durham Region; Deb Bodine, Toronto Community News; Frank Burghardt; and OCNA's Anne Lannan.



ABOVE: Hugh Nicholson, left, of Winnipeg; Fort Frances Jim Cumming; and Ottawa's Joe Grubestic were among the 450 guests at the Empire Grill feasting on food from across the country.

LEFT: Sean Murray of Pictou, Nova Scotia, lasted longer than his son during the Better Newspaper Awards gala.



THE NEW SMOKEY



This image, a photograph taken by Neil Etienne, has been given to the Ministry of Natural Resources for use in public education and community presentation. Etienne, newly appointed editor for Barry's Bay This Week and Bancraft This Week, covered this fire in Maple Leaf for the Bancroft title in June. The drama of the lone firefighter captured just at the moment before entering a billowing forest fire hundreds of feet over his head provides a poignant image for use in public safety education, the MNR said.

Photo: Bancroft This Week

Reach out to OCNA members

Member newspapers receive complimentary word classifieds in newsclips. Whether you are looking to buy or sell items, or hire new staff, your association can help you get your message to more than 270 community newspapers across the province.

The deadline for the August issue is July 16, 2004.

E-mail your copy to c.mullin@ocna.org

Don't forget to send staff changes, innovation and awards news as well!

press council

When do you have the right to refuse an ad?

By Mel Sufrin
Executive Secretary
Ontario Press Council

The picture published in four editions of a community newspaper showed six smiling people sitting in front of a blackboard. Imprinted above their heads were the words: "We're voting for fair funding for public education. Are you?" And below (in what might well have been the space for the name of an advertiser) were the further words, "On October 2, please make your vote count." The trouble was, the individuals or organizations that placed (paid for?) the ad weren't identified. And, as we have discovered, that is against the law.

The ads were brought to the attention of the Ontario Press Council by a reader who said he preferred not to identify the newspaper or to make a formal complaint.

"For some time," he wrote, "I have been concerned about an instance of a newspaper publishing content where it was not clear if the material was advertising or editorial.

"I searched the Internet for guidance and came across the Ontario Community Newspapers Association. In turn, OCNA has referred me to you.

"Your website touches on important criteria for journalists and newspapers but

nowhere did I notice anything that relates specifically to my particular concerns."

That prompted a recent meeting of the Press Council to amend its policy statement on advertising. The revised version follows.

ADVERTISING: THE LAW AND THE PRESS COUNCIL

From time to time the Ontario Press Council receives complaints from individuals or businesses whose advertising has been rejected by a newspaper for one reason or another. Sometimes it's a matter of

service subject to the right of the newspaper to control the content of such advertising.

"In the case of a newspaper, the nature and scope of the service which it offers, including advertising services, is determined by the newspaper itself."

The Press Council may nevertheless choose to adjudicate a complaint involving a newspaper's refusal to accept an ad when there is a question whether the paper has acted fairly or when it may have violated its own guidelines.

latitude in expressing their opinions, no matter how controversial or unpopular the opinions may be. It further believes it is only fair to extend such latitude to individuals who may wish to exercise it through advertising, provided it does not generate hatred against another group."

The Council believes ads published in type that makes them look like ordinary news items should be clearly labelled as advertising. It also believes sponsors of advocacy ads should be identified in a form that will leave readers in no doubt who they are.

Unlike federal law, there is no restriction on third-party advertisements under Ontario legislation. The Election Finances Act says:

"During a campaign period, political advertising may be carried on only by a registered political party, constituency association or candidate or by any person, corporation, or trade union acting with or without the knowledge and consent of the political party, constituency association or candidate."

The act adds:

"All political printed advertising, handbills, placards, posters and broadcast or telecast advertisements shall bear or make reference to the name of the registered constituency association, registered political party, person, corporation or trade union authorizing the political advertising."

FACTOID

The council believes it is appropriate for newspapers to exercise wide latitude in expressing their opinions, no matter how controversial or unpopular the opinions may be. It further believes it is only fair to extend such latitude to individuals who may wish to exercise it through advertising, provided it does not generate hatred against another group.



taste, at other times it may be the newspaper's belief that the proffered ad is misleading or even potentially libellous.

A 1979 decision of the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the right of a newspaper to turn down types of advertising that it chooses not to accept. The pertinent paragraphs in the judgment were:

"The service which is customarily available to the public in the case of a newspaper which accepts advertising is a

For example, a 1985 adjudication said in part: "A publisher has the discretion to determine the acceptability of any advertisement, providing that it has a policy for doing so which it applies consistently."

The Press Council favours considerable freedom for advocacy advertising. A 1988 adjudication said: "The Council's stated policy is that it believes it is appropriate for newspapers to exercise wide

Reader complains of bad 'joke'

TORONTO – A complaint about a metaphorical reference to a "menopausal Eskimo" in a humour column in the Ajax/Pickering News Advertiser has been upheld by the Ontario Press Council.

Discussing his "drafty old Victorian home," Neil Crone wrote it doesn't owe anybody

anything, "But I have to tell you, she loses heat faster than a menopausal Eskimo."

"I find this 'joke' to be racist, sexist and agist," Fred Holmes of Pickering said in his letter. He added he was sending the material to the Native Women's Resource Centre in Toronto, the Speaker

of the Nunavut legislature, his member of Parliament and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.

The newspaper's managing editor said he was disappointed that the Press Council chose to adjudicate this complaint "given that Mr. Holmes

Continued on Page 9

member news

Microfiche service lives on with Access

By Anne Lannan
OCNA Member Services

It seems like the end of an era at OCNA now that our microfiche program has come to an end. The archiving program comes from humble beginnings back in 1985 when funds were secured to film historic issues for some of our member newspapers. In the past 19 years, the association has been able to archive millions of microfiche from hundreds of community newspapers, chronicling the history of cities and towns across Ontario.

Unfortunately, in the past few years as newspaper publishers archive their products in current-day technology, OCNA had been operating the program in a deficit and had to make the decision to discontinue the program after May of this year.

We are pleased Access Document Conversions of Oakville has agreed to continue to offer the 16mm microfiche service, independent of the association, to our existing customers, if they so wish. Access, operated by Don Donoahue, is the company that has been developing OCNA's microfiche since 1985. They are very familiar with our member newspapers and have expanded the service to include 35mm microfilm which has a larger image area than OCNA's 16mm micro-

fiche. Some of the publisher customers of the service who are considering digitizing their back issues have switched their archive from the 16mm fiche to 35mm film. Although the 16mm fiche can be converted to a digital image, none, to our knowledge, has yet been able to successfully make it word searchable as they have with the 35mm film.

Access will be filming approximately 90 Ontario community newspaper titles for some 110 publisher and library customers.

At this point, OCNA will continue to maintain the archive of original microfiche from the past 19 years should a publisher wish to get copies of the titles. Please contact Anne Lannan at anne.lannan@ocna.org.

OCNA Executive Director Don Lamont and staff would like to thank Holly Ball and Laurie Mota who have worked so diligently over the years to produce the microfiche for our clients. Holly was employed with OCNA for 16 years and Laurie for 11 years.

We are grateful for their dedication and loyalty and wish them the best in the future.

If you would like to contact Access Document Conversions, please call Steve Knight at 905-338-9030.

PRESS COUNCIL DECISION Continued from Page 8

appears uninterested in making any attempt to settle the matter and has to date offered absolutely no information on what resource he is seeking (i.e. letter to the editor, apology, correction, changes to policy etc.) other than to demand the editor be fired."

Although 160,000 copies of the newspaper were distributed, it added, it received only the single letter.



NewsMakers

compiled by Carolyn Mullin

- Chris and Steph Scott are pleased to announce the birth of a baby



girl - already a Leafs fan as the photo attests - June 17. Olivia Joan is the granddaughter of Paul Scott, publisher of the **Gananoque Reporter**, and wife Carolyn.

- Congratulations to Suzanne Gammon (publisher/editor of the **Sturgeon Falls Tribune**) and Eric Dubois on the birth of Adrien in June. Weighing in at 7lbs. 5oz., Adrien is a little brother to Christian.

- **Transcontinental Media** recently announce its presi-

dent, André Préfontaine, has just been appointed chairman of the board of The Canadian Press, an organization with which he has a long association. Préfontaine first joined the venerable Canadian news service in 1979 as a parliamentary correspondent, then went on to become its deputy bureau chief for Montreal and vice-president, marketing in Toronto. Préfontaine also serves on a number of other boards of directors, including those of the Canadian Newspaper Association, where he is director, and of Nature Conservancy Canada, Quebec Region.

- **Transcontinental Media** launched its new magazine, *ottawaAThome*, June 24. The new lifestyle magazine showcases some of the editorial features from its national magazines (*STYLE at HOME*, *Homemakers*, and *Canadian Living*), blended with a local perspective on home, food, style and fashion. This unique partnership between the company's favourite women's magazine with their local community newspapers will produce the quarterly magazine, circulation of 100,000, to single family, high-income homes.

- Fred Runge, President of **Runge Publishing**, has announced the purchase of the publishing operations of Advance Printing Ltd. in Eastern Ontario which include the *Kemptville Advance* and *Review*, *Ottawa South This Month*, *Iroquois Chieftain*, and *Accent Magazine*. Runge Publishing now produces 18 weekly and biweekly newspapers in the Greater Ottawa Area. Brian Crawford, President of Advance Printing Ltd., said the sale of the publishing operations will allow his company to focus more on the printing business.

- The staffs of the **LaSalle Post**, **Tecumseh Shoreline Week**, **Lakeshore News** and **Tilbury Times** worked together to create a special D-Day section for early June. LaSalle Post editor Kristi Setterington reports the section was complete with historical background and local stories from veterans as well as information that appeared in the *Tilbury Times* around that period of time. The project was a joint effort between the editorial, sales and production departments, and it has been well received by the communities
- On June 17, citizens from Mount Hope and Binbrook gathered to recognize Michelle Ball, the former publisher of the **Glanbrook Gazette**, now owned by Neil Dring of the *Grand River Sachem*. For eight years, Michelle put out the paper effectively working on a part-time/volunteer basis. Readers in the audience spoke up to thank Michelle for her hard work and dedication. The reception was organized by the staff of the *Grand River Sachem*.

send gossip to c.mullin@ocna.org

editorial

Good reporters don't have time for excuses

By Jim Stasiowski
Writing Coach

Break out the microscopes, fellow truth-seekers, and let's examine the most common excuses all of us writers make for writing poorly.

1. "My editor is a cluck."

I suppose a deep-thinker would come up with a dozen reasons we writers love to blame editors, but I think the relationship is simple: The editor is a parent, and we children don't like to admit to our parents that we are wrong.

Editors aren't blameless. Some communicate poorly. Some reject reporters' creative ideas, then assign predictable stories. Some drastically revise stories and don't explain why.

Sometimes, the opposite happens. Many reporters tell me, "My editor puts my stories in the paper exactly as I've written them, so I'm not learning anything."

Reporters: Go talk to your editors, tell them you want to improve, but you need their help. Many editors shy away from helping because they don't want confrontations with you.

2. "If I push my sources too hard, they will stop talking to me."

Sources come and go. If you think a good source will help you forever, you're probably dreaming. The best sources realize they and reporters often have different goals.

If you cannot push a source for good information, then you have to ask yourself: Is this person a good source, or is it someone who gives only that which makes him or her look good?

3. "I couldn't get hold of (whomever)

before deadline."

No. 3 is a first cousin of No. 2. We reporters rely on too few sources, so when we are in a hurry, and the usual source is not returning our call, we don't know whom to turn to.

Rather than having a few excellent sources, develop a dozen good sources you can call on to help you piece together facts when the one person who knows everything is out of reach.

Yes, we do live in a universe of spokespeople, a seemingly impregnable wall around the real in-the-know sources. However, most spokespeople have cell phones, so rarely should we find ourselves completely shut off from information.

4. "The stuff I cover – meetings, speeches, games, festivals, parades – are all boring."

No, you're boring. You're also bored.

Newsrooms do a horrible thing: They turn reporters from enthusiastic and curious into jaded and smug, they make reporters think that being cool is more important than being excited. We've seen it all, we've done it all, we have levelled off as comfortable veterans.

What a miserable way to live.

Everything you cover has drama, excitement, surprise, behind-the-scenes conflict. Dig for it. If the newspaper is boring, you are at fault.

5. "I'm a reporter, not a writer."

Whenever I hear that excuse, which people always deliver with juttled-jaw pride, I think: Why would anyone brag about being good at one-half of his or her job?

What if your doctor was flawless at diagnoses, but weak at cures? Would you keep limping back to that doctor?

Reporting, the gathering of informa-

tion, is the basis for what we do. But if we do not present facts compellingly, if our storytelling does not push readers forward, facts are worthless.

Besides, if reporters mentally divide their job into two parts – first reporting, then writing – they are making a grave mistake. Reporters, learn to think this way: "At the end of my fact-gathering, I have to tell a story, so while I am reporting, I must see the story coming together."

6. "I don't have time."

Ahhhhhhh, the universal excuse. And yet, harried reporters every single day write good stories. They write good stories because they have mastered the practice I described in No. 5, seeing a story come together as they gather facts.

Stop relying on the notebook or the tape recording, both of which take time to sort through. Rely instead on your brain, which, if you let it, will organize the story for you.

You don't need a notebook to help you tell a friend about the party you enjoyed, or the meal you hated, or the person you talked to on the plane, or your maddening drive to work. As you were partying, eating, talking or driving, you were seeing the story take shape. Without any journalism training or experience, you knew which facts to use and which to leave out.

Facts support the story, but they are not the story. The story is the flow of drama, excitement, buildups and climaxes, and the skilled storyteller weaves the facts into that flow.

One more time-saving device: The skilled storyteller doesn't have to make up excuses.

Writing coach Jim Stasiowski welcomes your questions or comments. Call him at 410 247-4600 or write to 5812 Heron

Create an environment conducive to selling

By John Foust
Raleigh, N.C.

Imagine a young man who wants to sell his lady on the idea of marrying him. Does he take her to a busy sandwich shop at lunch time, where she might not be able to hear his proposal over the noise of the crowd? Or does he select a corner table at a quiet restaurant, with a romantic view of the starry sky?

Of course, he takes her to the quiet restaurant. He makes sure the pianist plays

their special song. And he waits until the time is right before he pops the question.

When it comes to selling, it's a good idea to be an environmentalist. That is, do everything possible to establish an environment conducive to selling.

Real estate professionals understand the importance of details. They know that removing screens from front windows creates more curb appeal. They've seen how raised blinds can brighten first impressions. It's all part of setting the mood.

In ad sales, window screens are off

limits. And we don't even want to think about including odors in a presentation. (Unless there's such a thing as Newsprint at Midnight cologne.)

In this business, the easiest way to improve a selling environment is to cut down on distractions.

When you're in someone else's office, your control is limited by being on their turf.

But at least you can eliminate potential distractions that you might cause.

See ENVIRONMENT on Page 11

redesign

Keep photographer's logbook close at hand

By Edward F. Henninger
OMNIA Consulting

While visiting a client newsroom recently, I found myself dealing with another 'edict from the owner.' At least that's how the newsroom saw it.

It seems the editors had run just one too many four-column photos of kids in the park on page one.

The owner lost patience with the continued use of such photos and called his publisher to prohibit their use in the future.

The publisher passed the word down and the newsroom heard that as "no more four-column photos on page one."

Well, that's not really what the owner said at all. What he said was that he didn't want any more kids-in-the-park pictures run as lead photos on page one. And there's nothing wrong with that.

What we know about readers tells us that they are often confused by the stand-alone photo – they tend to look for the story that goes with a photo and are perplexed when they realize that the photo is an element unto itself.

This may have added to the owner's frustration: He, like readers, had struggled to understand why the photo was there in the first place.

The reason for placing the photo on page one, the editors claimed, was that there was really no better local photo to run that day.

My response was that it's the job of

editors to deal with assignments and the photographer's schedule to guarantee more newsy photos for page one. It's easy to find newsy photos from the wire –

FACTOID

What we know about readers tells us that they are often confused by the stand-alone photo – they look for its story.



there are always AP photos from Iraq.

But these, too, often are treated as stand-alone items, at best with a note referring to an inside story.

In this newsroom, at least, there's a full-time photographer – something editors at many other small papers would consider a luxury.

His average day is busy and, yes, he's also called upon to shoot photos for the advertising department. Regardless, his primary responsibility is to the newsroom and the editors control the lion's share of his time.

As a result, those editors need make sure his time is used wisely.

Here are some of the ways editors can make that happen:

1. Keep a daily log. Know where your photographer is and where he's going throughout the day.
2. Keep a weekly log. This helps you to know if a photo you need for the weekend issue has already been shot.

The rest is common sense. Firm handshake. Eye contact. No chewing gum. Organized handouts. Clean business card.

The same goes for meetings in your office, although there is more freedom to establish a distraction-free environment. Try to conduct the meeting in a conference room – the business equivalent of a quiet table in a restaurant – where you will be away from office noise. Make sure the table is uncluttered and that appropriate refreshments are available. (Baking bread is optional.) Ask co-workers not to disturb you unless the building is on fire.

3. Keep in touch. Use a walkie-talkie setup or cell phones so you can contact your photographer at a moment's notice.

4. Plan. Make sure you have your photographer in the right spot at the right time to get that news photo.

5. Communicate. Take a few moments each day to chat with the photographer about your plans for the next 48 hours or so.

6. Use photo request forms. These help you, your photographer and your reporters to filter out the more important – and more newsy – opportunities from those that are less meaningful to your readers.

While discussing the 'owner's edict' with the page one editor, I mentioned one of my maxims of newsroom leadership: If you see a problem in your newsroom, often you will find the answer to that problem...by looking into a mirror.

He agreed, at least in part, that his lack of attention to managing the photographer's time had contributed to the kids-in-the-park photos.

Perhaps the most valuable lesson to be learned from this is really very simple: Better leadership creates better photos.

Oh...and sometimes 'owner edicts' can have a positive effect.

Edward F. Henninger is an independent newspaper consultant and the Director of OMNIA Consulting. Offering design expertise, consultation, redesigns, workshops. You can reach him at 803-327-3322. E-mail go2omnia@aol.com

ENVIRONMENT continued from Page 10

Let's start with the worst offenders – the cell phone and its first cousin, the pager.

When you're with a prospect, the most important thing in the world is...that prospect. Everything else is a distraction. So the rule on cell phones and pagers is simple: Turn them off.

Speaking of gadgets...if you use a laptop computer, don't place it where it will be a physical barrier between you and the other person. And when you're not using it, move it out of the way.

Of course, an environment without distractions can't guarantee a "yes" response from your prospect. But it can improve your chances.

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John Foust conducts on-site and video training for newspaper advertising departments. His three new video programs are designed to help ad managers conduct in-house training for their sales teams. For information, contact: John Foust, PO Box 97606, Raleigh, NC 27624 USA, E-mail: jfoust@mindspring.com, Phone 919-848-2401.

awards

Changes set for Better Newspaper Awards

By Laraine Hall
OCNA Education Coordinator

OCNA's Better Newspaper Awards Task Force met in April to continue its annual review of the BNC program and look at suggestions made by members, judges and participants over the year. The result will see some exciting additions and changes for the 2004 program.

As was previously announced, the Reporter of the Year Award has been

renamed 'The Stephen Shaw Award for Reporter of the Year' in honour of the reporter who died tragically following last year's awards ceremony. Stephen received this award twice since its inception in 2000.

Cartoon of the Year category will be split into two circulation categories (over 10,000 circ. and under 9,999 circ.). There will be more emphasis on subject matter and relevance, and each paper will be allowed to submit up to three cartoons from the same cartoonist to show consis-

tency.

OCNA will continue to use a numerical scoring system and judging guidelines for General Excellence Awards. Our largest category for newspapers with a circulation of 25,000 and over will be split into two categories as follows: Circ. 25,000 to 40,000; and Circ. 40,001 and over.

The following Premier Award categories will be split into two circulation categories: Circ. under 10,000 and Circ. over 10,001: Best News Story, Best Editorial, Best Feature Story, Best Feature.

Entry brochures will be available in September 2004. Deadline for submissions for the 2004 Awards is October 29. Don't forget to circle April 9, 2005 on your calendar and plan to attend the Awards Gala in Toronto. If you have any questions about the Better Newspapers Competition, or if you need further information, please call Laraine 905-639-8720, ext. 230 or email: l.hall@ocna.org

Ontario Press Council rulings can be found online at <http://www.ontpress.com>

Plan now for the Community Newspaper Career Fair

Plan to set up your own table to promote your newspaper to Community College and University students studying Journalism, Graphic Arts, Advertising, and Business.

OCNA will be inviting graduating students from across the province to this big event, to be held Saturday, April 9, 2005 during the OCNA Spring Convention in Toronto

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