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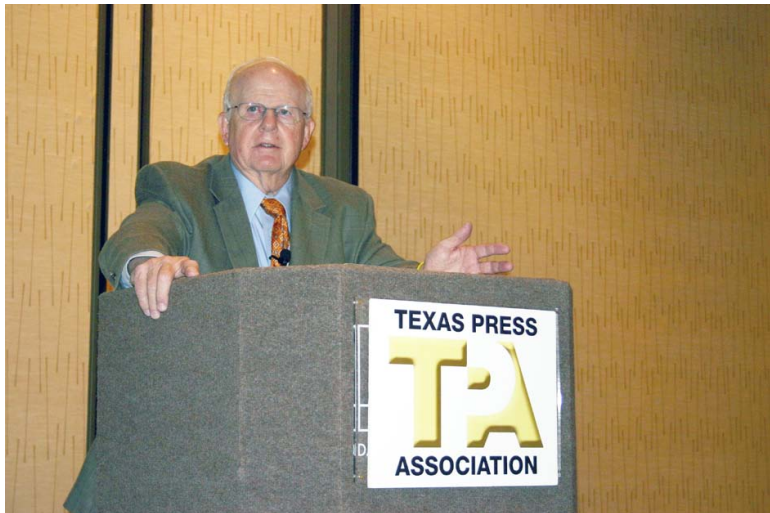
Texas Press Association Conference Shows Newspaper Industry Is Still Kicking

By John K. Edwards

Despite rather gloomy predictions to the contrary, the newspaper industry in Texas is alive and well, as reflected by the vibrant atmosphere and healthy attendance at the Texas Press Association's (TPA) 65th Annual *Mid-Winter Conference and Trade Show* held at the Hyatt Regency DFW on January 19-21, 2012.

The TPA, founded in 1880, is one of the nation's oldest and largest newspaper trade associations. As of November 2011, the non-profit TPA represents 478 paid-circulation newspapers -- 75 dailies and 403 non-dailies -- with a combined circulation of 2.94 million. The TPA is a trusted source for publishers throughout Texas who need information and guidance on a wide range of issues, and the *Mid-Winter Conference and Trade Show* brings them all together in support of a shared vision of protecting the public's right to know.

This year's conference began with several TPA committee meetings before a trade show reception and Officers & Past President's Dinner. The much-anticipated trade show kicked off Friday morning, with dozens of companies demonstrating their cutting-edge services to TPA members. The Texas Newspaper Foundation (TNF) conducted a silent auction during the trade show, which raised money to support education and training for community journalists. Immediately after the trade show and silent auction, Bob Rose, Chief Meteorologist for the Lower Colorado River Authority, gave a luncheon speech on *The Drought of 2011-2012: Going from Bad to Worse*. It would be an understatement to say that Bob's presentation kept the audience's attention, as everyone wanted to know what was in store for the drought-stricken regions of Texas in 2012. Unfortunately, Bob could not promise significant improvement, although the severity of conditions experienced in 2011 are not likely to be repeated any time soon -- for which we're thankful!



Griff Singer speaks on the differences in editing for print stories as opposed to web publishing.

A general session followed the Friday luncheon and included several interesting addresses. Doug Toney, Chair of the TPA's Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC), provided a legislative update that focused primarily on a hot button topic these days -- public notice requirements. Griff Singer, a veteran journalist and journalism instructor, provided some very informative observations on the differences in editing for print stories as opposed to web publishing. In what was certainly the most lively presentation, Russell Viers, an Adobe Certified Instructor, enthralled the audience with numerous tips and suggestions for taking a story from draft to publication in the most efficient and effective way possible using the most current computer software. After the general session, Jackson Walker hosted a reception, followed by a TNF dinner honoring new Hall of Fame inductees Art Kowert, Roy Robinson, Dean Singleton, and Carmage Walls. Judy Muller, an award-winning broadcast journalist, spoke at the dinner. She shared her view that journalism is very much alive and well in small towns throughout America. The convention closed mid-day Saturday after a publisher's roundtable discussion; a speech by Tony Cesale, veteran journalist

and CEO of American Opinion Research, on the topic of *Readership - Advertising – Growth*; and a closing brunch with speaker Monica Dias, attorney at Frost Brown Todd, who spoke on *Beyond Libel: Legal Pitfalls in the Digital Age and How to Avoid Them*.

This annual convention is something special, mainly due to the guiding hands of Michael Hodges, TPA's Executive Director, and Ed Sterling, Director of Member Services. The exhibitors at the trade show always bring cutting-edge tools and services to help TPA members deliver the news to the public, and the discussion among newspaper owners, publishers, editors, and writers is always lively and engaging. This is not a docile crowd! Anyone with an interest in the press and broader First Amendment issues should check out the TPA's next convention, which will be held at the Westin Galleria Houston on January 17-19, 2013. Get it on your calendar, and I'll see you there!

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