

Detroit newspapers to reduce home delivery

The eyes of the nation will be on Detroit in March when its two daily newspapers become the first to end daily home delivery. Under a plan announced Dec. 15, The Detroit News and the Detroit Free Press will provide home delivery only on Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays.

“We’re fighting for our survival,” David Hunke, chief executive officer of the Detroit Media Partnership, said at a mid-day press conference at the Detroit Athletic Club. The partnership manages the business operations of the two papers under a joint operating agreement.

“We think it’s time to take a geometric leap forward in what we’ve known as newspapers,” Hunke, who also serves as publisher of the Free Press, added.

When the plan goes into effect, The Detroit News will be delivered to homes on Thursday and Fridays only; the Detroit Free Press will be delivered on Thursday, Fridays and Sunday. News subscribers also will receive the Free Press at home on Sundays. On the non-home delivery days, a slimmed-down print version of the newspapers will be on sale at newsstands, retail outlets and in coin boxes throughout Michigan. The papers also will be available every day in PDF format to subscribers.

The home delivery online and print package is \$12 a month, and newsstand copies will remain at 50 cents daily and \$1 on Sundays, officials said. The newspapers’ current online sites – detnews.com and freep.com – will remain separate from the subscriber sites. The changes stem from a need to bolster digital offerings as the traditional newspaper print model declines in popularity with readers and advertisers, executives from the newspapers said at a press conference.

Hunke said the newspapers would face about a 9 percent reduction in their workforces under the plan. However no layoffs were planned in their newsrooms, which he described as “fiercely competitive.”

Jonathan Wolman, publisher and editor of The Detroit News, who also spoke at the press conference, said: “Our economics have become unsustainable.”

But Lou Mleczo, president of Local 22 of the Detroit Newspaper Guild, said: “I’m skeptical. This is a sea change. No one has done it on this scale in North America.”

Mleczo, whose guild represents 350 newsroom employees, contends that all readers will not be able to change their habits and read the paper online. He said newspaper executives told union leaders that “they’re losing money.” But “they didn’t say how much,” he added.

Hunke said the decision to change home delivery did not have to be reviewed by the U.S. Department of Justice, which



Print editions of The Detroit News and Detroit Free Press will be available only in newsstands and retail outlets when the papers limit home delivery to Thursday, Friday and Sunday.

has oversight of the joint operating agreement, because the changes were aimed at maintaining two newspapers in Detroit. Meanwhile, the trend of online-only, or mixed digital and print publishing, gained steam last year as the newspaper industry has seen steadily declining advertising revenue and circulation.

The Christian Science Monitor, for instance, dropped print publication altogether in favor of online-only. And recently, Crain Communication Inc. announced that its Financial Week will become an online-only publication, as well. Some smaller dailies have announced reduced publication plans. The Daily Tribune in Royal Oak reduced its print version to four days from six. And the East Valley Tribune in Mesa, Ariz., a 100,000-circulation newspaper owned by Freedom Newspapers, announced in October that it would move from a daily to a four-day publication beginning this month.

In an attempt to stem costs, several papers have been laying off thousands of workers, many in the editorial departments. The Detroit plan is a departure from that route: It seeks to preserve the “content” by leaving the newsrooms untouched, a move supported by industry analysts who argue the newsroom cuts were too deep.

“When you’re taking too much away (content), readers aren’t dumb. They’re going to notice,” said Rick Edmonds, media business analyst for the Poynter Institute, a Florida-

New leadership in place for Detroit SPJ board

Colleen Clement has been elected new president of SPJ Detroit. Clement, who was elected to the board in 2006, has served as secretary for the past two years.

An executive producer for WXYZ-TV (Channel 7), Clement joined Detroit's ABC affiliate in 2000 – a move that allowed her to return to her hometown Detroit. Clement replaces Steve Raphael, who will continue to serve on the board as immediate past president. Raphael also is chairman of the program committee.

In the August 2008 general membership election, David Sachs, Gloria Olman, Jim Schaefer and Walter Middlebrook were re-elected to two-year terms.

New board members elected include:

- ◆ **W. Kim Heron**, editor of Metro Times, was elected to a two-year seat. He will also serve on the Journalist of the Year contest committee.
- ◆ **Andy Chapelle**, managing editor at Crain's Detroit Business, was elected to a two-year seat.
- ◆ **Tom Stanton**, journalism instructor at University of Detroit Mercy, was elected to a one-year seat. Stanton also was elected by the board to serve as secretary.

Other appointments made by the board are:

- ◆ **Ann Zaniewski**, reporter, Oakland Press, nominations and membership committees.
- ◆ **Jack Harned**, AutoCom Associates, Journalist of the Year banquet committee.
- ◆ **David Sachs**, senior copy editor, Detroit Jewish News, Laurain Scholarship committee.
- ◆ **Walter Middlebrook**, The Detroit News, Web site and newsletter committees.
- ◆ **Janet Mendler**, publicity and communications committees.

SPJ hit issues at national convention in Atlanta

Hotlanta was the hotspot for journalists. Hundreds of journalists converged on Atlanta in early September for the 2008 Society of Professional Journalists Convention and National Journalism Conference.

Featured speakers at the convention included NPR's Charlayne Hunter-Gault, Richard Boehne, president & CEO of the E.W. Scripps Co. (the parent company of WXYZ-TV in Detroit), Martin Fletcher, foreign correspondent for NBC News, Julia Wallace, editor of The Atlanta Journal-Constitution and ajc.com, and Hannah Allam, McClatchy's bureau chief in Cairo.

Dozens of professional development sessions were held over the course of the three-day convention. Journalists got the inside story on the FOIA amendments and how the new law will affect their work. Other sessions dealt with ethics, good writing and story-telling, covering the environment, and even the story behind high gas prices.

The future of journalism continues to be a hot topic with

jam-packed sessions about online journalism, multimedia platforms, what you need to know on the Web, and what journalism will look like in 10 years.

At the Saturday evening banquet, Detroit Free Press reporters Jim Schaefer and M.L. Elrick were honored with the \$10,000 Pulliam Award for their work this year on the text message scandal involving former Detroit mayor Kwame Kilpatrick and former chief of staff Christine Beatty.

Dave Aeikens, a long-time reporter and editor at the St. Cloud (Minn.) Times, was installed as president of the national organization. Jeremy Steele, president of the Mid-Michigan Chapter, was re-elected as Region 4 director.

The Society of Professional Journalists fights to defend the First Amendment, works to keep high standards in journalism and provides continuing education for journalists.

The organization celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2009. The 2009 convention will be Aug. 27-29 in Indianapolis. Mark your calendars!

Contest closed: Good luck to all who entered

Entries have closed for the 2009 Excellence in Journalism, Journalist of the Year Awards competitions sponsored by SPJ Detroit. Open to all media, the contest honors outstanding achievements during 2008 by print, broadcast, photo and online journalists throughout southeastern Michigan.

The awards will be presented April 15 at the annual awards banquet. Those who are selected to receive an award will be notified about two weeks prior to the banquet.

Among the many awards, the "Open Government Reporting" category focuses on First Amendment freedoms. That award will be presented to an individual or to a news organization that has made the most significant contribution to open government in Michigan.

SPJ Detroit will also be selecting Journalist of the Year

and Young Journalist of the Year from among those nominated by their peers. Proceeds from the banquet and Excellence in Journalism competition are applied to the Detroit chapter's Larry Laurain Scholarship Program. The awards banquet will be at the San Marino Club, 1685 East Big Beaver Road, Troy. Tickets or table reservations for the banquet will be available by calling (586) 306-2035.

Look for us on the Web at:
www.spj.org/detroit
 Or, e-mail:
detroitspj@comcast.net



Detroit reporters win \$10,000 Pulliam Award from SPJ

Detroit Free Press reporters Jim Schaefer and M.L. Elrick have been awarded the 2008 Eugene S. Pulliam First Amendment Award from the foundation associated with the Society of Professional Journalists.

Schaefer, a board member for the Detroit chapter of SPJ, and Elrick accepted the award Sept. 6 at the National SPJ Convention in Atlanta. They received two standing ovations for their work uncovering a secret settlement in a whistleblower lawsuit against the City of Detroit.

Through a tip, Schaefer and Elrick learned about potentially incriminating text messages exchanged on city-issued pagers between Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick and his chief of staff, Christine Beatty. Schaefer and Elrick used the Freedom of Information Act to request information, and then sued the City when their requests were denied.



ML Elrick, left, and Jim Schaefer, right, earned the prestigious Pulliam Award this year.

Their reports in the Free Press were a major reason Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy opened an investigation. That investigation led to felony charges, including charges of perjury and obstruction of justice, against Kilpatrick and Beatty. The mayor eventually pleaded guilty and resigned from office two days before Schaefer and Elrick were honored at the convention. As part of the plea deal, Kilpatrick will spend four months in jail and five years on probation. He had to give up his

law license and will pay \$1 million in restitution.

The Pulliam Award recognizes those who have fought to protect and preserve the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment. It is named after Eugene S. Pulliam, former publisher of The Indianapolis Star and The Indianapolis News, who died in 1999.

SPJ asks Obama to support Shield Law

Aikens cites the case of Detroit's David Ashenfelter as an example

SPJ National President David Aikens is asking President Barack Obama to quickly endorse a proposed federal shield law that offers some protections for journalists.

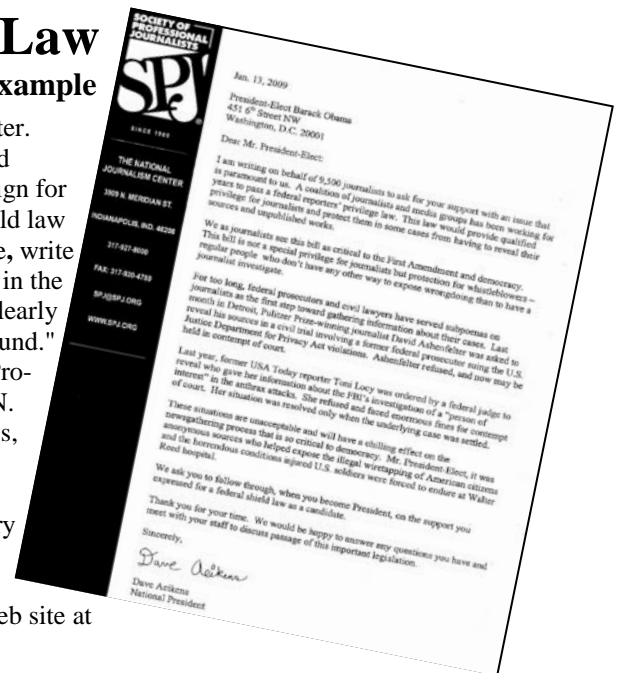
In his letter to Obama, Aikens cited the case of Detroit Free Press reporter David Ashenfelter. Last month, Ashenfelter was asked to reveal his sources in a civil trial involving a former federal prosecutor who is suing the Justice Department. Ashenfelter, a Pulitzer Prize winner, refused and could now face contempt charges. Aikens said in his letter that prosecutors tend to subpoena journalists as a first step in building a case. He said the limited protection offered by a shield law is warranted.

"We, as journalists, see this bill as critical to the First Amendment and democ-

racy," Aikens said in the letter.

In the last year, SPJ raised \$30,000 to support a campaign for the passage of a federal shield law for journalists. To contribute, write a check payable to SPJ and, in the "for" section of the check, clearly print "Federal Shield Law Fund." Mail checks to: Society of Professional Journalists, 3909 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46208.

The Detroit Chapter SPJ will hold a forum in February to discuss aspects of the Ashenfelter case. Details will be announced on our web site at www.spj.org/detroit.



Home delivery

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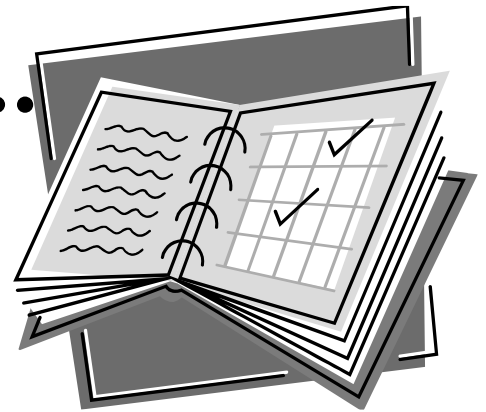
based resource center and school for journalists.

Randy Bennett, senior vice president of business development for the Newspaper Association of America, said: "It's a transitional period where a lot of papers are trying new and different things to attract advertising and stay current with readers. ... The challenge is making new models work on a

large scale."

The Free Press is the nation's 20th-largest daily newspaper, with a weekday circulation of 298,243, double on Sunday. The News had circulation of 178,280 at the end of September. The News saw a 10 percent reduction in circulation over the past year; while the Free Press had a 6.8 percent drop. The Free Press is owned by Gannett Co. and the News by MediaNews Group. William Dean Singleton is chief executive officer of MediaNews and chairman of the board at The Associated Press.

Mark your calendar



Wednesday, Jan. 21

Entries closed for this year's Excellence in Journalism contest sponsored by Detroit Chapter SPJ.

Awards will be presented at the annual banquet April 15. Winners will be notified in advance. This year's entries will be judged by the Central Florida and Minnesota chapters of SPJ and by members of the Chicago Headliners. Good luck to all who entered.

Wednesday, Feb. 4

Deadline to mail entries for SPJ's New America Award. The contest honors public service journalism that explores and exposes an issue of importance to immigrant or ethnic communities in the United States.

To be eligible, work must have been published or broadcast during the 2008 calendar year.

SPJ welcomes nominations from media outlets, journalists, community and issue advocacy groups, individuals and others concerned with ethnic and immigrant issues.

Each entry must include a letter explaining the significance of the issue and why it was chosen to report on. There is no fee to enter the contest.

Contact SPJ Headquarters at (317) 927-8000 or e-mail awards@spj.org.

Friday, Feb.20

Deadline to apply for the Laurain Scholarship, sponsored by Detroit Chapter Society of Professional Journalists. The \$2,500 scholarship is awarded to a Southeast Michigan area resident who is, or will be, a sophomore, junior or senior in 2009. The award can be used at any four-year college in Michigan but applicants must intend to study journalism. The award honors the late Larry Laurain, former Detroit SPJ president and city editor at the Oakland Press. Applications are on the our web site or call the scholarship committee, (248) 761-8204.

Friday, Saturday, April 3-4

The Region 4 Conference for SPJ will be held in Columbus, Ohio, at the Doubletree Hotel Columbus, Worthington. Chapters from Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia will meet for two days of workshops. SPJ's Spring Conferences are day-long professional development meetings that bringing area journalists, students and journalism educators together in one place to hear from industry experts on topics ranging from improving writing to leveraging technology in today's new media climate.

Networking opportunities at the conferences allow participants to build rela-

tionships that can lead to the sharing of the best practices in newsrooms. Region 4 director is Jeremy Steele, reporter for the State Journal and president of the Mid Michigan SPJ Chapter in Lansing. All SPJ members are welcome to attend the conference. For information, contact: Jennifer Monnin, (614) 677-5391.

Wednesday, April 15

Detroit Chapter Society of Professional Journalists will hold the annual Excellence in Journalism awards banquet at the San Marino Club in Troy. Awards will be presented for all categories of print, broadcast and new media.

Special recognition will be given for "lifetime achievement" and for the Journalist of the Year and Young Journalist of the Year. Jim Schaefer, award-winning reporter for the Detroit Free Press, will be the featured speaker. For more information, or to purchase tickets, call (586) 306-2035.

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