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2018 Entry Form

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What is the subject/title of the entry?

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Is your newspaper under 50,000 circulation or above 50,000 circulation? Under 50,000

Please give a brief explanation of issues discussed and the results achieved. (This space will expand as you type in your comments.)

Jan. 13, 2018 – Again promoting the importance of journalism in its purest form, newspaper reporting.

OPINION

COMMENTARY | BRANDON COX

The buzzing alarm gives me hope

Ringling out over the constant hum of other nearby machinery, the blaring and staticky call overtakes a discussion in the nearby office. The alarm is a signal that a day's work has been filed, and its permanence is about to be etched into history.

As the rollers begin to turn, a long and thin thread of parchment starts to unroll from its spool. The medium weaves in and out of steel cylinders, lying firmly against aluminum plates as ink is transferred from machine to canvas.

The written word spreads across the paper as the newspaper press gains speed. The day's work is being published.

It's a magnificent process to witness firsthand.

This past Sunday, I snuck away in the late afternoon to the local theater. After purchasing my ticket and making a pit stop at the concession stand, I quietly found my seat among a dozen or so other moviegoers.

We were there to see "The Post," a Steven Spielberg film that recounts the true story of Katharine Graham's Washington Post in the 1970s and its reporting of the Pentagon Papers.

Graham, played by Meryl Streep, was the first female publisher of a major American newspaper. She and her editor Ben Bradlee, portrayed by Tom Hanks, fight to grow the company and compete with The New York Times on a national scale. Both newspapers race to expose a massive cover-up of government secrets that spans three decades and four U.S. presidents.

"What is it you think we do here for a living, kid?" replies Hanks' Bradlee to a young journalist in the Post's newsroom who asks if the work he's been assigned is legal.

In his concurring opinion on *New York Times Company v. United States*; *United States v. The Washington Post Company* et al., Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black wrote, "In the First Amendment the Founding Fathers gave the free press the protection it must have to fulfill its essential role in our democracy. The press was to serve the governed, not the governors. The Government's power to censor the press was abolished so that the press would remain forever free to censure the Government. The press was protected so that it could bare the secrets of government and inform the people."

The newspapers survived the attack from United States government and the Nixon administration with a 6-3 Supreme Court ruling in their favor.

"To find that the President has 'inherent power' to halt the publication of news ... would wipe out the First Amendment and destroy the fundamental liberty and security of the very people the Government hopes to make 'secure,'" Justice Black also wrote.

Black's words are equally significant today.

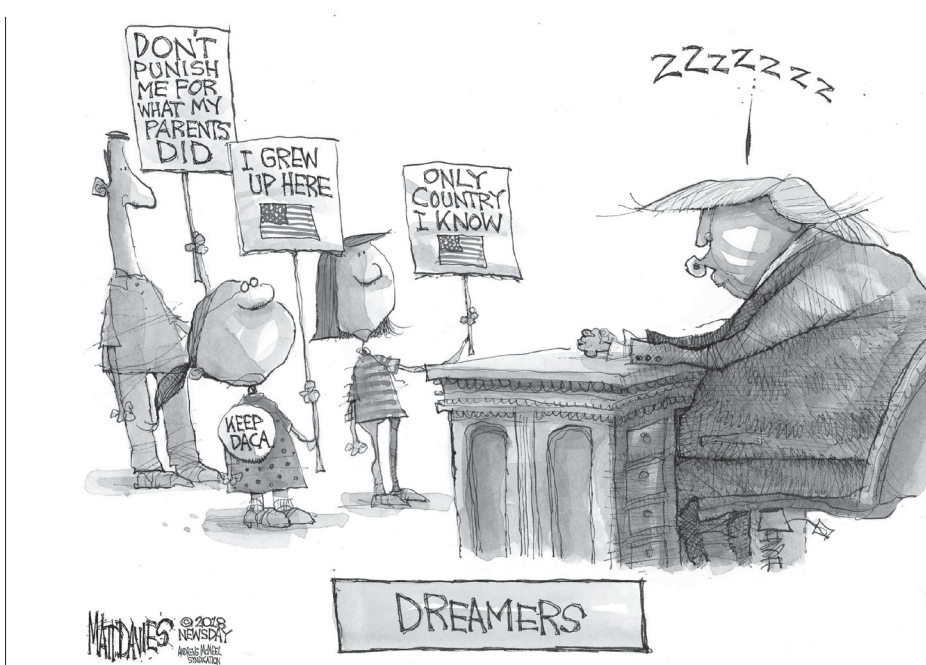
Each time I hear a deflecting "fake news" accusation, I am reminded of that buzzing sound. The same buzzer rings through my office building every day as we print our newspaper and a handful of others in the Tennessee River Valley.

I'm glad and hopeful that the buzzer continues to drown out conversations each day, especially those conversations that attack a free press.

Brandon Cox is the editor and publisher of the Sentinel. He can be reached by email to brandon.cox@jcsentinel.com. Follow Brandon on Twitter at @BrandonJCox.



Brandon Cox
Editor & Publisher



COMMENTARY | STEVE FLOWERS

Tuscaloosa is essentially Alabama's state capital

Awhile back, during Dr. Robert Bentley's tenure as governor, I wrote a column entitled, "They May as Well Move the Capitol to Tuscaloosa." Never before in Alabama history has a city had a sitting governor and the state's senior U.S. Senator hail from that particular place. Even with the departure of Bentley as governor, the Druid City has an inordinate amount of presence in the state's political sphere of influence.

Sen. Richard Shelby is in his 32nd year as our U.S. Senator. With that kind of seniority, comes immense power in Washington. Shelby is Chairman of the Senate Rules Committee and is easily one of the three most powerful U.S. Senators.

Secretary of State, John Merrill, is from Tuscaloosa.

He served in the Legislature prior to winning statewide office.

Scott Donaldson serves on the State Court of Appeals. He was a Circuit Judge in Tuscaloosa prior to his move to the state court.

Judge John England currently sits on the Bench as a Tuscaloosa Circuit Judge. He has previously served on the State Supreme Court. He is one of the most respected men in the state. Judge England's son, Chris England, has represented Tuscaloosa in the House of Representatives very effectively for 11-years. Chris is not only a stellar legislator; he is a practicing lawyer and an expert on Alabama football, which he grew up watching.

Tuscaloosa County Probate Judge Hardy McCollum has been in his office for over 41 years. He is nearing the end of an unprecedented seventh six-year term.

That means that Hardy was first elected in 1976. Over the years, he has generally been considered the most popular political figure in Tuscaloosa

County.

State Sen., Gerald Allen, has been representing his native Tuscaloosa County in the state Legislature for 24-years. He served 16-years in the State House prior to his election to the State Senate eight years ago in 2010. He is considered one of the most conservative members of the State Senate.



Steve Flowers

Some folks believe that this time next year, Tuscaloosa may regain the Governor's office. Their very popular, 45-year old mayor, Walt Maddox, will likely be the Democratic standard-bearer in the 2018 Governor's race. Young Mr. Maddox is very popular in his hometown. He has been the historic city's 36th mayor since 2005, which means he was first elected at the ripe old age of 32.

Although not Tuscaloosa's, there are some influential powers that live nearby and represent them in the Halls of Congress and the State Senate. Congressman Robert Aderholt from Haleyville represents Tuscaloosa as well as outstanding State Senators Greg Reed of Jasper and Bobby Singleton of Greensboro.

Lastly but certainly not least, Tuscaloosa lays claim to the most popular and consensus brightest rising star in the Alabama Legislature. State Representative Bill Poole is a crown jewel that Tuscaloosa can be very proud to call their own.

Bill Poole is a lawyer by profession. His utmost priority is his devotion to his wife, Nicole, and his three children, Sally, William, and Whitman. The Poole's are active members of the First Methodist Church of Tuscaloosa. Bill earned his B.S. and Law degrees from the University of Alabama

and began his law practice in Tuscaloosa, in 2004.

This Republican District 63 encompasses primarily the City and suburbs of Tuscaloosa. Poole came to the House with

a large group of Republicans in 2010. He immediately became a leader of that group. The entire Legislature quickly recognized his potential. By the

end of his first year in 2011, it was evident that Poole was clearly the star of that 34-member class. When you asked every veteran observer of Goat Hill about the class, the first name on the list was Bill Poole. He is liked and respected by members on both sides of the aisle.

In only his second term, he became Chairman of the Ways and Means Education Budget Committee.

When Mike Hubbard was removed as Speaker, it was a foregone conclusion that Poole was going to be Speaker. He turned down the post because he wanted to be able to spend time with his young family.

At 38 the sky is the limit for Poole. However, folks in Tuscaloosa hope he stays put. For a city that is home to the University of Alabama, having the Chairman of the Education Budget Committee is a pretty good coup.

Tuscaloosa was once the Capitol. Some would say essentially it is again. In fact preliminary census estimations project that Tuscaloosa will exceed Montgomery in population by 2030.

Steve Flowers is Alabama's leading political columnist. Steve may be reached at www.steveflowers.us.

COMMENTARY | DEWAYNE PATTERSON

Cold weather is good for nothing

I crawled in the car, and the dashboard temperature read 4 degrees. I hate cold weather.

Before I put the car in drive (or actually reverse), I get a text message from my guy, Jason, saying he has the flu. I hate cold weather.

I quickly realize his awesome sports pages will suffer with his absence. I blame the cold weather.

It's cold, and I don't like it. I can't get warm. I don't want to shave. The thought of my face hitting the cold air makes me shiver even more.

For two mornings, cold hateful mornings, I walk outside, readying myself for work, as my beautiful wife and son stay fitted in the warmth of our home.

School is out, and Northeast Alabama Community College is closed, but the Jackson County Sentinel rallies on.

Though I do give props to Dara, who still gets up at 4:30 a.m., the cold be damned, to go work out. Wednesday, when it was 4 degrees and the gym opened late, she went to Walmart.

Cold weather is awful. It makes you hate everything. I missed four questions on my literary elements quiz, that I shouldn't have missed, in my English class (another column, for another day).

I blame the cold weather.

On Thursday morning, when the world came back to life and school was back in session, the dashboard temperature read 11 degrees.

It felt warmer.

The temperature is supposed to rise by the weekend. Bye, cold weather.

40 degrees never felt so good.

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