

Best Sports Photo

Division 2

2015 Better Newspaper Contest

By Jeremy Weber, West Yellowstone News



Titled: Touchdown in the Rain

This was the first game of the season and it was a complete downpour. I had used a trash bag and duct tape to wrap the camera to keep it as dry as possible, and I am sure I looked pretty silly. The shot came right after a tough run for a touchdown, and captured the player celebrating as he crossed into the end zone.

Photo taken with
Camera: Canon 1D Mark IV
Lens: Canon 70-200 f2.8
Shutter: 1/1300th sec
ISO: 2500

Judge's comments: This is everything you want in a sports photo.
I want to stand and cheer, "Run, Emmett, Run!" Great job.

MNA Calendar

November

- 26-27 Thanksgiving - MNA office closed
- 30 Application deadline for the Montana Newspaper Foundation 2016 Internship Grants

December

- 8 Montana Newspaper Foundation 2016 Internship Grants awarded
- 11 Deadline to submit articles for the December Press Pass
- 14 2016 Better Newspaper Contest rules and instructions will be available
- 24 Christmas Eve - MNA office closed
- 25 Christmas Day - MNA office closed
- 31 New Year's Eve - MNA office closed

January

- 1 New Year's Day - MNA office closed
- 6 2016 MNA Better Newspaper Contest opens for entries
- 18 Deadline to submit articles for the January Press Pass
- 22 MNA & MNAS Board of Directors' meeting, Helena

February

- 8 Begin accepting nominations for the 2016 Hall of Fame and Master Editor/Publisher Awards
- 19 Deadline to submit articles for the February Press Pass
- 22 2016 MNA Better Newspaper Contest closes to entries at midnight
- 24 Deadline for print entries for the 2016 Better Newspaper Contest to arrive at the MNA office

2016 MNA Better Newspaper Contest

We are looking forward to another amazing MNA Better Newspaper Contest. Your instructions will be available in mid-December and our contest will open for your entries on January 6, 2016.

Congratulations again to our top winners of the 2015 Better Newspaper Contest.

Bozeman Daily Chronicle

Whitefish Pilot

Chris Peterson, Hungry Horse News

The Big Timber Pioneer

Lone Peak Lookout

Whitefish Pilot

Flathead Beacon

Bozeman Daily Chronicle

The Sam Gilluly Award – Best Daily Newspaper in Montana

The Thomas Dimsdale Award – Best Weekly Newspaper in Montana

Mel Ruder Photograph of the Year Award

Division 1 Newspaper General Excellence

Division 2 Newspaper General Excellence

Division 3 Newspaper General Excellence

Division 4 Newspaper General Excellence

Division 5 Newspaper General Excellence

The full presentation of all awards can be found at <http://www.mtnewspapers.com/awards2015/>

MNA adds a new careers section

Your MNA is happy to help get the word out when you have an open position at your newspaper. We have added a new career section to [mtnewspapers.com](http://www.mtnewspapers.com). A link can be found at: <http://www.mtnewspapers.com/careers/>

If you have a position that you would like include on the MNA website, please email your job posting to Jim Rickman, Executive Director, at jim@mtnewspapers.com.



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OUR MISSION:

To advance and sustain the news publishing industry in Montana.

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MEMBER PROFILE

JONATHAN D. McNIVEN

Owner/Publisher, Yellowstone County News

Personal Stats:

Born (year & place):

June 1, 1978 – 37 years young! (But I feel old.)

First newspaper job:

Yellowstone County News (Ironically)

Family:

Jonathan (37) and Tana McNiven (33), Landen (12), Gage (11), Anderson (9 as of Nov. 9), Raelyn (3), Tayson (1) and a black lab named Midnight.

Education:

Jonathan holds a bachelor's degree from Arizona State University, where he graduated. Jonathan also holds two associate degrees from Mesa Community College in Arizona, with honors, as well as a Certification in Arizona General Education Curriculum. While earning his degree, Jonathan was awarded the U.S. President's Council Service Award. Mr. McNiven initially attended college at Montana State University-Billings, where he served as the LDSSA president for one year.

Community involvement and diversions:

Jonathan has found the time to serve in his church from a young age and has been in many leadership roles. In October 2012, Jonathan accepted an invitation to serve in a presidency position for adult men within his local LDS church congregation, and in 2014 was called to be the president of that same group of men within his local church organization, which he currently is serving.

Jonathan is currently a member of the Huntley Project Museum of Irrigated Agriculture and has been a board member since 2008.

How did your career lead you to where you are now?

Boy, where does one start? I'll try to give you the Cliffs' Notes version. I graduated from Huntley Project High School in Worden in 1997 and left on a two-year mission to the country of Panama for my church. I returned back to the United States and went to school and received an education. I eventually got married and graduated from Arizona State University, I ended up coming back to Montana because I've always seen myself as a country boy, and ended up building a house in the same area close to where I grew up.

I grew up with humble beginnings (that's another story for another time), but learned to be involved in my community. I achieved the rank of Eagle Scout from the Boy Scouts of America. While helping my parents with their website and western adventure business called Western Romance Company. I helped their company receive the 2009 Tourism Excellence Award for Billings, MT.

I served as a state representative in the Montana House of Representatives from Jan. 2011 to Jan. 2015. I represented my constituents in the 2011 and 2013 legislative sessions in Helena.



The McNiven family, photo taken by Tana McNiven

I was re-elected to my third term before stepping down to run the newly-purchased Yellowstone County News last November. I am still working in the cable industry after eight and one-half years, and I'm currently employed by Charter Communications in Billings while I'm in the transition. (I'm still trying to figure out the insurance thing.)

In February 2014, I was awarded the 40 under 40 Award, which recognizes top young business professionals under the age of 40 in the Billings, MT area.

So, with hard work and a lot of being in the public, I figured why not jump headfirst into the reporting side of the public. The opportunity came to my wife and me to purchase the YCN, so here we are after one year, and enjoying it.

What's the most important thing you learned along the way that prepared you for your current role?

You can catch flies better with honey than with vinegar! I still use vinegar at times, for some reason, though (just to stay unpredictable).

What aspect of the job do you find the most rewarding?

Visiting with people and being in the know.

What aspect of the job do you find the most challenging?

Trying to get everything that needs to be done completed in time, while raising five kids. So much to do in so little time to do it all.

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PEOPLE and PAPERS

McNIVEN

Continued from Page 3

What have you done to enhance the brand of your newspaper in your area?

Since my wife and I purchased the Yellowstone County News on October 1, 2014, we have completed a new logo and organized the paper to be better formatted for our readers. We have upgraded our computers in the office so that we are not using three different versions for the same program. We have streamlined our processes so that they are consistent throughout the business. We have hired and built a great team of reporters and production staff to help us achieve our projected long-term goals.

We have purchased 20 newspaper dispensers and plan to have those out in the public soon. We are also now registered to be in more stores like Wal-Mart and businesses throughout Yellowstone County.

In August, we started publishing the Yellowstone County Home Schoolers Association page spread in our paper once a month. This was a good fit for our paper as we also publish the local school pages during the school year.

We just started a new YCN Sweepstakes incentive for our dedicated readers who read the paper cover to cover. We have assigned a YCN Sweepstakes number to their subscriber mailing address and our readers have a chance to win \$20 cash each week if their number is drawn and they recognize their number before the next Wednesday and stop by the office. In our first three weeks, we've had two of the three winners call in and claim their cash. They were so excited to win!

Finally, we are currently planning to increase the amount of papers we print each week and I feel that is a step in the right direction.

What is your digital strategy right now?

We have incorporated our community websites of www.huntleyproject.net, www.lockwoodmontana.com and www.shepherdmontana.com to help promote the Yellowstone County News online. We have also started promoting our community websites in the weekly Yellowstone County News print edition. Finally, we have soft-launched our own website of www.yellowstonecountynews.com and have it set up to receive credit card and PayPal payments online for new and renewing subscribers. We will eventually incorporate all our online into

our statewide website of www.montanastrailhead.com in the future.

What is your print strategy right now?

Take over the Gazette. (Just kidding.) We are just trying to increase our subscribers and advertisers and saturate our coverage area with the Yellowstone County News. We are also trying to educate the masses on what we provide, because there are many in the Billings and surrounding area that have never heard of the Yellowstone County News. Many in the public didn't even know that we cover the weekly Yellowstone County commissioners' meetings each week, as well as the Lockwood, Shepherd, Huntley Project and Custer school board meetings and area meetings. We also cover newsworthy stories from the Billings area.

How does the MNA serve you and your newspaper?

When my wife and I purchased the Yellowstone County News, I had to rely a lot on—and look to—the MNA staff for support, referrals and resources on what I can do enhance our paper. They had some statewide ads that came our direction that many of the papers also received, so that was a great help.

For example, I called Jim Rickman to see if he could point me in the right direction in acquiring some newspaper dispensers to purchase. He, in fact, had a better idea and reached out to the statewide group on my behalf and I received about six or seven options and eventually purchased 20 newspaper dispensers.

We were also grateful for the shout-out they gave us last May for the amount of SCAN and SDAP ads we have provided to the association, and we hope to continue to do that because it's a win/win for all of us newspapers statewide.

We have contacted Pam and Kev at the MNA many times and appreciate their prompt responses and support. We appreciate the support they provide to us, and I'm sure I can speak on behalf of all the publishers/owners/staff throughout the state in our appreciation for them and what they provide for each newspaper statewide.

Still being a new paper, I know we at Yellowstone County News would not be as far along without the Montana Newspaper Association.



Banned costume

Dressing up as a priest is illegal in Alabama on Halloween. Actually, you can't dress up as any clergy member in that state. Good thing the Tribune is located in Montana. Great Falls Tribune Publisher and Editor Jim Strauss.

PEOPLE and PAPERS

Still hot off the press

Big Timber Pioneer celebrates 126 years of community news

By Lindsey Erin Kroskob, Pioneer editor

Today we celebrate the start of the Pioneer's 127th year of publication.

Newspapers have seen an array of changes in that time frame, coupled with their fair share of struggles and triumphs.

And while publishing the Pioneer hasn't been without difficult times, community newspapers on the whole have been the exception to the industry rule.

The most recent adjustment — the ever-present digital tide — isn't causing the havoc here as in larger markets.

Our readers still want ink on their fingers. They want to cut out stories and photos to be prominently displayed on cork boards and refrigerators.

They want our paper available anywhere in the world, but they still want to be able to read it Thursday morning at their breakfast table.

I believe this is a testament to both the content of our community newspaper and the lifestyles of our readers.

It's about connection — seeing a face you recognize in these pages, reading their words and being able to relate to their story, whether it comes in the form of celebrating their successes or mourning their losses.

It's about reflection — showing you the world around you in a way you may not have seen it before and keeping a record of the community to look back on generation after generation.

While a lot has changed in this community during the last 126 years, there are a few themes reflected in the Pioneer's pages throughout the years that are still relevant today.

Benjamin Franklin said, "... but in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes."

While I wouldn't presume to be on par with Mr. Franklin, I'd like to add a few journalism-related certainties to his list.

First, newspaper readers will forever and always be interested in the weather.

Need a go-to front page story in a pinch? Write about water levels, drought on the horizon, a historical piece on the area's most significant storms to kick off the winter season.

For something as uncertain as the weather, it has certainly always been of interest to our readers.

The earliest preserved Pioneer from Jan. 5, 1893, contained its own front page winter forecast, told with relation to the planets and salted with foreboding warnings:

"The first month of the new year is to bring us the biting blast of winter if Dr. Hicks, of St. Louis, has truthfully — or correctly, perhaps it is better to say — foretold the weather ... Venus from December 28th, and Mercury on January 4th, will combine for the period ... Upon the whole, January will be very cold and trying. Be ready for it. Remember your stock."

At that time, 122 years ago, M.W. Hatoh published the Pioneer every Thursday afternoon and offered subscriptions of three

months for \$1, six months for \$1.50 and a year subscription for \$3. For those who really loved their weekly dose of local news and could afford it, the Pioneer also offered a 100-year subscription for a whopping \$335.

Today, a 100-year local subscription would translate to approximately \$4,900, a 1,362.6 percent increase, but we'd be happy to accommodate such a request.

The Pioneer edition from 100 years ago, published Oct. 21, 1915, by Jerome Williams, underwent a complete style overhaul from its predecessor. Gone were the days of advertisements and paid news stories on the front page as it transitioned into a sacred news space — a trusted source of information. Though the page was too news-packed for photographs, subsequent issues now included faces staring back at readers in black and white.

World War I was in high gear with Woodrow Wilson at the nation's helm, and while every week included a story about the war, community news continued to flourish. Local headlines highlighted stories about everything from an exhumed body and a suit from a suspended police chief to an upcoming play and September honor rolls.

This leads to my final two journalism certainties:

No. 1 — conflict sells. Readers will always be drawn to drama, or the "tidbits," as I like to call them.

No. 2 — despite changes in owners, publishers, editors and reporters, Pioneer readers have always had a passion for this community and share that passion with their newspaper.

Returning to February of 1893, the largest headline reads: "SWEETGRASS COUNTY. If Created Will Be One of the Grandest Counties In the Grand State of Montana."

Surrounding communities weighed in on the battle for the county's creation, with Park County as the primary opponent.

The article reads: "Peaceful, prosperous and law abiding, the citizens will, if Sweetgrass county is formed, take a pride and a personal interest in managing, developing and maintaining the law and order of their county. Such are the people, clear headed and ever-gentle and it is with similar and rare unanimity of purpose that they have entered this fight to win. With an honest and upright way, concealing nothing and encroaching upon no other, they ask only for what is theirs and insist that just deserts be granted."

Just deserts, indeed. The people of this county continue to uphold this statement about their character and the prophecy of their territory — one of the grandest counties in the grand State of Montana.

And we at the Pioneer are not only proud to write about your lives and your community, we're so proud to be a part of it too.

PEOPLE and PAPERS

Chris Peterson, Hungry Horse News editor, retraces epic hike by wilderness advocate Bob Marshall

By Karl Puckett, *Great Falls Tribune*

Bob Marshall hiked 288 miles over eight days through the northwestern Montana wilderness in 1928.

Marshall would average 36 miles a day during the epic hike, and The Bob Marshall Wilderness would officially be created 36 years later, after Marshall.

“Averaged,” says Chris Peterson of Marshall’s daily walks. “I averaged 10, and I didn’t bag the peaks he did.”

In 2014, 86 years after Marshall’s journey, Peterson retraced Marshall’s large footsteps, with a few modifications, through the Swan Range, The Bob Marshall and Mission Mountains, traveling about 200 miles in 20 days.

Peterson, admittedly a slow hiker, didn’t move as quickly as the fleet-footed Marshall, and he was lugging enough camera gear to “choke an elephant.”

But he returned with incredible wilderness and wildlife photographs and material for a book he would call, “A Walk on the Wild Side.” Peterson hand-wrote the photo captions for a sole-copy hard-cover collector’s edition that was auctioned for \$500 to benefit the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation. Another 50 soft-cover books were printed and sold.

“He’d be an ultra-marathoner today,” Peterson says of Marshall. “The stuff he did was pretty incredible.” On one “day hike” alone, Marshall scaled three mountains.

Marshall, the co-founder of the Wilderness Society, was an early crusader for wilderness protections. The Bob Marshall Wilderness is named after him. He was 28 years old when he made the trip through what would become the Bob and areas surrounding it.

“I did the part where he was running around in what would become the Bob,” Peterson said.

He decided to take the walk on the wild side in late August and early September in 2014, the same week Marshall did the same in 1928.

Timing was right, with it being the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act, which created the million-acre Bob Marshall Wilderness on the Flathead and Lewis and Clark national forests in 1964.

The purpose of the trip, he writes in his three-chapter book recounting it, was to get good photographs and spend nights in memorable places. And enjoy.

“It’s what I call a perfect quiet,” Peterson said of his experience retracing Marshall’s route in the Bob. The Bob, he notes, is a much different atmosphere than a national park such as Glacier, he said. In 94 miles, he saw three hikers.

In “A Walk on the Wild Side,” Peterson writes that the “wilderness soaks you up, makes you insignificant.”



Chris Peterson on a rock

Peterson first learned about Marshall’s impressive walk from a few paragraphs in Marshall’s biography. His journal, kept by the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation, offered more information.

“The journal is a very well-detailed journal of where he goes,” Peterson said.

Peterson didn’t retrace Marshall’s exact steps.

Marshall started in the Spotted Bear of the Flathead National Forest and went south to Holland Lake, including a massive “day hike” where he went up and over Pagoda Pass from Helen Creek to the Continental Divide to Salt Mountain on the Chinese Wall and back again. It was 42 miles.

Peterson reports in his book that Marshall also did another 34-mile day hike from the Big Prairie ranger station to White River and Prisoner Lake lookouts that included another mountain climb.

Peterson’s hike began at Holland Lake and headed north, over Gordon Pass, White River Pass, along the Chinese Wall to Larch Hill Pass, down to Brushy Park to Pagoda Pass, then down Helen Creek to Black Bear, up Picture Ridge and down into Gorge Creek to the Bunker Creek Trailhead.

Peterson, now, 48, added the Picture Ridge diversion to get better photos and it paid off with a 360-degree view of the wilderness. Before arriving at the Hungry Horse News 18 years ago, Peterson wrote for a daily newspaper in New York where reporters also had to shoot their own pictures. Peterson began shooting Buffalo Bills NFL games and became adept at shooting photos, which has served him well working in Montana.

“I always wanted to move to Montana,” he said.

On his trip retracing Marshall’s route, Peterson lugged an

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PEOPLE and PAPERS

HUNGRY *Continued from Page 6*



Photo by Chris Peterson

eight-pound telephoto lens and camera on top of a full pack as he logged 200 miles in roughly 20 days, capturing stunning shots including a goat overlooking a vast wilderness valley like a sentinel.

He spent nine days of the trip traveling 94 miles in the Bob Marshall Wilderness.

Marshall traveled 182 miles in the Bob over five days as part of his eight-day, 288-mile journey.

It was rough going for Peterson. He pulled a calf immediately. And the mud was brutal, especially in trail running shoes.

He reached the Chinese Wall, the showcase of the Bob, on Sept. 4. It was his birthday.

“I busted hump to get up there and it started to rain that night and it was snowing so hard I couldn’t even see the way,” he said. “It was miserable, and I had sneakers on.”

Once, he met a man on a horse on a narrow trail on a blind bend at White River Butte. The man and his horse, whom he later learned packed for the Forest Service, went off the steep slope and Peterson thought they were goners. But they managed to ride it out without tumbling and retake the trail.

“The hike itself was at times a grunt, others times pure joy and even deeply saddening,” Peterson wrote in his book. “On one of my off-trail routes, I found a memorial — a cross with a horse-shoe tacked to it and the man’s boots beside the cross. The cross had the year ‘2014’ written on it in black ink, but there was no person’s name. The boots were well worn, the person had gone many miles in the Bob. It was a fitting tribute and in retrospect, one I was glad to experience.”

Missoulian.com unveils new, more interactive design

By Matthew Bunk, editor, Missoulian



Matthew Bunk

Have you seen the new Missoulian.com? We redesigned the website to make it easier to use, with quicker loading times and a cleaner appearance. The new layout gives our readers a more vivid and multimedia-focused experience that highlights imagery, rather than simply text.

It had been several years since Missoulian.com underwent any major design changes. We liked the old website. It served us well over the years. However, as we added more and more features for our readers, the website became cluttered and difficult to navigate.

The Missoulian’s digital team spent time researching the latest online trends, focusing on ways to make it easier for readers to find the content that interests them the most. We’ve applied that knowledge to the new website design, while adding responsive technology that improves the experience for people who read the news on mobile devices.

Now Missoulian.com will have the same appearance and page-loading speed whether you use a desktop computer, a phone or another mobile device.

The first thing you may notice about the website is that we’ve replaced the “carousel” display at the top of the homepage with a “mosaic” that shows readers five of the day’s best story packages at a glance. No scrolling or clicking necessary.

We also simplified the navigation bar at the top of the homepage so readers will be able to access the stories they want with less clutter and fewer clicks.

For readers who want to narrow the search by topic, we’ve included a more robust menu of content categories in the upper left corner of the website. Just click on the icon that looks like three horizontal bars to view the more detailed menu. That’s where you will find our e-edition, Contact Us page, and dozens of specific topics such as Griz sports.

Farther down on the homepage, we added a section called “Trending Now” that will help you stay on top of the hottest, most relevant stories of the day. Our top five most-popular headlines rotate through that spot, based on state-of-the-art technology that instantly tracks the number of readers clicking on each story every minute of every day.

Our photo galleries, videos and newscasts are also a big part of the new website design. The work of our award-winning photographers, digital specialists and reporters will be displayed more prominently than ever before.

Subscribers to the Missoulian’s print edition also get unlimited online access to Missoulian.com and the Missoulian’s e-edition, which is an electronic replica of the printed edition that you can take with you wherever you go. The only thing you have to do is activate your online account.

All of us at the Missoulian encourage you to spend some time looking over the changes on our website and let us know what you think.

PEOPLE and PAPERS

In Memorium

Gladys Shay

By Chris Peterson, Hungry Horse News



Gladys Shay

Longtime Hungry Horse News reporter and columnist Gladys Shay died of natural causes. She was 87. Shay grew up with a penchant for the news.

When just a child, she recalled seeing the lights and hearing the fire engines outside the window of her Kalispell home as firefighters raced to save a house ablaze. "And I automatically started writing a story," she said in an interview earlier this year. Just a few days before her death, Shay was sending news tips via email to the newspaper.

"She always had an interesting news item to share," said Hungry Horse News editor Chris Peterson, who worked with Shay for 18 years. "She was a great source of information and history. It's a sad day for the newspaper."

Shay was the "Girl Friday" for Hungry Horse News founder and editor Mel Ruder for 30 years, covering society news, Columbia Falls city council and a host of other topics for Ruder, who won the Pulitzer Prize in 1965 in community journalism for his coverage of the 1964 flood.

Shay's journalism career, however, started long before she went to work for Ruder. As a kid, she wrote for the Kalispell Times, which was the weekly newspaper in Kalispell at the time.

In her teens she worked in the newspaper mailroom and then came to Columbia Falls once a week to pick up ads from businesses.

Shay graduated from Flathead High School in 1946 and her uncle, John O'Connell, was mayor of Columbia Falls at the time. Shay was visiting her uncle and Ruder walked in one day that same year and said he was starting a newspaper in Columbia Falls.

"He had egg on his tie," Shay recalled.

Ruder knew she worked for the Kalispell paper and hired her shortly thereafter.

"I was his first and only news employee," she said.

They sat and typed stories in desks close to each other. Both talked to themselves as they wrote and people often thought they were talking to each other, which wasn't the case. Ruder hated being interrupted.

"If he was typing, you left him alone," she said. "Ruder was a good name for him."

Both of their writing styles were clipped. They left articles like the word "the" out of their sentences on purpose to save space. And they were protective of their news and their sources.

"You didn't dare let the Daily Inter Lake have anything before we did," she said.

Shay married Al Shay in 1947 and she had six children, Gail, Janet, Howard, Laurie, Tim and Becky. There was a 20-year span between the oldest and youngest and when Becky was born, Shay, who had a wry sense of humor, quipped that she "was having her own grandchild."

Later on, she wrote stories for owner Brian Kennedy and a column "Gabbing with Gigi" for years, as well.

Shay was also active in a host of community organizations. She was either the secretary or president of the Columbia Falls Eastern Star, the PTA, the Rebekah Lodge, the VFW Auxiliary, the Columbia Falls Senior Center, The Columbia Falls Library Board and the Columbia Falls Lions Club, to name a few. She was the first woman president of the Lions Club.

-30-

2016 Montana Newspaper Foundation Internship Grant Program

What is the internship program?

The Montana Newspaper Foundation (MNF) Internship Grant Program helps train tomorrow's professionals by providing grants to member newspapers.

How much is the grant and how many are awarded?

\$1,500 will be awarded to three successful newspapers.

When can I use the internship grant?

The grant can be used (and the money will be awarded) in 2016. We encourage successful applicants to begin the intern recruitment process in 2015.

What is the application deadline?

November 30, 2015

When will grants be announced by the MNF?

December 8, 2015

More information and your grant application can be found at <http://www.mtnewspapers.com/2016-montana-newspaper-foundation-internship-grant-program-application/>. If you have questions, please contact Jim Rickman, MNA Executive Director, at 443-2850 or jim@mtnewspapers.com.

SALES and MARKETING

Grow circulation with mail sampling, and sell extra advertising as a bonus

By Max Heath, NNA postal chair/KPA past president



Max Heath

An increase in calls and emails on sampling questions in recent weeks and months caused me to update this topic on the value of sending sample copies to nonsubscribers using your 10% in-county "sampling" entitlement.

The nonsubscriber rules in the Domestic Mail Manual are there to allow you to promote your newspaper to nonsubscribers and grow your mail delivery. Too many papers fail to use this tactic.

Print subscriptions now compete with our own websites, electronic subscriptions, and other free news and information sites. Some readers of free shoppers with news think it's the newspaper. It's no exaggeration to say that we have to work much harder to grow, or just stay even, in paid subscribers these days.

Some papers have had success sampling a route or two at a time for 2-4 issues. Others choose to sample an entire ZIP code or the entire county. But either way, sampling addressed pieces to 90% of the active residential addresses, or 75% of all addresses, on in-county routes earns you a low 3.5-cent Saturation piece price. That compares to a 6.8-cent piece price for Basic (6-124 pieces per route) in-county mail, saving you nearly half of the per-copy piece price.

You can also mail unaddressed Saturation so long as 100% of Active Residential or Total Active deliveries are provided copies. See below.

Include a good offer to subscribe or renew in each sample copy. For those worried about offending current subscribers, make the offer two-tiered, with a higher discount level for new subscribers, and another, lower one for renewals. A single-sheet flyer with coupon pulls more response than ROP ads.

The more in-county subscriber copies you can build and retain, the greater your sampling privilege is to sample at in-county rates in the future, without paying outside-county rates for non-subscriber copies sent above the 10% rule.

Review of postal sampling rules

Domestic Mail Manual 207.7.9.3 specifies that in-county eligible newspapers can mail 10% of the in-county subscriber copies in a calendar year to nonsubscribers using the low in-county rates. To estimate your entitlement, add the Subscriber Copies

column, lines A1/A2 of your 3541 Postage Statement. Multiply times the number of issues in a year, and take 10% of that.

For example, a weekly with 3,500 average in-county mail subscriber copies can send 18,200 copies to nonsubscribers at in-county rates ($3,500 \times 52 = 182,000 \times .10 = 18,200$) in a year. Double that for a twice-weekly. A 5-day mailed daily earns 91,000 non-subscriber copies at in-county rates under that formula.

You may use the "simplified address" of "Residential Customer" (DMM 602.3.1.b) when sampling rural or city routes. Some software vendors provide electronic CDS (Computerized Delivery Sequence) files giving all addresses in a ZIP.

Newspapers are not required to duplicate subscriber copies when using simplified address saturation mail, nor when mailing addressed copies to nonsubscribers. Also, when sampling infrequently, a single issue can mail more non-subscriber copies than subscriber copies. (See Customer Support Ruling PS-228 at Postal Explorer web site.) Simplified address copies do not technically count as subscriber copies.

But remember that a newspaper cannot consistently mail more than 50% of its total distribution free. Those wishing to sample above the 10% in-county rate ceiling pay regular carrier-route prices of 15 cents for Saturation on Line C33 of the 3541, plus 12.6 cents per advertising pound and 9.3 cents non-advertising pound at DDU lines B1 and B14 when entered at DDUs (delivery offices).

The copies should be co-mingled as part of the regular issue, and not a separate mailing. Both pound prices are lower than when I last wrote this in July 2010, and now compare favorably to the 16-cent DDU pound price In-county.

USPS provides a Periodicals Nonsubscriber Percentage Calculator at Postal Explorer (<http://pe.usps.gov>). Click on Postal Links in the upper left of the blue vertical toolbar, then scroll to the last item in that section for the Excel spreadsheet. This helps you track your In-County price eligibility and know when to switch to Regular prices when needed.

Requester rules are identical, allowing 10% more copies to nonrequesters to try to grow the requested total or reach more of the market. Only requested copies earn In-County price.

Always promote subscriptions!

Remember, you should always have at least a one-column ad (think vertical coupon) in every issue of your newspaper and shopper, if you have one. And when space permits, larger ads or single-copy inserts are ideal, especially when a big news story ensures purchases of single copies by people who are not "regulars."

Grow advertising when you sample

You can also grow ad revenue when sampling your entire

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SALES and MARKETING

SAMPLING *Continued from Page 9*

market at once. Your market may be an entire county, or the primary ZIPs inside the county that you serve. With advertising slow in this weak economy, you need to provide your advertisers and potential advertisers a reason to spend their scarce dollars. What better way than to provide them total-market coverage in a paid news product?

Some papers have known this for years, and built both circulation and advertising with monthly sampling, often tied to the issue nearest the start of a new month when government paychecks are in the hands of residents on fixed incomes. While sampling this often usually results in several issues mailed at outside-county Saturation price, it can still pay off if revenue growth is strong enough.

A newspaper group that has made sampling for revenue growth a primary goal has seen papers increase more than 100%

in per-issue ad dollars, with many papers up 50-70%. An average for one month of those sampling averaged over 30% increases. Variables include the depth of economic difficulty locally, the commitment and execution by sales reps, and the date picked, such as seasonal or local retail occasions.

Some newspapers bump ad rates higher, while others offer local merchants the opportunity to reach every household at existing rates. Some with shoppers allow the sample to replace an issue of the shopper, saving Standard Mail postage as well.

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SALES and MARKETING

Athlete of the week

Case Study: Athlete of the Week generates \$54K
How one small-market newspaper capitalized on local hometown sports pride.

\$18,000 in revenue collected from two sponsors
\$54,000 in revenue projected over three years
26,000 votes cast in under four months for 2015
year-round promotional opportunity

The Idea

The Telegraph Herald is a daily newspaper based out of Dubuque, Iowa. A small-market paper, serving around 28,000 daily subscribers, the newspaper specializes in local and regional news for Dubuque and surrounding areas in Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin. The Telegraph Herald is a division of Woodward Communications, Inc.

Seeking a new form of revenue for the paper, the Telegraph Herald decided to try a new submission contest centered around local athletes. Recognizing the hometown pride of Dubuque, the Telegraph Herald felt that this style of promotion would be a great fit for their community and would offer a boost to their website and social media presence. Now in their third year of the promotion, the Telegraph Herald has continued growth in engagement and exposure for their sponsors.

The Execution

The newspaper decided to implement their Athlete of the Week as a year-round promotion that would be integrated across the board into print, online, email, and social media.



For three days, Friday-Sunday, each week, readers nominate their favorite high school athlete. Eligible athletes could come from 42 different schools within the tri-state area, and the athletes had to be in grades 9-12, currently participating in the

sport in which they are nominated. The weekly nominations are then evaluated by a team from the Telegraph Herald and three athletes are selected as the voting pool for the current Telegraph Herald Athlete of the Week. The voting period starts at noon on Monday and runs through Tuesday at 5pm. (The ballot would be on hiatus during weeks that no sports were played.)



The featured athlete's story is printed in the sports section that following Thursday, displayed on the TH website, and is also announced on the Telegraph Herald Facebook Page as well.

This Athlete of the Week promotion is set up as a category exclusive sponsorship model, allowing the same local credit union and auto dealership to sponsor the contest for the last three years. The cost to each sponsor was \$750 per month. Sponsors are heavily utilized throughout the contest with their logos clearly placed on top of the contest page, mentioned and tagged in the weekly Facebook winner announcement, and with their names printed on the award certificates that were given to the winners. Some of the sponsors even take the initiative to post on their own social media pages to encourage voting, congratulate the winners, and drive viewers to the contest on the Telegraph Herald's page.

The Results

This promotion worked very well for Dubuque's Telegraph Herald. It has helped their community highlight great local athletes, allowed their sponsors to get in front of a key demographic, and generated \$18,000 for the newspaper each year.