

**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 and often cheaper.**

**Ben Pollock takes a 2024 look at websites, social media, mass emails and engaging local news media through the lens of how the University of Arkansas's AEA chapter organized opposition earlier this year to an administration plan to privatize over 200 custodial and groundskeeping employees.**

**These employees got to keep their seniority and benefits.**

**[arkansas965.org](http://arkansas965.org)**



# Media Strategies: Today's Best Tools for Organizing



[arkansas965.org](http://arkansas965.org)

Presented by Ben Pollock



Find these slides  
& more at website



UNIVERSITY OF  
ARKANSAS

# Today's Outline

- Overview
- Background
- A big example
- Breaking down the media strategies



# 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, similar app
- Radio PSAs
- Media's social calendars
- Facebook, posts & event
- Group's website

# Tell the World

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





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 a native of Fort Smith, Ben 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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# A Higher Education 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: 5,200 workers: 1,600 faculty & 3,600 staff. Serving 32,000 students. Union membership?
- Public Employees, Public Education can unionize according to 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**



# Custodial Outsource Proposal Timeline

- January-February whispers/rumors
- February: Officers confer (First strategy: Speed)
- February: Broadly announce planning meeting
- February Meeting: Size, Mike, 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



# March 16 Rally & March Supports Custodians & Groundskeepers



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



**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](mailto: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 through 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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- Multipronged
  - Multifaceted
  - Hub-and-spokes
- Gather confederates,  
members or not





# 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!**





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# 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: next years?
- 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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