

March 8, 2023



Volume 40
Issue 9

Iowa Newspaper Association Bulletin

www.INAnews.com

▶ letter to **members**

CALENDAR of EVENTS

MEETINGS

INA, INF, INA Services
Company Board Meetings
April 21, 2023

WEBINARS

6 Sales Tactics You Need
To Do In 2023
March 30, 2023



Legislative Q&A Session

Friday, March 17th
10:00 a.m.

Dear INA Member,

All members are invited to join me for a Legislative Question and Answer Session. As you all know your Association is currently fighting public notice legislation This year's legislative session has been unlike any that I have ever experienced. The speed at which bills are moving is unheard of and as such, our strategy continues to be fluid.

On Friday, March 3—the Iowa Newspaper Association sent out nearly 400 emails to publishers, general managers and editors with updates and instructions on how to contact your senators along with talking points. Please continue to follow the directions provided in the INA Legislative ALERT. During the March 17th Legislative Q&A Session I will provide an update on the public notice legislation along with other bills. On Friday, March 10th all publishers, general managers and editors will receive an email from me with the login information. If for some reason you do NOT receive the login information, please email a request with the subject line LEGISLATIVE Q&A to ina@inanews.com along with your contact information and the login information will be sent to you directly.

I anticipate you will receive additional Legislative ALERTS from me between now and March 17th.

Thank you to all who have contacted and called your Senators.

Susan Patterson Plank
Executive Director
Iowa Newspaper Association

The Iowa Newspaper Association's mission is to advocate the continued importance of thriving newspaper enterprises in Iowa dedicated to the First Amendment and to provide guidance to members and direction to the association's two related boards.

Cartoonists criticize ‘Dilbert’ creator over racist remarks

MARK KENNEDY
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cartoonists are pushing back against racist remarks made by “Dilbert” creator Scott Adams, with one artist even using his own strip this week to lampoon the disgraced cartoon now dropped by newspapers nationwide.

Darrin Bell is transforming his strip “Candorville” — which usually features young Black and Latino characters — into a way to address Adams’ racism by mimicking the look and style of “Dilbert,” complete with wayward necktie.

“The only reason anyone knows who Scott Adams is because of the comics page. So I thought somebody on the comics page should respond to him on the comics page,” Bell, the 2019 winner of the Pulitzer Prize for illustrated reporting and commentary, told The Associated Press.

In the strips running Monday to Saturday, Bell paired Dilbert with one of his own characters, Lemont Brown. In one, Dilbert hopes Lemont will side with him in his quest to get a laundry room installed at work.

“You could wash your hoodie,” says Dilbert. Responds Lemont: “And you could wash your hood?”

Adams, who is white, was an outspoken — and controversial — presence on social media long before describing Black people as a “hate group” on YouTube last month. Adams repeatedly referred to people who are Black as members of a “hate group” and said he would no longer “help Black Americans.” He later said he was being hyperbolic, yet continued to defend his stance.

“When somebody goes too far like Scott Adams did, everyone who knows better should stand up and use their First Amendment to draw a line — to say that this is unacceptable,” said Bell, whose new graphic novel “The Talk” explores growing up as a biracial man in white culture.

Other cartoonists have stepped forward to denounce Adams, like Bill Holbrook, the creator of “On the Fastrack,” a strip that features an interracial family and — like “Dilbert” — focuses on a modern workplace.

“One of the things I wanted to spotlight with my characters is that people do rise above their differences. It can work,” Holbrook said. “That’s the spotlight I wanted to focus on and still do. It’s all a matter of where you want to put your focus.”

Holbrook said the Adams case is not one of so-called cancel culture but of consequences.

“I am in full support with him saying anything he wants to, but then he has to own the consequences of saying them,” he said. “He’s not being canceled. He’s experiencing the consequences of expressing his views.”

Individual newspapers have dropped “Dilbert” and Adams’ distributor, Andrews McMeel Universal, said it was severing ties with the cartoonist. While some outlets replaced “Dilbert” with another strip, The Sun Chronicle in Attleboro, Massachusetts, decided to keep the space blank through March “as a reminder of the racism that pervades our society.”

The “Dilbert” controversy has rocked a community of daily cartoonists who often create work in their homes several months ahead of publication. While reliably pro-free speech, they say they’re also orientated toward a better future — or at least a chuckle.

“We believe comics are a powerful medium and that cartoonists should perpetuate laughter, not racism and hate,” said Tea Fougner, editor in chief of King Features Syndicate — which distributes such strips as “Candorville,”

DILBERT - cont. on page 6

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Are your news, ad departments on same page?

JIM PUMARLO

Editors often raise red flags – or at least hesitate – at requests for business news, and often for good reason.

A store seeks a story for its grand opening – three months after the doors have opened.

A request for a restaurant review, though maybe a good idea, would be a “first” for the newspaper and might set an uncomfortable precedent.

A request for an anniversary story is accompanied by a reminder that the florist is one of the newspaper’s largest advertisers.

Advertising departments are quick to promote business content for the promised dividends in increased revenue. And that may well be the case. Be aware, however, that haphazard coverage can be worse than no coverage at all.

Newspapers instead should take a tip from the sports playbook: A deliberate offense will minimize the times that publishers and editors will have to defend a story. That strategy is best accomplished if newsrooms craft guidelines in consultation with the advertising department and management.

The exercise is especially important as newspapers are regularly challenged to generate advertising revenue in today’s fractured media landscape. Departments must be on the same page. Develop ground rules as much as possible. Exceptions are certain to surface, but they ought to be rare.

Mention business coverage, and many editors think of the chamber of commerce and “red coat” ambassadors who welcome businesses into the business community. The chamber can be a far greater resource.



Jim Pumarlo

For example, chambers of commerce and economic development organizations can become partners in presenting the local economic pulse. Monthly employment figures are an excellent example of how your newspaper can provide valuable and substantive information on a regular basis and the chamber receives businesses that represent the statistics.

The broad spectrum of business stories provides rich content, and it can help generate revenue. If you devote resources to beef up coverage, be sure the efforts are noticed. Newspapers regularly promote their editorial page, sports section, lifestyle or travel stories. Package business news in similar fashion. Send a message that you are interested in telling stories of employers and employees.

Improving business coverage is a shared responsibility. Businesses must be comfortable that reporters can get the story right, and reporters deserve to have all the facts including those that may not be so flattering. It boils down to trust. Reaching a common understanding is at the foundation of drawing the fine line between editorial and advertising departments. It’s also a slow process.

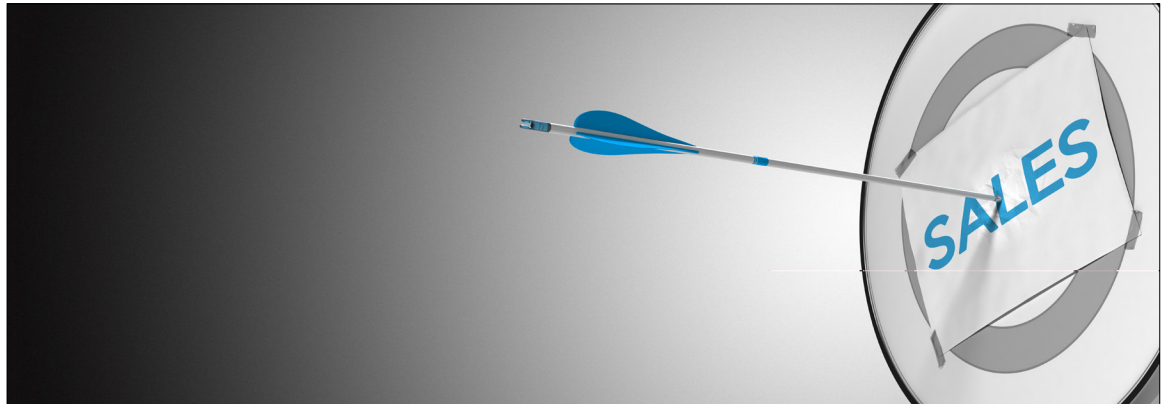
The first step is to start a conversation within your newspaper and with your business community. Building business news into your everyday coverage can spell dividends for news and advertising departments.

Jim Pumarlo is former editor of the Red Wing (Minn.) Republican Eagle. He writes, speaks and provides training on community newsroom success strategies. He is author of “Journalism Primer: A Guide to Community News Coverage,” “Votes and Quotes: A Guide to Outstanding Election Coverage” and “Bad News and Good Judgment: A Guide to Reporting on Sensitive Issues in Small-Town Newspapers.” He can be reached at www.pumarlo.com and welcomes comments and questions at jim@pumarlo.com.



WEBINAR SPOTLIGHT

Visit www.onlinemediacampus.com to register today!



6 Sales Tactics You Need To Do In 2023

MARCH 30 FROM 1-2 P.M.

IN THIS WEBINAR...

If you are in a transition, a sales leader acquiring new talent, or want to stay ahead of the curve and better situate yourself for sales success for 2023 and beyond, these six sales techniques should help tremendously. This training is for sales leaders at all levels and will help reconstruct a solid sales strategy you can enhance and build upon throughout the year!

ABOUT THE PRESENTER...

Richard E. Brown is a News/Media Alliance Rising Star recipient, the former director of renewals and digital sales strategy at LPI, and the former director of digital operations and sales of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. He recently served as the head of digital subscriber churn for Gannett | USA TODAY NETWORK and is now the senior director of retention for The Daily Beast. He is also a member of the board of directors for the Wisconsin Newspaper Association Foundation.

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Questions? Contact jshepherd@inanews.com



FREE MEMBER EXCHANGE

▼ HELP WANTED

SENIOR STAFF WRITER. Business Publications Corporation (BPC), an award-winning media and communications company, is seeking a full-time journalist to cover business news in Greater Des Moines for the Business Record, our flagship division. The right candidate will join our experienced staff to lead the Business Record's coverage of the people, issues and trends affecting the business community as the region continues to grow and transform. This reporter's primary focuses will include real estate, development and local government; the role will also encompass producing a variety of business stories.

The position requires a strong writer who can develop a beat and write in-depth analysis pieces on a variety of business topics for our weekly print edition, website, e-newsletters and specialty magazines. This person must function with a great deal of autonomy, building sources on their beats and managing their story schedules.

This person is also given freedom to generate a majority of their own story ideas. The ideal candidate must also be able to report and write daily business news items quickly and efficiently for our website and be able to keep a daily pulse on the community.

Previous business writing experience is a plus; however, it is not a requirement. The candidate must have a solid foundation in AP style, the principles of journalism and have a desire to represent the Business Record at a large number of community events and network with the community both in person, virtually and via social media. In addition, this person must have comfort leading panel discussions in front of an audience.

Basic photography skills, video production experience and the ability to help our organization move forward in the digital world are major pluses, but not required.

Management experience, project management and editing skills are not required, but the role has the flexibility to be adapted to utilize skills of this nature.

A passion for the Des Moines and Iowa, and a desire to tell the story of our communities is a priority.

Visit <https://recruiting.paylocity.com/Recruiting/Job/Details/1287240> to apply. Please include a cover letter with your resume.

SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER. The Indianola Independent Advocate and Record-Herald, an independent, Iowa-owned digital plus print newspaper, is seeking help managing our Town News, Audience Plus subscription environment. The job will be a flexible, part-time, remote position setting up subscriptions and rates in the Town News offer-builder environment on an occasional basis and helping troubleshoot user issues when needed. Happy to work through a newspaper that uses this service and is willing to make its team available or an individual who works in this environment and would like to earn some extra income outside of regular work hours. Call 515-250-3698 or email amy@indianola-ia.com to discuss options. 0101

▼ FOR SALE

WANTED: Old Apple Laser Writer printer. Laser Writer 16/600 or Laser Writer Pro, working or parts. Call the Don at the Avoca Journal Herald 402-681-4763.

View and submit ads on the Internet at www.INAnews.com. Students and professionals may also submit their resumés for online viewing.

There is no charge for most of these ads. They are a free service to INA active (newspaper) members only. The name of the newspaper in the ad must be the same as published in the current INA Directory.

If you are trying to help an employee relocate, please send us the ad information on your letterhead, rather than having the employee write us. We will not run ads for persons living in a member's town without first clearing the ad with the publisher.

Please have copy to the INA office no later than noon on Monday. The INA will make the determination of whether an ad qualifies for free or paid publication. If payment for an ad is not enclosed with the ad, the INA will require payment in advance before the ad will be published.

Ads for products or services which could be marketed for a profit may be published for a fee of \$10 per insertion, paid in advance, with a 40-word maximum.

Recruitment (help wanted) ads for positions in states other than Iowa may be published for a fee of \$25 per insertion, with a 100-word maximum.

For more information, contact Cicely Gordon at cgordon@inanews.com.



Iowa Newspaper Association

Bulletin

www.INAnews.com

DILBERT - cont. from page 2

“Zits,” “Mutts” and “Dennis the Menace” — in a statement to the AP.

“We are proud of our cartoonists who are using their platforms to denounce the hatred spread by Scott Adams and encourage others to join us as we stand together as a community to keep the world of cartooning a safe and welcoming space for everyone,” the statement said.

Bell credited King Features Syndicate and his editors for allowing him to rip up the strips intended for this week and pivot to the “Dilbert” send-ups, an unusual request.

“They apparently thought it was important enough to take a risk and to make sure that it goes out on time,” Bell said.

Many comic creators said they’d stopped reading “Dilbert” over the past several years, finding the strip’s tone darker and its creator’s descent into misogyny, anti-immigration and racism alarming. But Adams still had hundreds of newspaper perches before last week.

“We can’t move forward and progress as a culture and as a society if there are still people in these gatekeeping roles that are holding onto these archaic ideas,” said artist Bianca Xunise, who co-authors the strip “Six Chix” and is the second Black woman in comics history to be nationally syndicated.

Xunise noted the fallout was much quicker when she drew a strip that commented on both the Black Lives Matter movement and the coronavirus pandemic. More than 120 publications immediately dropped the strip.

She said being Black in the cartooning world seems to always trigger pushback from hateful readers and those fearful of “woke” messages, but is heartened that “Heart of the City” — now authored by the Black cartoonist Steenz — replaced “Dilbert” in The Washington Post.

“We don’t want to push so far that it becomes a different form of fascism over censoring everybody’s ideas just out of fear of being offensive,” Xunise said. “But some things do not need to be said, and especially if they are a directly punching down towards those who are marginalized.”

“Macanudo” creator Ricardo Liniers Siri, known professionally as Liniers, said Adams was moving into unfunny territory and that’s a cartoonist’s third rail.

“Grievance generally is not fun. The funniest guy at a party is not the one just complaining about everything. That’s the annoying guy,” he said.

“I don’t do grievance. I’m just trying to focus on whatever is good that we have around,” he added. “Because in the context of a newspaper with so much bad news, I try to have an optimistic space.”

Mark Kennedy is an entertainment writer, editor and critic for The Associated Press.

This article was originally published by The Associated Press. Visit <https://apnews.com/article/dilbert-scott-adams-cartoonists-respond-109cb1a6dea03e931e2e6e3814bc743a> to read the article online.