New ideas that worked
To mark the first day of summer in real time, Newsday launched a newsroom wide social media project that had staffers capturing hundreds of everyday moments from dawn to midnight—sunrise fishing in Montauk, first lifeguard on the stands at Jones Beach, delivery room with new baby, junior high graduation. We partnered with Instagram on the effort and invited readers and local influencers to partake, also including Facebook posts/live videos and Twitter (where our hashtag trended by early afternoon). We pulled all the feeds into a page hosted on newsday.com and ran the best of the best in a Sunday print splash. Yes, readers loved it, but STAFFERS loved it more — it was a tremendous low stakes training exercise and really just great fun to see how creative we could be.
The TODAY Parenting Team is an online community for moms and dads. Since its launch in March 2015, nearly 90,000 people have joined the TODAY Parenting Team and more than 2,000 writers have contributed to it. About 100 or so are regular contributors. Many are veteran parenting bloggers who use the TODAY show’s digital platforms as extra distribution channels for their work.

None of these writers or vloggers get paid for their contributions, but here’s how they benefit:

- If their posts have potential to resonate with lots of moms and dads out there, those posts get shared on the TODAY.com homepage and on the TODAY show’s social media channels. We are very generous with tagging the bloggers on social media and linking back to their sites.
- TODAY Parenting Team members have a variety of opportunities to appear on the TODAY show throughout the year.
- Contributors can earn special badges and display those badges on their websites to show that they are part of the TODAY family.
- Top contributors get invited to special events such as movie and television show premieres, exclusive brunches with show guests, fun nights out at Universal theme parks, etc.

The personal essays and videos submitted by these moms and dads frequently bubble up as our top traffic drivers for the entire website. Readers respond to their authenticity and candor. These posts really do help lots and lots of parents out there. We’ve also had a lot of success transforming Parenting Team members’ personal essays into short videos for distribution on social media.
Here’s an idea that worked to help our workload, especially as staff shrinks and demands rise. Increased digital demands can be at odds with print production deadlines.

We were struggling to fill a page of events on Monday. Our social media editor (Eric Webb), also a gifted writer, created The Webb Report – a weekly roundup of some of our lighter or viral web content, topics that might not always rise to a standalone story outside the online world. It uses content that already exists to fill a print hole. Readers who might read only print products also seem to enjoy it, based on some positive calls (like one older guy who said “he doesn’t get it but still enjoys it”).

Austin American-Statesman/Austin360
Explore the flavors of Oaxaca at next Todd Price Taste Club

Taste Club

Our dining writer launched a monthly dining series called the Taste Club. He works with chefs to create a unique meal beyond the restaurant's usual menu. The dinners have communal seating and are served family style. The chefs always come out to answer questions after the last course. The marketing department handles logistics and runs house ads, but the editorial side has control over restaurant selection and menu. We have managed to sign up sponsors and generate revenue from the dinners.

NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune
Michael Storey came across this sight during one of his Happy Trails rambles on trails in the state. Do you know where it is?

**Hint:** This 160-foot dam was built in the late 1930s by crews with the Civilian Conservation Corps and Works Progress Administration. The dam created a lake that ranks among the largest contained by a city park.

Although the dam has been reported as the largest hand-cut stone dam “in the world,” really it has a concrete core that’s covered with local limestone, which was hand-cut.

**Hint 2:** The park in question is on the National Register of Historic Places.

**Think you know?** See the answer on Page 3E.

— Celia Storey

The **Arkansas Democrat-Gazette's** Happy Trails hiking column takes a break during the summer. To fill that space on the front of Style, we cannibalized his earlier columns to create a quiz. Trick questions were part of the fun. We posed the question on the front of the section and played the answer — reusing the map from the original hiking column — inside.

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We started a new column this year, Chuck’s Food Shack. One of our new food writers, Chuck Blount, isn’t a traditional food writer, but he has a tremendous wealth of knowledge of all things Texas food: chili, grilling, smoking – you know, the holy Texas trinity. He also built his own 200-square-foot cook shack in his backyard with

- Two Brinkman electric smokers
- A steel offset smoker (an "Oklahoma Joe’s Longhorn") to handle the big jobs
- Two iconic Weber kettle grills with cast-iron grates
- A standard four-burner gas grill.

To go with columns, which vary from cooking tutorials to how others pull off their own Texas food magic, there are videos. Cooking tutorials are filmed literally in his backyard. Others onsite. The latest promises a sponsor soon: Chuck’s Food Shack at the tailgating scene for University of Texas at San Antonio home games: [http://www.expressnews.com/news/local/media/Chuck-tailgate-vs-Southern-1027742.php](http://www.expressnews.com/news/local/media/Chuck-tailgate-vs-Southern-1027742.php)

San Antonio Express-News
Chuck on steaks
In October 2016, we did a Halloween-themed special section. It included:

- A listing of all Halloween-related events in San Antonio and the surrounding areas
- A profile and map of a great neighborhood for trick-or-treating with insider tips
- A guide to all the haunted houses and escape rooms with an awesome graphic/guide for parents of scariness level, age appropriateness, etc.
- DIY project ideas for Halloween décor both inside and outside your home
- A Halloween coloring contest with prize packages of tickets to scary attractions. Art was created by our graphic artist, and there was a readers’ choice/social media prize and an editors’ choice.

It sold really well.

San Antonio Express-News
Halloween Coloring Contest

Halloween packs some serious visual punch. Orange pumpkins, bowls of colorful candy and costumes in a rainbow of hues all come together for a ghoulishly graphic display.

Our wonderful graphic artist Mike Fisher captured the Halloween spirit in eight coloring book images for the Express-News Halloween Coloring Contest, where two winners each will receive a prize package with:
- $100 gift certificate to Alamo Drafthouse Cinema
- $100 gift certificate to Cover 3
- 2 tickets to the 4th Annual Esperitu de la Noche Macarronale Ball at Victoria’s Black Swan Inn (victoriasblackswaninn.net)
- 1 night rental at Premiere Escape Rooms (premierescaperooms.com)

The total prize value comes to $500, so get out your markers and pencils, and get to it!

How to enter
1. You must be 18 or older to enter.
2. Color as many of the images as you would like either in this section or by downloading images to print onto your own paper by going to mySA.com/Halloween.
3. Take a photo of each of your creations and post it on Instagram. Be sure to tag us @mySA on Instagram and to direct message us with your full name, email address and daytime contact number. You only need to direct message us once, even if you have multiple entries.
4. The deadline to enter is Oct. 17. We will select the finalists and post them on Instagram and Facebook Oct. 10. Readers will vote by liking images of the finalists, so encourage your friends to vote. The Readers’ Choice winner will be the image with the most likes on Instagram and Facebook.
5. We will announce the two winners, a Readers’ Choice from the most social media likes, and an Editors’ Choice, Oct. 24. The two winners’ work will be published in the Oct. 30 mySA Sunday section.

Happy Halloween!

—Emily Spicer
## WELCOME!
Do you have what it takes to venture forth into a spooky Halloween haunted house? Here’s all you need to know before you go, bwahahahaha!
— Richard A. Martín

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>How Scary?</th>
<th>Appropriate Age</th>
<th>How Many Ghouls, Etc.?</th>
<th>How Long to Get Through?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13th Floor Haunted House</td>
<td>1203 E Commerce St, San Antonio, TX 78215</td>
<td>13thFloorHauntedHouseSanAntonio.com</td>
<td>$24.99 to $28.99 depending on day</td>
<td>Super Scary</td>
<td>16+</td>
<td>75-100</td>
<td>30 to 45 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psycho Asylum/ Slaughterhouse</td>
<td>1014 E Commerce St, San Antonio, TX 78215</td>
<td>psychoasylumusa.com</td>
<td>$20.99</td>
<td>Medium Scary</td>
<td>15+</td>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>15 to 20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ripleys Haunted Adventure</td>
<td>5300 Alamo Plaza, San Antonio, TX 78216</td>
<td>ripleys.com/ptx</td>
<td>$21.99</td>
<td>Medium Scary</td>
<td>12+</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>15 to 20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seaworld Howl-O-Scream</td>
<td>10500 SeaWorld Dr, San Antonio, TX 78251</td>
<td>seaworld.com</td>
<td>Online, $59; Gate, $65 included in park admission</td>
<td>Super Scary</td>
<td>13+</td>
<td>150-200 in entire park</td>
<td>5 to 10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six Flags FrightFest</td>
<td>17000 IH-10 West, San Antonio, TX 78261</td>
<td>sixflags.com/Restoration</td>
<td>Online, $59; Gate, $65 included in park admission</td>
<td>Medium Scary</td>
<td>12+</td>
<td>About 300 in entire park</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hashtag contests – We made better use of Instagram this year, launching reader contests and then sharing winning images in print. The best example for us was from the Minnesota State Fair. Hundreds of readers submitted their photos and it gave us a great display during a slow time of year. Example with photo gallery and link to more:


Star Tribune
Star Tribune Magazine – Without a doubt, our biggest new undertaking this year was launching a quarterly magazine. We set out to make it have a strong sense of place; to provide substance without heaviness in the stories (we save that for A-1) and to be seasonal. The format for the main well is a cover story, photo essay, Q&A and secondary story, and we added standing features to the back of the book, including a Secrets of the State idea stolen from last year’s SFJ meeting.
EXTREME SNOWBIRDS

A Tim Burton movie comes to life on your hand with this twisted metal flower, a perfectly forged ring for spring by Kari Jacobson. $550 karijacobson.com

Elemental Accessories
Put a little spring in your wardrobe with these one-of-a-kind wares.

A choker hand-embroidered by women in Turkey brightens spring color up to a N. $156 Klay Boutiques klayboutiques.com

These whimsical gold earrings by Meghan Nelson turn spring upside down. $22. DottiShop.com

Kettle-dyed in small batches, each ScarfShop scarf is one of a kind. From snow white to bright red, $50-$90 scarfshop.com

Spring showers double as bright flowers in these earrings by Elana Coleman. Small $45, large $45 elanacolemanhaney.etsy.com

This peyote handwoven pendant by Madison Kael Holzer brings a happy-‐

E’s spring rabbit to your collarbone. $410. kaelholzer.com
Tweet gathering – Inspired by what other papers were doing, we copied. We started pulling together stories about trending local tweets, such as this one on #ControversialTwinCitiesTakes, which gave locals a chance to get their snark on.

Star Tribune
Street corner — Here's an easy way to meld old archives with new digital tools. Find an old photo of a local street corner. Go there and take a nifty 360-degree video. Use it to explain what was happening then and how it's changed now. If you like, add more context for print and reverse publish. Repeat every Monday, when things are slow to get in gear. Our readers love this type of then/now content.

Star Tribune