

In lots of ways, we've had digital media at our full disposal for a good 3 decades. But as we've gotten smarter the apps have, too — and they're easier to use.

Ben Pollock takes a 2025 look at websites, social media, mass emails and engaging with local news media. First, an example: how the University of Arkansas's AEA chapter organized opposition last year to an administration plan to privatize over 200 custodial and groundskeeping employees.

These employees got to keep their seniority and benefits.

arkansas965.org



Media Strategies: Today's Best Tools for Organizing



arkansas965.org

Presented by Ben Pollock



UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS



Find these slides
& more at website

Ben Pollock, a former career journalist, has been website manager since 2016 for the University of Arkansas College of Education and Health Professions. He is vice president of UA-Fayetteville Education Association / Local 965.

A graduate of Stanford University and native of Fort Smith, Ben also has a 2003 master's in Journalism from the UA. He was the 2010-2012 president of the National Society of Newspaper Columnists and remains an officer of its Education Foundation.

Ben lives with his wife and their pets in Fayetteville.

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Today's Outline

- Self introductions
- Overview
- Background
- Breakout groups
- The example
- Review of media strategies



Caption

I: Tell your People

- Word of mouth
- Posters & handouts
- Direct phoning & email
 - Email marketing app
 - Personal/manual
- Texting (Golden Rule)
 - Direct to 1 or group
 - Slack, Teams or similar
- Radio PSAs
- Media's social calendars
- Facebook, posts & event
- Group's website

II: Tell the World

- Facebook, posts & event
- X, Instagram, Bluesky etc.
- Group website
- News release (aka **press release** or **announcement**)
 - Email, by name or to general mailbox
- Radio PSAs
- Media's social calendars



A Higher Ed Union at an Arkansas Public University

- These tips are based on years of experience, a recent success, and general "best practices," all subjective
- Local 965 certified in 1962. It had up to about 200 members through the '90s
- University of Arkansas: 5,400 workers: 1,650 faculty & 3,750 staff. Serving >33,600 students. Union membership?
- Public Employees, Public Education can unionize according to state constitution but no collective bargaining, no meeting on campus during work hours, no recruiting on campus during work hours
- We may not know when we win
 - What is "viral"?
 - Let's say: We win when we win
 - **Collective action**



Caption

2024 Custodial Outsource Issue's Timeline

- January-February whispers/rumors
 - February: Officers confer (First strategy: Speed)
 - February: Broadly announce planning meeting
 - February Meeting: Crowd, officer's keyword
 - February-March: Plan rally/march
- First step: Date or place?
 - Media promotion
 - Which ones see a story here?
 - Hold rally/march
 - What are we forgetting?
 - Divide the what-ifs into possible and the extreme



Search Facebook



Events

Search Events



Home



Your Events



Birthdays



Notifications

+ Create new event

Recommended events



Today at 7 PM

Gulley Park Concert Series with
The Juice



Today at 6 PM – 8 PM

Eras Girls' Night Out



Jun 11 at 10 AM – Jun 14 at 2 PM

2008 GMC Acadia Auction

Categories



Classics



Comedy



Crafts

16

SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 2024 AT 2 PM

Rally & March for UA Custodians & Grounds

St. Martin's Episcopal Center, 814 W Maple St, Fayetteville, AR 72701-3233, United States

About

Discussion

Invite

Edit



Details



27 people responded



Event by UA-Fayetteville Education Association / Local 965 and Ben Pollock



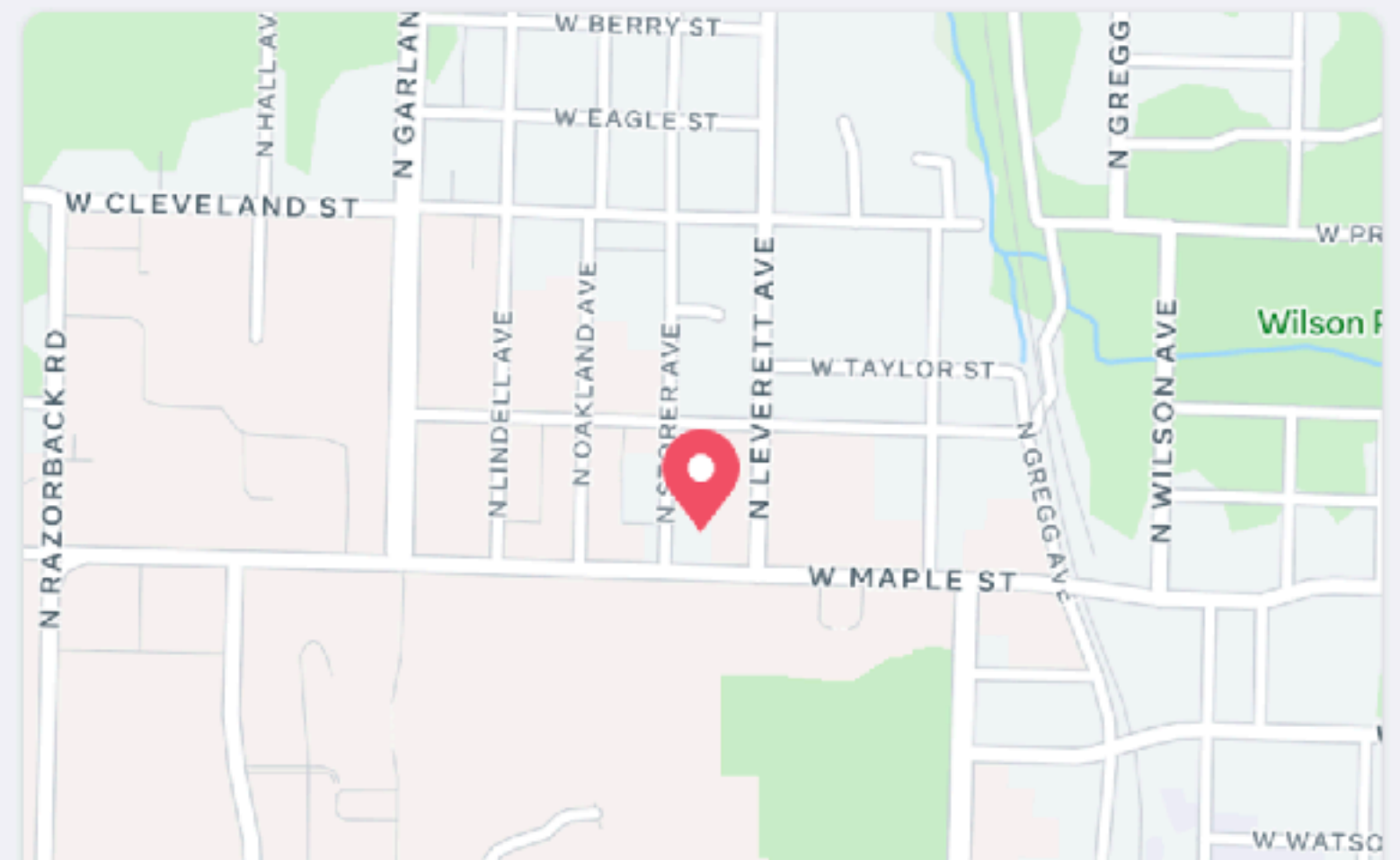
St. Martin's Episcopal Center, 814 W Maple St, Fayetteville, AR 72701-3233, United States



Public · Anyone on or off Facebook

The UA is in talks to outsource groundskeepers & custodians to a private firm, detrimental to the hundreds of employees impacted.

A rally with great speakers starts at 2, then abo... See more



March 16 Rally & March Supports Custodians & Groundskeepers



Inbox × Announcements, Official Messages, Newsletters etc. × Delete in 120 Days ×



UA-Fayetteville Education Association <uarkansas965@gmail.com>

Mon, Mar 4, 9:00 AM



to Hershel, benspollock, bcc: news, bcc: news, bcc: news, bcc: randerson, bcc: kkellam, bcc: mrm081, bcc: news ▼

Press Release

For Immediate Release

For more information, contact: Local 965 President Hershel Hartford [479-799-9691](tel:479-799-9691), hrhartford@gmail.com

The independent organization for University of Arkansas employees is fighting with and for the custodial and grounds staffs of the Fayetteville campus.

UA-Fayetteville Education Association / Local 965, backed by its [resolution supporting the custodial and grounds teams](#), plans a rally and march for Saturday afternoon, March 16, 2024. The rally, comprising brief speeches, will be at 2 p.m. at St. Martin's Episcopal Center at the University of Arkansas, [814 W. Maple St.](#) The media and public are invited.

Then a march comprising Local 965 members, custodians and groundskeepers — and their colleagues, friends, families and supporters — starts there by 2:45 p.m. The group will cross Maple and march though campus to the Administration Building, [1125 W. Maple St.](#)

Administrators have been developing a plan to transfer groundskeepers and custodians to a private company. While current employees are expected to retain salary levels, they stand to lose some key benefits, such as terrific tuition discounts if they or family members have not yet enrolled. New custodians and groundskeepers can expect lower salaries, and current employees moved out of the public sector can be fired at will. (The bookstore and food services are already outsourced.)

"These workers, like all of us at the U of A, came here to work FOR the University of Arkansas and not just work AT the University of Arkansas," said Local 965 President Hershel Hartford, summarizing comments made by workers at the union's February meeting.



Rally Results

What worked.

What didn't work.

A news media fail?



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Overall strategy

- Multipronged
- Multifaceted
- Hub-and-spokes

Gather allies/confederates,
members or not



Caption

Avenues of Communication

- **Analog** (or just 20th century)
 - **Word of mouth**
 - **Posters & handouts**
 - **Phone banks**
 - **Radio PSAs**
 - **Website social calendars**
- **Social Media**
 - **Facebook**
 - **Posts and Events**
 - **X/Twitter**
 - **Instagram, TikTok** (photo based)
- **Texting** (latter-day phone bank)
 - **Manual**
 - **Texting app**
- **Emails**
 - **Manual**
 - **Email marketing app: MailChimp**
 - **Law** ("unsubscribe"), **best practices**
- **Website**
 - **Option: Pro Facebook page**
- **News release** (or **press release** or **formal announcement**)



You wouldn't believe how many people try
to skip answering these questions,
but give them a shot, OK?

- 1. What do you want to say?**
- 2. Who do you want to say it to?**
- 3. What do you want them to do?**



**'Hey, we exist,' is a
fundamentally fine
announcement. Really.**

You'd be surprised at what people don't know. Or maybe not!



March 16 Rally & March Supports Custodians & Groundskeepers



Inbox × Announcements, Official Messages, Newsletters etc. × Delete in 120 Days ×



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Breakout Interlude

1. Form small groups.
2. Choose topic, cause or event
3. Tools to communicate within your group
4. Tools to share the event or news with others ...
5. Pros/cons, points of confusion



General Media Strategy

- Minus: official campus media
- Website as hub
- Email list: announcements
- Press releases
 - Contact person: One name/phone/text/email, reply A.S.A.P.
- Social media: Facebook, X, others
- Analog: Word of mouth, Posters, Radio PSA/community calendar
- RSVPs and analytics
- "Viral" on our scale: Email opens
- Comms team not solo - a goal?
- Other orgs & 'the common good'
- Failures are successes, too.



Get the Word Out

Media Strategy: Today's Best Tools for Organizing

Questions?

Such as:

- Copyright of images etc.?
- How to be interviewed, risks?
- Is a website worth the trouble?
- Is an emailing app necessary?

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