What Can News Editors Let Go?

Neil Holdway
AME/copy desk,
Daily Herald (suburban Chicago)
more than vs. over

And other recent style “allowances,” if you will
persuade/convince
anxious/eager
WHO/WHOM
and other old grammar rules
that not everybody follows anymore
“close to” vs. “near”

and other tightening
“says”

“says” vs. “said” consistency
said Jones
vs. Jones said
“But” vs. “However”

beginning a sentence with
(some believe in never starting a sentence with “But”; some believe starting one with “However” slows it down)
“following” vs. “after”

Ever taught this one?
passive voice
always bad?
“Dems”
“mull”
and other undesirable headline shorthand
repeated words in headlines

Time to watch out for turtles

Plus, don’t help turtles across the street, and other advice
repeated words in stories such as in consecutive paragraphs (some writers and editors just hate that)
Number abbreviations in headlines

Budget calls for $53M in tax hikes
Other abbreviations in headlines

Gov
Prez
Blago
Hill
Rahm
Bad breaks in headlines
In 1-column heads
In multi-column heads
Captions!

AP’s damned captions
“captions for the blind”
repetition
Bigger questions!
Ethical considerations

- Domestic battery coverage
- Victim identification
- Address usage (like of a dead person)
- Story play
- Balance and fairness (say, elections, or wire stories involving the Trump administration)
Training and feedback for staff