

Keeping quiet or taking the lead? A study of editorial pages in Kentucky newspapers

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When academics and journalists list the roles of a community newspaper, providing editorial leadership is almost always on the list. However, the reality often differs from that ideal. An examination of newspapers in Kentucky shows that many – if not most – of the state’s papers have a timid editorial voice.

Kentucky has 25 daily newspapers, most with circulations of 10,000 or less. It has about 125 weekly papers, defined as those published fewer than four times a week. Most are published once a week (Kentucky Press Association 2008 Directory).

All the daily papers have editorial pages and many of the weeklies do not, so the two categories of papers were examined separately. The weeklies were studied for the presence of editorial pages and the content of those pages. The dailies were surveyed about their policies on endorsements in elections – a traditional editorial-page function that appears to be less common in smaller-circulation newspapers.

During the study period, about a fourth of the weeklies surveyed had no editorial pages at all, and only half published material that was clearly the voice of the newspaper, defined as

editorials presented as the opinion of the paper or columns by the paper's publisher or editor. There was no such material in more than a third of the papers that had editorial pages. Just under half of the weeklies had an editorial page in every edition.

While all of Kentucky's daily newspapers have editorial pages, less than half made endorsements in elections for any particular race in the last election cycle, and were more likely to endorse in major statewide races than in legislative or other major local races, according to a survey conducted for this paper in which all of the daily papers participated. Generally, the larger the paper, the more likely it is to endorse candidates.

Background

Although opinion has been a part of American newspapers since the colonial period, the modern editorial page as a newspaper department developed in the mid-19th Century, largely through the influence of Horace Greeley and his *New York Tribune* (Mott, 1962). Since that time, the editorial page has been a fixture in most newspapers, although it is more common in dailies than in weeklies. In the late 19th Century, Joseph Pulitzer admonished newspapers to be "both a daily teacher and a daily tribune," with responsibilities beyond reporting surface facts (Kriegbaum, 1956, p. 2). "Among daily newspapers, those without editorial pages are about as common as inhabitants of the tropics who live in igloos," Kriegbaum noted (p. 69). Weeklies are less likely to have an editorial voice. Kriegbaum cited one survey of 40 weeklies published in *The National Publisher* in 1951 that found 34 of them had editorials, though of varying quality. "Some publish ready made reprints or hurriedly-dashed-off platitudes. Other country papers can match any product of the better known metropolitan dailies" (Kriegbaum, p. 69).

The distinction between community and metropolitan papers is relevant to this study because of the different challenges and opportunities faced by publishers and editors who work in smaller communities. All daily and weekly newspapers in Kentucky, with the exception of

The Courier-Journal of Louisville, the *Lexington Herald-Leader* and *The Kentucky Enquirer* in Northern Kentucky, can be classified as community newspapers.¹

Lauterer describes a great community newspaper editorial page as one with local content “balanced between political viewpoints, personal perspectives, editorials, commentaries, cartoons and letters to the editor. Above all, the edit page does not shy away from discussion of important community issues—for debate is critical in our free society” (2006, pp. 141-142).

Lauterer argued “communities need strong opinions on local issues..., unafraid champions of small, lost and worthy causes, and informed reflection on matters local and beyond” (2006, p. 145).

While most newspapers do have editorial pages, not all meet Lauterer’s criteria for a great editorial page. As Pumarlo (2008b) noted, “(M)any newsrooms fall short in one of their most important responsibilities – advancing debate on significant issues through local editorials” (March/April 2008, p. 18).

Over the years, reasons for timid editorial voices have included possible loss of advertising, fear of other repercussions, lack of time and staff for research and writing, and the discomfort some editors and publishers feel about choosing among influential people with whom they associate regularly.

While stances newspapers take on their editorial pages may be unpopular, Pumarlo (2008a) wrote, “Courageous publishers and editors – those who view the editorial page as the heart of a newspaper—take those stances, regardless of potential repercussions” (February 2008, p. 23).

One of the strongest forms of editorial leadership is taking a side in an election, but not all newspapers choose to do so. Many journalists and experts on community journalism consider

¹ Lauterer defines a community newspaper as “a publication with a circulation under 50,000, serving people who live together in a distinct geographical space with a clear local-first emphasis on news, features, sports, and advertising” (2006, p. 1). The authors of this study use an upper circulation threshold of 30,000 to define community newspapers in Kentucky. *The Kentucky Enquirer*, an edition of *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, claims a circulation of about 40,000 daily and 53,000 Sunday; the Lexington and Louisville newspapers report weekday circulations of 125,000 and 215,000, respectively.

endorsing candidates to be a newspaper's responsibility. Kennedy (1974) wrote in *Community Journalism: A Way of Life*: "Since I believe it is a responsibility of an American voter to choose a political party or a political candidate, I believe it is an editor's responsibility, too. . . . What is an editorial if it can't take sides?" (1974, p. 42).

In his book on covering elections, Pumarlo (2007) wrote, "Newspapers have a responsibility, even an obligation, to weigh in on those individuals who they believe will best represent the interests of their communities – because newspapers usually have a particular insight on candidates" (2007, p. 60).

Previous research has shown that approximately 90 percent of daily newspapers endorse candidates in at least some elections, but the number varies widely from election to election (Bird, as cited in Rystrom, 1994, p. 202). In 2004, 418 U.S. dailies, 29 percent of the total, endorsed presidential candidates (Stengel, 2008). Another survey found that smaller papers were less likely to endorse than larger papers and that independently owned papers were less inclined to endorse presidential candidates than were papers owned by groups (Fedler, Stephens and Counts, as cited in Rystrom, 1994, p. 202).

Endorsements are most effective in local, nonpartisan elections when the candidates are unfamiliar, the ballot is long and complicated, or voters have received conflicting information or have conflicting loyalties (Fedler, as cited in Rystrom, 1994, p. 205). Other research suggests endorsements have more effect on ballot propositions than candidate races, and more in primary rather than general elections (Rystrom, 1986).

While many journalists and journalism scholars support editorial endorsements, there are arguments against them. One is that endorsements may make readers think news coverage of the election is biased (Rystrom, 1986; Stengel, 2008). Also, in smaller communities, the endorsement process can be "exhausting and delicate," and candidates may be "friends, neighbors, associates and maybe even co-workers" of editors (Pumarlo, p. 60).

Research Questions/Purpose of study

The overarching question we set out to answer was this:

- How strong are the editorial voices of Kentucky newspapers?

For weekly newspapers, the criteria were presence of an editorial page and a clear editorial voice. We attempted to answer these questions:

- How many Kentucky weeklies have editorial pages?
- How do those with and without editorial pages differ in terms of frequency of publication, circulation size, ownership and geographical region?
- Of those papers that have editorial pages, how strong is the editorial voice, defined as locally written editorials or columns by the editor or publisher?

For daily newspapers, we measured strength of voice by whether or not the paper made editorial endorsements. We attempted to answer these questions:

- How many Kentucky dailies endorse candidates for public office?
- Among those that endorse, in what races do they most often endorse?
- How many Kentucky dailies take a position for or against local referenda?

Methodology

The study of weekly newspapers examined the 102 weeklies for which printed copies were available at the main library of the University of Kentucky. These newspapers closely reflected the ownership and circulation profiles of Kentucky weekly papers as a whole. The study period was the month of September 2007. Each item appearing on an editorial page was placed in one of 21 categories, such as locally written editorials, columns by staff members, letters to the editor and so on.

In the study of daily newspapers, editors or editorial-page editors of all Kentucky dailies took part in an online survey administered through SurveyMonkey.com. They were asked about

the endorsement history of their paper, with emphasis on the 2004-07 election cycle. They were also asked about their expectations for endorsements in the November 2008 election.²

Findings

Weeklies and editorial voice

During September 2007, 28 of the 102 weeklies surveyed, or 27 percent, had no editorial pages. Of the 74 that did have editorial pages, 21, or 28 percent, did not have one in every edition published that month. Fifty-three, or 72 percent, had an editorial page in every edition. See Table 1.

Table 1: Frequency of editorial pages in Kentucky weekly newspapers, September 2007

<i>Percent of editions with ed. pg.</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>25%</i>	<i>33%</i>	<i>50%</i>	<i>67%</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Total</i>
Totals	28	6	2	8	1	4	53	102

Circulation. When the newspapers were divided into four circulation categories, a trend emerged: The larger its circulation category, the more likely a newspaper was to have an editorial page. See Table 2.

The differences were statistically significant not only for circulation categories, but also when analyzed using the individual circulation figures of each newspaper.³ Most papers with editorial pages had them in every edition, but some did so only in some editions, as Table 3 shows.

Circulation category	Percent
2,000 and under	47
2,001-4,000	36
4,001-6,000	15
6,001 and above	13

² Weekly newspapers were examined by Cathie Ford, an exchange student in Community Journalism in the University of Kentucky School of Journalism and Telecommunications, from Charles Sturt University in New South Wales, Australia. Statistical support for this paper was provided by Jason Martin, the Tall Grass Farm Foundation Fellow in the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues at the University of Kentucky.

³ Pearson Correlation (90 percent confidence level) for categories = .248; for individual circulations = .199

Among the 17 newspapers with circulations of 2,000 or fewer, eight, or 47 percent, had no editorial pages during the month. Twelve, or 71 percent, had editorial pages in half or fewer of their editions.

Among the 36 weeklies with circulations of 2,001 to 4,000, there were no editorial pages in 36 percent of the papers. Seventeen, or 47 percent, had editorial pages in half or fewer of their editions.

Among the 34 weeklies with circulations of 4,001 to 6,000, 15 percent had no editorial pages. Eight, or 24 percent, had an editorial page in half or fewer of their editions.

Among the 15 weeklies with circulation of more than 6,000, only 13 percent had no editorial pages. Seven, or 47 percent, had an editorial page in half or fewer of their editions.

Table 3: Frequency of editorial pages in Kentucky weekly newspapers, by circulation

<i>Percent of editions with ed. pg.</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>25%</i>	<i>33%</i>	<i>50%</i>	<i>67%</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Total</i>
Circulation 2,000 and under	8	0	1	3	0	1	4	17
Circulation 2,001-4,000	13	1	1	2	0	2	17	36
Circulation 4,001-6,000	5	2	0	1	1	1	24	34
Circulation 6,001 and above	2	3	0	2	0	0	8	15
Totals	28	6	2	8	1	4	53	102

Ownership. Slightly more than half of weekly newspapers are part of groups, either in regional or national chains or in small, Kentucky-only groups. The survey found that newspapers owned by regional or national chains were more likely to have editorial pages than those in the other two ownership categories, although the pattern did not reach statistical significance.

Ownership category	Percent
Independent	37.5
Kentucky groups	47.1
National/regional	5.4

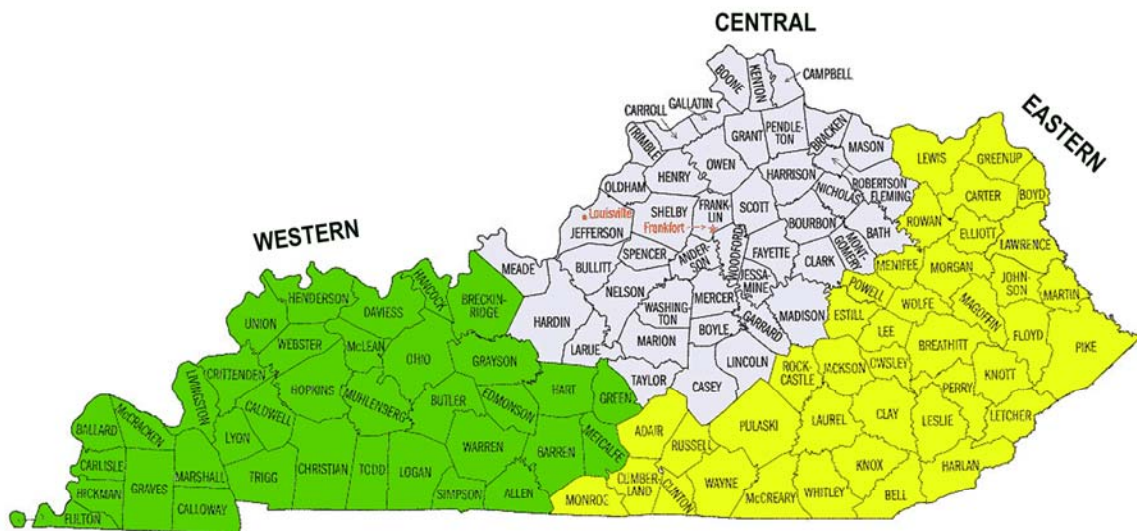
Regional and national chains are more likely to own newspapers in the larger circulation categories.

Among papers owned by Kentucky-only groups, eight of 17, or 47 percent, had no editorial page during the

month. Eleven of the 17, or 65 percent, had an editorial page in half or fewer of their editions. Among those owned by regional or national chains, only 5.4 percent had no editorial pages. Among these 37 papers, 10, or 27 percent, had an editorial page half the time or less. Among the 48 independently owned weeklies, 18, or 37.5 percent, had no editorial page. Twenty-three, or 48 percent, had an editorial page in half or fewer of their editions.

Table 5: Frequency of editorial pages in Kentucky weekly newspapers, by ownership

<i>Percent of editions with ed. pg.</i>	None	25%	33%	50%	67%	75%	All	Total
Independently owned	18	3	0	2	0	3	22	48
National or regional chains	2	2	1	5	0	1	26	37
Kentucky-only groups	8	1	1	1	1	0	5	17
Totals	28	6	2	8	1	4	53	102



Geography. Defined most broadly, Kentucky has three regions: Western, Central and Eastern. For purposes of this study, the Central region includes the state’s two largest cities, Louisville and Lexington, and Northern Kentucky, which has the state’s third largest metropolitan area (part of the greater Cincinnati area). The Eastern region includes most of the Southern Kentucky counties that are part of Appalachia as defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission (see map above).

The study found that newspapers in Western Kentucky were least likely to have an editorial page and those in Central Kentucky were the most likely to have one, though the differences were not statistically significant. About two-thirds of weeklies in Central Kentucky are chain-owned.

Table 6: Frequency of editorial pages in Kentucky weekly newspapers, by region

<i>Percent of editions with ed. pg.</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>25%</i>	<i>33%</i>	<i>50%</i>	<i>67%</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Total</i>
Western Kentucky	16	0	0	2	0	0	11	29
Central Kentucky	4	2	1	4	1	0	26	38
Eastern Kentucky	8	4	1	2	0	4	16	35
Totals	28	6	2	8	1	4	53	102

A common reason given for having no editorial page or editorials is lack of time and lack of things to say. Alan Gibson is editor and publisher of the *Clinton County News*, an independently owned, 3,500-circulation weekly on Kentucky’s southern border, in Appalachia. His father preceded him and had a short column on the front page called “Briefs and Comments,” but the younger Gibson rarely publishes his opinions, except in a sports column.

“Probably the biggest reason [for having no editorials or editorial page] is there’s only so many hours in a week,” Gibson said in an interview. He said there was a brief period several years ago when he tried to run regular editorials, but “You quickly run out of meaningful subjects. It’s kind of like putting up caution lights at every intersection. Pretty soon it doesn’t mean anything.”

Finding a voice

Even if a newspaper has an editorial page, it may not have a strong editorial voice. Of the 74 weeklies that had editorial pages in the study period, 51, or 69 percent, did not publish any locally written editorials.

Typically, the strongest voice on an editorial page is a locally written editorial on a subject of local interest. In many cases, weekly newspapers do not publish editorials in the

traditional sense, but publish columns written by the editor or publisher. In this study, columns were the preferred voice of the newspaper.

Of the 74 weekly newspapers with an editorial page, 34, or 46 percent, published columns by the editor or publisher. Only 23, or 31 percent, published locally written editorials.

Twenty-six of the 74 weeklies that had editorial pages, or 35 percent, published neither a locally written editorial nor a column by the editor or publisher.

Willie Sawyers is the publisher of *The Sentinel-Echo*, an 8,700-circulation, three-times-a-week newspaper in London, Ky., in Laurel County, in the southeastern part of the state. Its editorial voice is a column that appears under his name. He explained in an interview why the newspaper uses that vehicle instead of traditional editorials:

“That way you don’t really have to do an editorial board. If it’s the voice of the paper, well, who is the paper? I think people respond more if it’s a personal editorial than just some anonymous word from above. ... People are going to be suspicious of who that’s coming from, and their motives.”

Circulation. Weekly newspapers that had editorial pages and circulations of less than 2,000 were less likely than larger papers to publish locally written editorials or columns by the editor or publisher. Only four of the nine papers (44 percent) in that circulation category published such material, while 44 of 65 larger papers (68 percent) did so. The difference was not statistically significant, perhaps due to the small number of papers in the first category.

Ownership. The nine newspapers owned by Kentucky-only groups were more likely to have a clear editorial voice than those owned independently or by national chains, but the sample size was too small to be statistically significant. Eight of the nine Kentucky-group papers (89 percent) published such material; among other group-owned papers, 22 of 35 (63 percent) did; and among independents, 18 of 30 (60 percent) did.

Geography. Among weekly newspapers with editorial pages, those in Central Kentucky were the most likely to have locally written editorials or columns by the editor or publisher, but the differences were not statistically significant. Three-fourths of Central Kentucky weeklies

with editorial pages had a clear editorial voice, while only five-eighths in the rest of the state did so.

Creating a public forum

The study suggested that a strong editorial page generates more public discussion in the form of letters to the editor. It found that the stronger the editorial voice, the more letters the newspaper published. (Twenty-two papers did not have editorial pages but still ran letters.)

Among the half of weeklies surveyed that had locally written editorials or columns by the editor or publisher, 59 percent published five or more letters during the 30-day month (more than one letter per week). Among those without a strong editorial voice, 72 percent ran four or fewer letters during the month. The difference was statistically significant.⁴ Those categories appear in **boldface** in the table below.

Table 7: Strength of editorial voice and letters to the editor in Kentucky weeklies

Number of letters in September 2007

<i>Newspapers</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1-2</i>	<i>3-4</i>	<i>5-8</i>	<i>9-13</i>	<i>14+</i>	<i>Totals</i>
WITH locally written editorials or columns by the editor or publisher	3	8	10	15	11	4	51
WITHOUT locally written editorials or columns by the editor or publisher	8	18	10	3	6	5	50*
Totals	11	26	20	18	17	9	101*

*One case missing from this analysis.

Dailies and endorsements

Fifteen of the 25 daily newspapers in Kentucky reported making some sort of candidate endorsement in 2004-07. Larger-circulation papers were more likely to make endorsements, and those that did endorse were selective among offices on the ballots.

Almost half the dailies reported making endorsements for major federal offices and governor, but fewer engaged in what is arguably one of the more valuable enterprises of an editorial page – endorsements in local elections and races for the state legislature.

⁴ Pearson Correlation = .255, significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 8: Candidate endorsements by Kentucky daily newspapers, by circulation, 2004-2007

<i>Weekday circ.</i>	<i>Pres.</i>	<i>Sen.</i>	<i>Rep.</i>	<i>Gov.</i>	<i>AG</i>	<i>Aud.</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>GA</i>	<i>J/E</i>	<i>Shf.</i>	<i>Judge</i>	<i>Mayor</i>	<i>CC</i>	<i>SB</i>
4,700-8,500 (9 papers)	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
9,500-10,700 (7 papers)	3	4	4	3	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
17,000+ (7 papers)	7	7	7	7	5	5	4	6	3*	3	5	5	5	5
Totals	10	11	11	11	6	6	5	7	4	4	6	5	5	5

Offices across: President, U.S. senator, U.S. representative, governor, attorney general, auditor, secretary of state, General Assembly, county judge/executive, sheriff, circuit or district judge, mayor, city council, school board.

*Two largest papers are published in metropolitan-government counties, where judge-executives no longer have power.

The smallest newspaper to report an endorsement was a 6,100-circulation daily, which chose candidates only for sheriff and judge-executive, the county’s chief administrative official. The only other paper in the small-circulation category to endorse was a 7,000-circulation daily that chose candidates for the top four statewide offices: governor and lieutenant governor (elected as a slate), attorney general, auditor and secretary of state.

Overall, the races for governor, U.S. senator and U.S. representative attracted the most endorsements, 11. There were fewer endorsements for lesser statewide offices (treasurer, 4 endorsements, and agriculture commissioner, 2) and state appellate-court seats, which are elected by seven districts (2 endorsements).

Of the 24 dailies that responded to questions about federal offices, 11, or 46 percent, said they made endorsements for U.S. senator and representative in the 2004-07 election cycle. Ten, or 42 percent, said they endorsed for president.

Only seven of 24 dailies reported making any endorsement in races for the state House or Senate. Many of these races were not contested, but most of these newspapers have circulation and coverage areas that include multiple districts.

Races for local judgeships drew endorsements from six papers, a quarter of those responding to the question. All circuit and district judgeships were on the ballot in 2006; many were not contested, but again, most dailies’ territories encompass more than one district.

Five of the 25 dailies reported making endorsements for mayor, city council or commission, or school board, races that arguably have some of the greatest local impact. Generally, however, less powerful offices drew even fewer endorsements.⁵

The publisher of a 9,000-circulation daily said his newspaper has a tradition of endorsing in races for governor, the legislature, Congress and president. “We don't normally endorse in local races,” he said, “but reserve the right to change that policy if we believe that one or more of the candidates in the race is unqualified for office or if one or more candidates stand out.”

The editor of a 10,000-circulation daily explained, “In races in which we did not endorse, it was likely because we did not feel strongly about either candidate or did not feel well-versed enough to make a case.”

The editorial-page editor of a 19,000-circulation daily said the paper “had always endorsed” in local races “until this current publisher. I don't think he wants the heat of it. But we're gonna try it again this year,” most likely with a state legislative race and a mayor's race. He said the 2006 county election “was the first one we ever sat out, which I think the people liked. They didn't think the newspaper should be telling them who to vote for.”

Some papers said they have been less likely to endorse in local races for fear of making enemies of those who win the elections, but are reconsidering under new management.

The editor of a 10,000-circulation daily said, “We have previously felt that an endorsement in such intensely local races could be damaging to our ability to gather news should our candidate lose. Our upper management is struggling with this policy.”

The editor of a 7,000-circulation daily said, “The previous publisher felt that we shouldn't make enemies of local office holders or candidates who might achieve positions of power. The new publisher and I have a different opinion and have talked about possibly endorsing in local elections this November.”

⁵ Other offices and the number of reported endorsements were: county attorney, 4; commonwealth's attorney, 3; circuit court clerk, 3; county clerk, 3; property valuation administrator, 2; jailer, 2; commissioner or magistrate, 2. All local offices were on the ballot in 2006 but many were uncontested.

The editor of an 8,000-circulation daily said his paper does not endorse because he does not “have staff or access to enough information to make an informed judgment.” The editor of a 9,000-circulation daily said it does not endorse because the publisher “does not believe newspapers should do endorsements. He believes it compromises credibility.”

Some newspapers offered no explanation for not making endorsements other than the tradition of their papers.

One editor who is aggressive about endorsements said, “We think it is our responsibility to help educate our readers about the candidates and their positions and to make a recommendation about which candidate would do the most to address the problems and quality of life in our county.”

In a preliminary study as part of a Community Journalism class at the University of Kentucky, e-mail interviews found that the idea of choosing among people they knew was a difficult proposition for local editors and publishers.⁶

“This is not Louisville or Lexington,” wrote Pipes Gaines, publisher of the Bowling Green *Daily News*, the largest independently owned newspaper in Kentucky, in a city of 50,000 and a county of 95,000. “In a smaller town, you often run into all the players at least weekly at church, Rotary, or on the street.”⁷

However, the editor of a chain-owned daily in a county with equal population argued that his county and its major towns, both about 22,000, have all become so large that most voters can’t be expected to know most of the candidates personally, so the newspaper should offer voters its informed and considered judgment of the candidates.

⁶ “Kentucky dailies surveyed on political endorsements,” semester research paper, Jacob Skeeters, JOU 485, fall 2006; Al Cross, instructor.

⁷ The only other independently owned daily is the Kentucky New Era, Hopkinsville, circulation approximately 10,000.

Warren Wheat is editor of *The News-Enterprise*, which is published in Elizabethtown and also serves Radcliff and the rest of Hardin County. He came to the paper, owned by Landmark Community Newspapers Inc., in 2002, and soon concluded that it should make endorsements.

He explained the new policy in a column that accompanied the endorsements on Oct. 27, 2002, nine days before the local election: “It would be a lot more comfortable to avoid controversy by sitting on the sidelines during this election season. But members of the Editorial Board felt it is this newspaper’s duty and responsibility to fulfill its role as a voice in the community we serve by providing leadership and guidance for our readers.” Wheat then listed the members of the editorial board and the criteria they used to make their choices. Since then, the newspaper has made endorsements in most races, even in those with relatively small constituencies, such as school board member.

Thirteen of the 15 newspapers that reported making endorsements in 2004-07 said they gave non-endorsed candidates the opportunity to reply in a later issue. None offered a reply in the same edition as the endorsement.

Kentucky’s daily newspapers are more likely to take a stand on local ballot issues than choose candidates in local elections. Thirteen of the dailies reported that one or more local referenda were on their ballots in 2004-07, and nine reported taking a stand on the issue. Additionally, one paper reported that its publisher, editor or manager supported the proposal in a column.

Summary

Many Kentucky newspapers have a timid editorial voice. Most daily papers, especially the smaller ones, do not endorse candidates in most major elections, and shy away from choosing candidates in races involving local people. About a fourth of weekly papers have no editorial

page, and during the study period only half published local editorials or columns by the paper's publisher or editor. Such columns are the most popular editorial voice of Kentucky weeklies. The study found that the more such columns or editorials a newspaper published, the more letters to the editor it published, indicating that a strong editorial voice generates a broader and livelier public forum.

Further research

This research provides a template for further research in other states and nationally. Also, it should not be presumed that almost all daily newspapers have editorial pages, or that weekly newspapers do not make endorsements. One reference cited in this paper about daily editorial pages is more than 50 years old, and while the authors' observations indicate that it remains valid, updated research on the topic would be valuable. Research on editorial endorsements by weekly newspapers, where editors are often faced with more conflicts between personal and professional responsibilities, could confirm or debunk generally held assumptions about the differences in the two types of newspapers. Also, as newspapers move to the Web, research on their local editorial voices in cyberspace seems called for.

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