

THE HERALD AND YOU

We strive to attain the highest standards of journalism and to publish a newspaper that is fair, accurate, and objective. We try to avoid all conflicts of interest. That, simply, is our goal. It is not a goal easily achieved. It requires from each of us decisions of conscience on matters both professional and personal. Often there are no clear answers or precise precedents.

We ask that you use your own best judgment. We ask that you act in good faith and that you recognize the best interests of The Herald. Whenever in doubt, inquire. Talk to your department head.

The following guidelines offer answers to some frequent questions and confirm our existing practices.

Free-Lancing

Generally, newsroom staff members should not free-lance for competing publications. Staffers should not free-lance for individuals or institutions they cover or make editorial decisions on, or might reasonably be expected to cover in the future. All free-lance arrangements must be approved by the staffer's department head. Obtain approval in writing.

In free-lancing, staffers should not use any unpublished stories produced for The Herald, material from such stories, or notes on work in progress. Photographs taken on assignment for The Herald, both published and unpublished, may not be sold except through The Herald.

In free-lancing, staffers should make certain all parties know they are working independent of The Herald.

Staff members may appear as guests on local radio and television broadcasts with the approval of their department heads.

Meals, tickets, travel

As a general rule, we pay our own way. We also act with common sense and good manners.

The Herald pays for meals and drinks shared with news sources. It is acceptable to let a source pay with the understanding that you will reciprocate at a later occasion.

The Herald will pay, where appropriate, for the food and drink of a staffer assigned to cover a news event. Common sense should prevail in situations where it may be socially awkward or even impossible to pay at the time. In most instances, department heads should make payment arrangements before an event. For political and charitable fund

raisings, The Herald will not, by purchase of a meal ticket, contribute indirectly to a campaign. The amount paid should be a reasonable estimate of the price of a similar meal at a restaurant.

Free tickets to movies, plays, sports events and other entertainment attractions for which admission is normally charged shall not be solicited or accepted. There are some exceptions: private screenings or special press showings for which tickets are not sold to the public; registration fees at seminars or conventions attended with specific story coverage in mind; passes to special press box facilities, photo galleries and other areas available exclusively to the press, provided these are used only by those assigned to cover the event.

Generally, The Herald will pay all transportation expenses incurred on assignment. In certain circumstances, such as use of military transit, a staffer may accept free transportation if it is the only way to effectively complete the assignment. The executive editor should be advised as quickly as possible.

A staffer invited to speak before a professional group may accept appropriate travel and meal expenses, along with a modest honorarium. Obtain prior approval from your department head.

Outside relationships

Staff members should avoid outside activities that conflict — or appear to conflict — with their jobs.

Staffers should not publicly endorse political candidates or take part in political campaigns and should avoid making contributions to political candidates or causes.

No newsroom employee should run for political office. Nor should he or she accept appointment to a public agency or committee or take part in a public campaign if the activity could be viewed as a conflict.

Books, records, gifts

Books, records, and tapes sent to The Herald for review are accepted as news releases. They may be kept by the reviewer. Those not reviewed become the property of The Herald. Those not kept for reference purposes will be donated to a local charity at the direction of the book or music critics and their editors.

Staff members shall not accept gifts, samples or free services from sources or anyone we write about. All gifts received, except items of insignificant value, should be returned through the managing editor's secretary. She will send the donor a letter of explanation signed by the managing editor.

Business dealings

Staff members are not to use their positions with the Herald for profit, benefit or other advantage in any personal business or commercial transaction; or to cause anyone a financial loss. This applies to family, friends and acquaintances.

Staffers with corporate investments or stock holdings shall avoid making news decisions that involve those corporations. If this is not possible, the potential conflict must be disclosed to the staffer's department head.

Staff members shall avoid investing in companies or industries about which they regularly make news decisions. Any such holdings must be disclosed immediately to the department head and divested by Jan. 1, 1986.

Knowledge about upcoming stories is proprietary information and is not to be discussed outside the newsroom until after publication.

Staff members should remember that these are policy standards, not legal guidelines or statements of applicable law.

Miscellaneous

All information gathered, photographs taken or artwork prepared in the course of work are the property of The Herald.

Staff members should not write, edit, photograph, illustrate or make news judgments about anyone related to them by blood or marriage or with whom they have a close personal relationship. This does not apply to first person stories in which the relationship is clearly spelled out.

Staff members should not use their Herald connections to:

- Seek special consideration from private companies or public agencies to expedite personal business.
- Obtain information or photographs for purposes other than those of the paper.
- Obtain tickets, memberships, hotel rooms, transportation or other considerations free or at reduced rates that are not available to the general public.

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Every staff member will be asked to verify in writing that he or she has read these guidelines and is in compliance with any specific provisions.