

AlaPressa

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA PRESS ASSOCIATION

MAY 2025

Online Media Campus Upcoming Webinars

[Hackers & Headlines:
Defending Your Newsroom
from Cyber Threats](#)
June 5, 2025, 1 p.m.

APA Summer Convention

Perdido Beach Resort
Orange Beach, AL
June 26-28, 2025

[Click HERE to make
accommodations at PBR
BEFORE May 26.](#)

[Click HERE to
register with APA](#)



All contests have been judged. Awards will be presented at banquet or mailed out post convention.

Mason retiring: English and Tortorici will have new roles at APA

Sen. Britt speaking at convention luncheon; deadline Monday

Boone sells four Alabama newspapers

Gulf Coast Media chosen for the Report for America program

Want to know more about Report for America?

Click links to sign-up to meet the Report for America recruitment team, and ask questions about becoming a host newsroom:

[May 29, 2025 Session](#) | [June 5, 2025 Session](#)

Hundreds of students participate in TimesDaily contest

USPS Board of Governors selects a new postmaster general

News/Media Alliance files amicus brief in United States v. Google

News/Media Alliance applauds the Copyright Office's AI Study Report on fair use

Column: If you'd read the paper...



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Charles Whisenant, The Arab Tribune
Tippy Hunter, The Outlook,
Alexander City
Vince Johnson, Gulf Coast Media
Ashley Trice, Lagniappe, Mobile
Barnett Wright, The Birmingham Times

APA Staff

Felicia Mason, Executive Director
Brad English, Marketing/Governmental
Affairs Director
Leigh Leigh Tortorici, Senior
Marketing Representative
Parrish Wright, Network Coordinator
Jaclyn Langan, Membership Coordinator
Cassidy Armstrong, Tearsheet Clerk
Evans Bailey, General Counsel
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Mason retiring: English and Tortorici will have new roles at APA

Felicia Mason will retire from APA on September 1, 2025, after 38 years. Brad English will become the new executive director. Leigh Leigh Tortorici will move up to the advertising director position. Both have worked alongside Mason at APA for 34 years.

Mason began her newspaper career as a sales representative and later as retail sales manager for The Crimson White student newspaper at the University of Alabama. After graduating with a degree in marketing, she joined APA as a sales/marketing representative in 1987. She was promoted to advertising manager at APA in 1991, and associate executive director in 1998. Following Bill Keller's retirement in 2000, she became APA's 11th executive director, and the first woman to hold the position in APA's 154-year history. She finished her MBA from Samford University in 2000.

Mason has served on the Board of Visitor's at the University of Alabama and Auburn University. She previously served on the UAB Communication Studies Advisory Board and the executive board of the Alabama Center for Open Government. Mason also sat on the board of the Summer High School Multi-Media Journalism Camp at Miles College.

Felicia is a past president of the Newspaper Association Managers, a national organization of newspaper

association executives, and a graduate of Leadership Alabama.

English joined APA in 1991 as a sales rep for the Alabama Newspaper Advertising Service. Since 2000, he has served as advertising director, leading all revenue-generating activities for ANAS. Under his direction, English expanded ANAS's Network programs by establishing both a statewide Display (Print) Network and a Digital Network for our member newspapers. He also oversees advertising record-keeping and prepares the monthly payments for advertising placements.

In 2010, Brad took over the lobbying efforts of APA, serving as the governmental affairs director. In that role, he has been successful in fending off countless attempts to take public notices out of newspapers, in addition to working on improvements of Alabama's open records and open meetings laws.

He is a native of Elba, and also served as the retail advertising manager for The Crimson White while in school at the University of Alabama, before joining APA.

He and his wife, Nancy, have two married daughters and one grandson.

Tortorici, who also joined APA in 1991, initially worked part-time and became full-time assistant to Executive Director Mike Ryland before his passing. Tortorici moved over to sales for the advertising service not long after that. Since 2000, she has served as the senior sales representative for ANAS, handling a number of small and large accounts.

She was instrumental in establishing BamaNet, the system that provides for the electronic transfer of ads to newspapers, and is the key staff member for alabamapublicnotices.com, the statewide depository for public notices in Alabama, since it was created by APA in 2001.

She is a native of Birmingham and a 1991 graduate of the University of Alabama with a degree in advertising.

"I am so fortunate to have spent my career at APA," Mason said. "I so admire and respect the work our newspapers do in communities throughout Alabama. It will be difficult to step away, but APA could not be in better hands."

Mason will continue to work with the APA Journalism Foundation to manage the grant, internship and scholarship programs, as well as being a liaison between the association and journalism schools across the state.

"I am so fortunate to have spent my career at APA," Mason said. "I so admire and respect the work our newspapers do in communities throughout Alabama. It will be difficult to step away, but APA could not be in better hands."

Sen. Britt speaking at convention luncheon; deadline Monday

Don't miss the deadline to reserve your hotel room for the APA Summer Convention on the Alabama Gulf Coast at the Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach, June 26-28.

For APA newspaper and magazine members, if you are staying more than one night at the Perdido Beach Resort for the convention, ANAS, the advertising placement arm of APA, will pay for your second night. No action needed. APA will work with the hotel to adjust your bill.

The hotel reservation deadline is **Monday, May 26**. Make your hotel reservations [HERE](#) or call 251-981-9811. *Reference booking ID#18440 for the APA block at special rates starting at \$329 per night (regular rates are \$600+ per night). Please do not wait to reserve your room. The hotel is fully booked for this weekend.

Here's the lineup:

- Thursday welcome event:

Join us Thursday evening as we kick-off

the weekend with a two-hour sunset dolphin cruise aboard Wild Hearts, a 53-foot, open ocean catamaran. We will depart from the dock across the street from the hotel. Tickets are \$50. Price includes light food, beer, wine, soft drinks and water. Space is limited, so reserve your seat early.

- Friday afternoon programs and events:

We are excited to have Rob Curley, executive editor of the Spokesman-Review in Spokane, Wash., join us for two programs. He will talk about audience engagement and community funding, among other topics.

The second Friday afternoon program is Beer with the Barrister. APA attorney Evans Bailey will be available to answer your legal questions about open meetings and open records issues.

End the day with fellowship and libations at our opening reception on the beach deck sponsored by Alabama Power. Dinner on your own.

- Saturday programs and events:

In our breakfast program, we will hear about America 250, the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

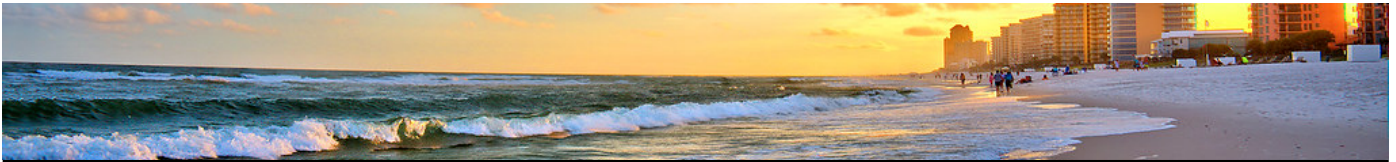
We will hear another program from Rob Curley, and also a panel of some of the top leaders in the Alabama Legislature.

Sen. Katie Britt has confirmed that she will join us as our Saturday luncheon speaker.

Finally, we will celebrate the winners of the 2025 APA Media Awards with a reception, sponsored by the Poarch Creek Indians, and banquet Saturday night. Let's celebrate all of the good work accomplished this year!

Visit our convention website www.alabamapress.org/summer to register with APA. Remember: Hotel deadline is Monday, May 26. Make room reservations [HERE](#). Please contact Jaclyn at the APA office (205-871-7737) if you have any need additional information.

We look forward to seeing you in Orange Beach!



Boone sells four Alabama newspapers

from Boone Newsmedia

Boone Newsmedia Inc. (BNI) sold four Alabama newspapers to Jeff and Michelle Schumacher. The sale included The Atmore Advance, The Andalusia Star-News, The Demopolis Times and The Brewton Standard. John Cribb, Cribb & Associates, represented BNI in the transaction. The sale was closed April 30. Terms were not disclosed.

The Schumachers, originally from North Dakota, have most recently worked in Oregon with Wick Communications.

Catherine Boone Hadaway, BNI senior

vice president, said that after decades of ownership, the BNI family is proud the Schumachers will continue as the stewards of the community newspapers in Andalusia, Atmore, Brewton and Demopolis with local ownership and management.

"BNI CEO Steve Stewart and the Boone family see this as a good fit for Jeff and Michelle, for us and for those we have worked with in these places," Hadaway said. "We have enjoyed working with excellent people in these communities over the years and will miss those associations. We wish them well going

forward."

Both Jeff and Michelle have been involved in the newspaper business for many years. Jeff has been a publisher for more than 30 years, and Michelle has been in sales for more than 15 years.

"We are excited to be given the responsibility of publishing these fine newspapers and websites," Jeff Schumacher said. "We certainly will work to continue creating a first-class experience for our readers and advertising clients. We are equally excited to integrate ourselves into these fine communities."

Gulf Coast Media chosen for the Report for America program

from GCM

Gulf Coast Media has been chosen to serve as a host newsroom for the Report for America program, a national service program that places talented early career journalists in local newsrooms to report on under-covered topics and communities across the United States and its territories.

By creating a new, sustainable model for journalism, Report for America provides people with the information they need to improve their communities, hold powerful institutions accountable, and restore trust in the media.

They will pay half of a journalist's sal-

ary for the first year, up to a certain cap based on experience.

At GCM, the new reporter's work this summer will be dedicated to telling the local stories, at a grassroots level. They'll look into every way growth and development impacts our corner of the world, from the depths of the Gulf and the foundations of new construction sites to the water towers and winding waters of the Mobile-Tensaw.

The newspaper has launched a fundraising campaign to support the expansion of local news coverage and to support this program beyond the summer.



Since launching in 2017, Report for America has placed 658 journalists in 371 newsrooms large and small across the country and helped those newsrooms raise more than \$30 million from local donors to transform their business models and ecosystems.

Hundreds of students participate in TimesDaily contest

From TimesDaily

More than 500 students from third grade to 12th grade showcased their talents by taking part in the 14th edition of the TimesDaily Design an Ad contest.

The newspaper's event features the



work of students throughout Colbert, Franklin and Lauderdale counties.

The event supports literacy efforts through the TimesDaily's longstanding Newspapers in Education (NIE) program. The NIE program works closely with area teachers and makes it possible for them to use the newspaper in the classroom to enhance literacy and teach core life skills, such as comprehension, math and writing, social studies and science.

The Newspaper Association of America Foundation concluded that moderate instructional use of the newspaper in the

classroom elevates student reading and comprehension test scores by as much as 39%.

The sponsors of Design an Ad include the TimesDaily, United Community Bank, Northwest Shoals Community College and Rick's Barbecue.

The overall winner received a medal and \$100. Other cash prizes were awarded for all divisions.

Sheffield High junior Merijaine Potter was awarded a \$1,500 scholarship to Northwest Shoals Community College as the creative winner of the contest.

Wendy Smith, a senior at Deshler High, was named Tuesday night as the overall winner of the 2025 TimesDaily Design an Ad contest. Presenting the award is Susan Westmoreland of United Community Bank and TimesDaily Publisher Darrell Sandlin. [Kevin Taylor/TimesDaily]

People

Shannon Allen has resigned as publisher of The Sand Mountain Reporter. **Mary Bailey** has been named managing editor and will take over many of his duties. **Druw Giamalva** has been named the new sports editor.

Allen joined The Reporter in 1988 as sports editor, and was named publisher in 2020.

Bailey has worked at The Reporter for almost 20 years. She began in the press room and has worked up to assistant

circulation manager and is working as a staff writer.

Giamalva joined the editorial staff last year. He is a 2024 graduate of the University of Alabama at Birmingham with a bachelor's degree in journalism.

Industry

USPS Board of Governors selects a new postmaster

From the National Newspaper Association

The U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors announced recently the selection of David Steiner as the nation's 76th postmaster general. Steiner has served on the board of FedEx and is a former CEO of Waste Management. He is set to take over sometime in July.

"NNA offers its congratulations, and we look forward to working with PMG Steiner to help change course and restore the confidence of publishers in the USPS," NNA Chair Martha Diaz Aszkenazy, publisher, The San Fernando (California) Valley Sun, said. "The selection of Steiner clearly heeds the administration's call for a change in

direction that is desperately needed."

She continued, "The last five years have been a disastrous period for NNA members. The pattern of service failures and twice-a-year punitive rate increases has driven publishers out of the mail. It has been no more beneficial for the USPS which has experienced skyrocketing costs and financial losses. USPS cannot survive continued pursuit of higher rates and poorer service."

NNA is eager to work with PMG Steiner to address crucial issues like



rate increases, lack of measurement for newspapers delivered and quality of service overall. We seek a stable and efficient USPS.

NNA Directors ask that you call on Congress to pass H.R. 3004, the USPS SERVES US Act to ensure that there is effective governance for the USPS for years to come. Doing so is easy. Simply Click [HERE](#) to send a message to your representative. Directors will be carrying this message to Washington, D.C. on June 3-4, 2025, to support meaningful change what will ensure the USPS' success and viability as an essential service provider for community newspapers.

News/Media Alliance files amicus brief in United States v. Google

On May 9, News/Media Alliance filed an amicus brief in United States v. Google in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, the remedy phase of the Google search antitrust trial. The brief, available here, highlighted the growing importance of publisher content in search engine

competition through uses that employ retrieval augmented generation (RAG).

The Alliance noted that other GSEs and AI-search companies must negotiate for access to publisher content to enable their RAG-based AI search. It argued that Google's unlawful monopoly gives it

an unfair advantage as search engines increasingly employ RAG, and therefore urged the court to specifically clarify in the final judgment that publishers may also selectively opt out of RAG to restore competition in search as generative AI search becomes more and more prevalent.

Industry

News/Media Alliance applauds the Copyright Office's AI Study Report on fair use monopoly

By Sam Quigley, NNA

The News/Media Alliance commends the Copyright Office for releasing a pre-publication version of its report on Generative AI Training, the third portion of its AI series. This report analyzes whether the use of copyrighted content in training and retrieval augmented generation (RAG) constitutes infringement.

We appreciate the Copyright Office's careful and nuanced analysis as over 40 litigations work themselves through the courts, recognizing that differences in technology and uses of AI models can affect liability.

News/Media Alliance President and CEO Danielle Coffey stated, "Today's report constitutes an important and timely recognition of copyright owners' right to protect their works and prosper in the digital ecosystem, especially for the use of real-time news media content that requires tremendous investment and human reporters. The report states clearly what we already knew: U.S. copyright law is capable of handling new technology, the primary issue we continue to face is effective enforcement and AI developers' respect for the law. While we would have preferred the Copyright Office had issued a stronger conclusion on training of news media content, the report as a whole makes a compelling case that AI companies must rein in their excesses, respect content creators, and fall in line with copyright law."

The report highlights the special risks that retrieval augmented generation (RAG) poses to news media stakeholders, noting "the use of RAG is less likely to

be transformative where the purpose is to generate outputs that summarize or provide abridged versions of retrieved copyrighted works, such as news articles, as opposed to hyperlinks."

While fair use is a contextual analysis, we wish the report could have offered similar clarity when it comes to AI training. On the first factor, the Office declined to make definitive statements on the transformative use defense deployed by many AI companies, noting that models may simultaneously serve transformative and non-transformative purposes. The report also notes that AI uses may encroach upon emerging licensing markets and compete with other uses for copyrighted content. In N/MA's experience, most AI models do not consistently employ sufficient guardrails or mitigations against competitive uses for professional content, and we wish the Office had come to a broader conclusion here to incentivize more responsible development.



We are encouraged, however, that the Office recognizes that in many cases training LLMs "threatens significant potential harm to the market for or value of copyrighted works" and that "where licensing options exist or are likely to be feasible," the fourth factor will disfavor

fair use. Here, the value and nature of journalism businesses must be recognized. News media publishers were early to engage in AI licensing partnerships, and N/MA recently offered a voluntary collective license to its membership. For these reasons, N/MA remains a champion of voluntary licensing, and believes it is premature to consider regulatory interventions in licensing markets.

Before considering the defense of fair use, the Copyright Office also analyzed AI training processes and concluded that "creating and deploying a generative AI system using copyright-protected material involves multiple acts that, absent a license or other defense, may infringe one or more rights." Although LLMs train on a vast quantity of data, the report notes that model performance "also depends heavily on the quality of the data used to train them," and explains how training can result in the memorization and retention of valuable content within the model itself, a topic of an N/MA White Paper.

The Copyright Office launched its study on AI and copyright in August 2023. The first part – focusing on digital replicas – was published in July 2024 while the second part on copyrightability came out in January 2025. N/MA submitted initial and reply comments to the Copyright Office, and met ex parte with the Office to highlight special considerations related to retrieval augmented generation. N/MA also published a White Paper detailing how the pervasive copying of expressive works to train and fuel generative AI systems is copyright infringement and not a fair use.

Columns

If you'd read the paper...

by Loretta Gillespie,
The Moulton Advertiser

In these days of high-speed internet, television with 24-hour coverage, artificial intelligence and smart-phones that enable us to literally have the news of the moment in our pockets, many people have come to depend on these electronic devices for all their news.

This generation of tech-savvy folks can pull up the history and mating habits of the Australian wombat, pictures of galaxies far, far away, images of historical value and what movie stars are up to at any given moment as well as the menu of one's favorite restaurant.

But what these marvels of modern technology can't give us are much more important to us as individuals and as members of communities like ours.

These things are so intrinsically inter-

twined into our daily lives that, like many things, we take them for granted.

They say that you don't miss your water until your well runs dry. That being the case, think about these once commonplace things that we seldom see any longer unless maybe in a museum.

Phone booths, once on every city street and in public buildings, restaurants, gas stations, parks and other spots where people congregate and might need to

Read continued on page 5

Columns

Read
continued from page 4

contact someone, a family member, employer, doctor, or just to hear a beloved voice on the other end of the line.

They became almost obsolete due to the convenience of the cell phone.

Phone books, once used almost daily, especially the yellow pages, where you might look up numbers for plumbers, banks, bakeries, barbers, and a whole world of services like dog groomers, house painters, and on and on.

Juke boxes were once common even in small restaurants. For a quarter you could select three of your favorite songs. For a dollar you could listen to your own selections for as long as your meal lasted.

On the endangered species of things, we might miss out if we don't exercise some common sense and be proactive rather than mourn and react after the fact, and that is the hometown newspaper.

The internet, for all its good, and all its bad contents, can never deliver to you the things you need to know most, like who won the local high school game, the BBQ cook-off contest, local obituaries, marriages, births, invitations to local events, schedules for the events, sports, church services, school board meetings, and a myriad of other activities and events that you might want to attend.

You won't see your granddaughter's first birthday picture on CNN, or an action shot of your brother hitting a home run on Fox.

The local archives is a treasure trove of information about local families, the history of your part of the world, census records, land grants, just about anything that happened in the past century can be found there, and it all started with newspaper clippings. In fact, according to Ar-

chive's Director Wendy Hazle, the oldest newspaper article on file at the Archives came from a newspaper clipping from 1868. She continues to collect and file hard copies of newspaper articles for future generations.

"People can come here to research a wealth of genealogy, but there is also historical research information, as well," Hazle pointed out.

She used the local hospital as an example of tracing back to meetings of the board that might have information about decisions that were made that could possibly help historians to understand the reasons it continued to decline over the years.

"These newspaper articles are a resource for understanding what was going on years ago that we see the results of today. We can follow up on the reasons certain things were done (like the relocation of the Jackson House, or flood zones that caused damage to certain areas, etc.) and there are many accounts of civil and criminal trials held over the years preserved at the Archives, as well.

Of course, you can gather a lot of information about some of these things online, but they mostly have a newspaper logo and a staff writer listed as their resource.

You can help to ensure that newspapers play a role in communities large and small by supporting them with your readership. Write letters to your editors if you read something you enjoyed or maybe that you disagree with.

Call your local paper to report upcoming events or to have them include your

club news, upcoming fundraiser, or church information such as revivals and special meetings. Newspapers even publish your child's lunch menu in certain areas.

Local newspapers like ours are the backbone of our communities, the repositories of our past and present generations lifestyles, the reliable accounts of crimes, and the hundreds of little things that we often take for granted when it happens, but want a record of later.



There is no comparison in reading something on a computer screen and holding a crisp newspaper in your hands. The faint lingering smell of newspaper ink, the pictures of familiar faces, the words of your friends, neighbors, elected officials and religious leaders are preserved in those pages. The importance of these things can't be replaced by modern technologies. Television news gives you a snapshot of the news of the day, then it's on to something else. The newspaper article you read will be there as long as you keep that paper.

Think about these things when you pass by that newspaper box. If you'd read the newspaper last week you wouldn't have missed all the good things going on this week!

Help Wanted

Reporter - Huntsville, AL

If you care about, and want to help others clearly understand, what's going on in your community and how it will affect the people who live and work there, Alabama Media Group and its daily digital news products may be perfect for you. The base salary range is \$42,000 to \$48,000 per year. The reporter will be responsible for daily, audience-focused reporting on Huntsville, Alabama, the state's largest city and a technology, aerospace and manufacturing center.

[CLICK HERE](#) to learn more about this position and to apply.

Additional Open Positions on APA Help Wanted page:

Managing News/Sports Editor - South Alabama

Page Designers - South Alabama

Magazine Feature Writer - Alexander City, AL



For more information on these positions and to see the latest listings [CLICK HERE](#) to visit the APA Help Wanted page.