

## Protect and Improve Public Notices



By Jan Anderson

*Chairperson of the MNA Legal Affairs Committee and Publisher/Owner of the Boulder Monitor*

One of the major issues on the agenda and the vision of the MNA Legal Affairs Committee is to protect and improve public access and notice, and part of that means making sure public legal notices are properly published. That is not an easy task, but it is a vital one – both in our professional mission of serving the public and in our mission of staying fiscally secure.

A survey of MNA members resulted in an estimate of \$1.1-1.2 million in annual income to Montana newspapers from the publication of legal notices. Losing that income would be serious news for every newspaper.

But, it would be even more serious to our readers. Public notices are vital to the functioning of our society, assuring access for every citizen to government actions and making sure there is an archived record independent of government control.

The Legal Affairs Committee anticipates future legislative efforts to diminish our role in that vital public service and needs everyone's help to assure that does not happen.

### Here are some suggestions on what your newspaper can do:

- ♦ Explain to readers why public notices are important and why the newspaper's role in publishing them is important.
- ♦ Editorialize and run ads explaining how they can use them to their individual advantage and to benefit the community.
- ♦ Tell them where to find the notices on a regular basis, and publish them regularly in an easily identifiable location.
- ♦ Publish them in an easily readable font and size. Remember, Montana is largely an aging population and tiny type is hard for some readers. While the law allows publication as small as six-point solid type, that size will be hard to read and newspapers who go that small could be accused of valuing only the income, not the public service aspect of the notice. That would certainly be hard to argue against in front of legislators who would rather not pay newspapers if it can be avoided.
- ♦ Put talented, professional people in charge of public notices and allow that staff time and training to do the job right. The record keeping – managing billing, affidavits, publishing schedules and clippings – can be a burden, but it is an important one.

- ♦ Make sure your legal notices are published online, as well, where the public can easily access them. Advertise that website address regularly in your print product.
- ♦ When a public notice plays a role in your reporting, be sure to tell the public about it.
- ♦ Most of all, GIVE THEM PROMINENCE AND READABILITY. Treat them as if they are important, because they are.

### That is the “why.” The “how” is important, too.

Every county in the state is required by law to have a newspaper of public record, someplace readers can depend on to publish legal notices. In counties where there is more than one qualifying newspaper, the county is required to call for bids. (See ARM 18-7-411-413.) If you have competing newspapers in your county, make sure the legal notice contract is bid every two years at least.

The maximum price a newspaper can charge for publishing legal notices is set by the Department of Administration's Board of County Printing. MNA members are two of the five people on the board. That maximum is currently \$11 per folio for the first insertion of the notice and \$9 per folio for each subsequent insertion. (ARM 2.67.303.) That rule also defines a folio. There is no minimum charge, but keep in mind that if you bid lower for the county notice publications, you cannot charge the state more; the contract rate with the county also sets your rate for the state.

In addition, newspapers must submit a circulation report to the county clerk and recorder by July 1 of each year to be eligible to hold the county's legal notice printing contract. The same is true for a submission to the city clerk to be the official newspaper of a municipality.

### Now for the “what.”

Knowing what the governments are required to publish is not legally the newspaper's job, but a good publisher really should make sure the government understands its obligations and lives up to them. Newspapers should strive to be experts in public notices. By mastering the process, a newspaper can cement its reputation as the place to go for public notices. Some newspapers even are seen by local governments as the place to go to find out what needs to be published.

The MNA has published at least two pamphlets that deal with public notice requirements.

One, *Montana's Freedom of Information and newspaper-related laws*, was compiled in 2008-2009. It addresses related laws, applicable AG opinions, Canons of Ethics, the Federal FOI Act and more.

While it deals more with theory behind public notices, the other MNA publication, *Montana Public Notice Advertising*

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# MNA Calendar

## August

25-27 Society of Professional Journalists Annual Convention  
Anaheim, California

## September

2 Labor Day observed, MNA office closed  
12 National Newspaper Association 127th Annual Convention & Trade Show  
The Arizona Grand Resort, Phoenix, AZ  
13 Deadline to submit articles for September *Press Pass*  
20 MNA and MNAS Fall Board of Directors' Meeting, Butte

## October

1 Deadline to submit USPS Statement of Ownership (PS Form 3526) with your local post office <http://about.usps.com/forms/ps3526.pdf>  
1 2014 Rate & Data Questionnaire emailed to all papers  
17-19 Institute of Newspaper Technology - newspaperinstitute.com  
18 Deadline to submit articles for October *Press Pass*  
27-29 Inland Press Association 128th Annual Meeting  
Renaissance Chicago Hotel  
Register at [www.inlandpress.org](http://www.inlandpress.org)

## November

1 Deadline for 2014 Rate & Data Questionnaire to be RETURNED

{ben's friends}



- Always forgive your enemies, but never forget their names.
- Time is the coin of life. Only you can determine how it will be spent.
- Stay committed to your decisions, but stay flexible in your approach.
- You can disagree without being disagreeable.

## Protect and Improve Public Notices

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*Law*, is a real nuts and bolts tool box on what must be published. It lists – sorted between municipalities, counties, the state, and schools – what notices they must publish, how many times, the time frame (e.g. “last publication at least two weeks prior to hearing”), and what MCA requires that.

The other two W’s – “who” and “where” – should be you and your newspaper, especially if you can follow the rules and suggestions.

As the MNA Legal Affairs Committee continues its work and gets nearer to the next legislative session, we would like your input. Do you need either of the MNA reference guides mentioned above? Should we work to clarify any of the legal notice rules, particularly the definition of a folio, which has become somewhat outdated with everyone using computer layout with the ability to count words easily? Should we work to change the rules about type size since six-point type is hard to read and may not serve the public well? Do you have other suggestions we should hear?

Feel free to forward any questions we might be able to answer, as well.

## Frank Perea named COO of Country Media

Frank Perea, publisher of the Carbon County News, Stillwater County News and Big Horn County News, announced he has been named COO for Oregon-based Country Media Inc. Perea will also serve as publisher of The News-Guard in Lincoln City, Oregon. Perea will be departing in early September.

“I want to thank the entire Carbon County community for making the past two years so very special. I will greatly miss seeing my many friends and unsurpassed beauty of Montana daily. I especially will miss and want to thank my staff. Although I served on several community boards and represented the news at many local events, it was my dedicated co-workers who really deserve the credit for making things go so smoothly. While my decision to depart wasn’t easy, it will be exciting to help lead a media company in these evolving times for community newspapers and help shape the media landscape.”

Perea has been with Yellowstone Newspapers since May 2011. Before that he was with Lee Enterprises, as General Manager of the Times of Northwest Indiana, Publisher of the Meade County Times-Tribune and Black Hills Press in Sturgis, S.D. Perea has two daughters attending college.



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**OUR MISSION:** *To advance and sustain the news publishing industry in Montana.*

## Periodicals Mailers-Time to File Statement of Ownership

Yes, it's that time of year again, for Periodicals mailers to file their annual Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation with the United States Postal Service® (USPS). This document, Form 3526, is required to be filed annually by publishers for each authorized Periodical publication. The completed Statement of Ownership form is due by October 1 each year. The completed form must be filed at the post office serving the publishers' offices.

This form is NOT required to be filed for publications that mail at other classes of mail, such as Standard, Package Services or First-Class, nor is it required to be filed for publications that are currently mailing as Periodicals Pending.

Aside from confirming the ownership and management information, the USPS uses the circulation information as a basis to ensure publishers are meeting the circulation requirements to qualify for Periodicals mail. These requirements specify that at least 50% of the total circulation of a publication be circulated to those who have paid for or requested the publication. If the paid/requested ratio on this annual form reflects a percentage of between 50% and 60%, this can trigger a more detailed postal audit.

The information needed to complete the form may be found on postage statements, print orders, print invoices, distribution instructions, etc. It is easier if publishers maintain this information on an issue-by-issue basis in a spreadsheet or something similar so that, when it comes time to complete the annual form, all the necessary information is at hand. If this is not done, you should gather up all the pertinent documents for each issue of the year before attempting to complete the form.

A common problem that publishers run into is that the subscriber/nonsubscriber copies have not been reported correctly on the postage statements during the course of the year. If the paid/requester counts on the statement of ownership do not correspond with the subscriber/nonsubscriber counts on the postage statements, that discrepancy can also trigger an audit.

To prevent this problem, it is critical that detailed instructions be provided by the publisher to the mailing list processor so that they can correctly identify and report the subscriber and nonsubscriber copies in the mail.dat files and on the postage statements. Any changes to the way these address records are identified during the course of the year also needs to be communicated to the list processor.

It is also critical that publishers monitor postage statements during the course of the year to ensure that these counts are reported accurately and to rectify any problems early on if they are not. It can be very problematic (not to mention expensive and time consuming) to try to correct a whole year of postage statements right before you are ready to file your statement of ownership, particularly if rate changes have occurred or if software updates have taken place in the interim.

In addition to filing the completed form, the information on the completed form must be published in the publication for titles authorized under the General or Requester categories. This information is required to be published in the first issue subsequent to filing the form. For example, if the publication has a monthly frequency, the information should be published in the first issue produced after the filing date of October 1. If the publication is weekly or less frequent, but more than monthly, the information

should be published in an issue no later than October 31. For weeklies or more frequent, the information should be published in an issue by October 10.

There are no regulations regarding the size or format of this published information, as long as it is legible and complete. Some publishers replicate the actual form itself for publication, while others convert the information to text format.

If, for some reason, you do not meet the filing deadline of October 1, you should contact the post office serving your publishing offices and notify them of the reason for the delay and the date by which you estimate you will submit the completed form. Publication of the information is more strictly enforced. If you do not publish the statement of ownership information in the timeline described above, the USPS can hold the mailing of subsequent issues until this requirement is met. Again, if you fall behind in meeting this deadline, it is best to notify your post office up front in order to prevent mailing delays.

If you need assistance to complete or publish your forms, contact your local Business Mail Entry (BME) office and ask for the Periodicals mail expert. They can walk you through the form and provide information about filing and publication of the information.

### In Memoriam

**Ken Hofferber** passed away on July 28, 2013. He was 83. He became a member of the International Typographical Union while serving his apprenticeship at the Laramie Boomerang where he worked for eleven years. He moved to Great Falls in 1957 when he accepted a position as a printer for the Great Falls Tribune, a job he looked forward to each day.

**Katherine 'Kay' Hardin-Hansen**, 82, died Aug. 3, 2013. Kay was a life-long journalist and wrote for many newspapers in the state including the Madisonian, Lewistown News Argus, Independent Record, and Billings Gazette.

**Dick Pattison**, 85, died in Helena on July 11, 2013. In the early 1950s, Dick became a reporter and copy editor at the Great Falls Tribune. In 1962, Dick received an award from the American Political Science Association for political reporting. In 1963, he became executive director of Citizens Rededicated, a Montana organization devoted to fighting political extremism. Dick took a position as copy editor with the St. Paul Pioneer-Press and then a similar position at the Stockton Record in California. In 1969, Dick became an international representative of the Newspaper Guild, a labor union representing news organization employees in the U.S. and Canada. During his 22-year career with the Guild, Dick negotiated labor contracts with United Press International (UPI), the New York Times and the Associated Press (AP). Though he had only a high school education, he did work usually done by lawyers in National Labor Relations Board proceedings.

**Margaret Ella Westrook**, 95, died Thursday, August 1, 2013. Margaret served as a local correspondent for the Livingston-based Park County News weekly newspaper.

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# AP gets threats after asking names of concealed carry permit holders

*The Missoulian*, Missoula, Montana, August 6, 2013

HELENA – Associated Press reporters in Montana have been subject to online threats after the news spread that Attorney General Tim Fox had denied AP's request for the names and other information about Montanans with concealed weapons permits.

On July 30, the AP filed a report with the Helena Police Department over the online threats, said Jim Clarke, AP chief of bureau for Colorado, Montana, Utah and Wyoming.

Clarke declined to elaborate, saying: "The AP refrains from ever publicly discussing security matters affecting staff, and that goes for war zones such as Kabul as well as locations in the United States."

Some online commentators have published the names and addresses of AP reporters in Helena, while another ran a Google Street view photo showing the house owned by one AP newsman here.

One online threat on a blog said, "If only someone could release the names of the AP reporters, where they work, their home addresses, names of family members, where their children go to school and what kind of car they drive with the license plate number."

Another one said: "We need to track down and publish the names and addresses of AP executives, photographs of their children and the route they take to school."

Another threat said: "Associate Propaganda – they will know when they see my muzzle flash."

John Barnes, spokesman for Attorney General Fox, said Monday he wasn't aware of the threats until informed by a reporter.

"If any employee of the AP or their families or any citizens or anyone has a threat, that person should contact their city or county law enforcement officers," Barnes said.

What triggered the controversy was when an AP reporter made a formal request on March 18 for a digital copy of the concealed weapon permit holder database in Montana. AP sought the public information on each permit holder, not limited to first, middle and last name, street address, city, employer, age or date of birth, driver's license and date of application.

This information on concealed weapon permit holders had been public in Montana until the 2013 Legislature passed a law making it confidential.

Over the years, Montana news organizations, including Lee Newspapers State Bureau, had periodically requested the names of the concealed weapon permit holders for use in news stories.

The AP request came shortly after a bill easily passed both houses of the 2013 Legislature by large margins to require that all information on a concealed weapon permit application be kept confidential in the future. Gov. Steve Bullock signed the bill into law March 28, and it takes effect Oct. 1.

In response, Barnes said he talked to two AP reporters by phone on April 22 to tell them their request was being denied and detailing the reason. Barnes said the Attorney General's Office was putting together a memo elaborating on Fox's reasoning.

On April 30, an online publication from Boston, known as MuckRock News, filed a similar request.

On July 17, Fox's office sent a three-page memo to the AP and the Boston group detailing his reasons for denying the requests.

"After careful research and consideration of the requests, it is the opinion of this office that broad dissemination of CWP (concealed weapon permit) status and application information would unnecessarily invade the privacy of individuals in violation of the Montana Constitution," the memo from Fox's office said.

The memo concluded: "In the opinion of the attorney general, the demands of individual privacy clearly outweigh the merits of public disclosure under these circumstances. After thoughtful consideration, requests for such information must be denied."

It said the office would continue to provide county-by-county statistics, upon request, on the number of permit holders.

The same day that the memo was released, Barnes said the office sent copies by email to the 56 county attorneys and then by mail to the 56 sheriffs, although their sheriffs' association later distributed it to members by email.

AP never reported on the memo from Fox's office.

News of the AP request and Fox's denial first broke July 24 on the website for Aaron Flint, a conservative Billings commentator and broadcaster with Northern Broadcasting System, who has a daily statewide radio show. Flint said he had received a copy of Fox's memo from a source outside of the Attorney General's Office and posted it on his website.

A day later, Media Trackers, a conservative Montana website that covers Montana politics and the media, picked up the story.

Montana Television Network and Montana Public Radio followed with stories about Fox denying the request. They quoted AP Bureau Chief Clarke saying the news organization generally doesn't comment on its ongoing reporting efforts.

On Friday, in a statement to Lee Newspapers, Clarke elaborated on why AP sought the information:

"After the Montana Legislature voted to remove from the public record information on whom the government had granted permits to carry concealed weapons, effective Oct. 1, The Associated Press requested a database of these files that had long been accessible to the public.

"AP acted under freedom of information law, which we do routinely in seeking records at the federal, state and local level as part of our newsgathering process and our long-standing mission to assure transparency and accountability in government....

"We have never had any interest in publishing the Montana database in its entirety."

**By Charles S. Johnson**  
**Chuck Johnson is chief of the Lee Newspapers State Bureau in Helena. He can be reached by email at: [chuck.johnson@lee.net](mailto:chuck.johnson@lee.net) or by phone at (406) 447-4066 or (800) 525-4920.**

A nice design element used by the Big Sky Weekly.

**stats** ON THE **FIRE OF 1988**  
From nps.gov

9 fires caused by humans      42 caused by lightning

Fires begun outside of the park burned **63%** or approximately **500,000** acres of the total acreage.

*Did you know that...*  
In Yellowstone National Park itself, the fires affected **793,880** acres, or **36%** of total park acreage.

The 1988 fires comprised the largest fire-fighting effort in the U.S. up to that time:  
**\$120 million** spent fighting the fires.  
**25,000** people involved in these efforts.

About 300 large mammals perished as a direct result of the fires

 <b>246</b> elk	 <b>4</b> mule deer
 <b>9</b> bison	 <b>2</b> moose

After July 21, park managers ordered that all fires be fought, including natural fires that had been allowed to burn.

Firefighters saved human life and property, but they could do little to control or stop the fires because weather and drought made the fires behave in unusual ways.

 Contrary to what was feared, the fires of 1988 did not deter visitors. In **1989**, more than **2,600,000** people came to Yellowstone – the **highest** annual visitation of the 1980s.

Newspaper ads to promote our statewide display and classified programs are available on the MNA ftp site.

**69** PARTICIPATING NEWSPAPERS

**BIG SKY. BIG IMPACT.**

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An Easy, Cost-effective Way to Reach Nearly

**400,000**  
Montanans with Your Message for Just

**\$149** (FOR 25 WORDS)

**Montana**  
NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION

⇓  
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**WWW.MTNEWSPAPERS.COM**

# PEOPLE and PAPERS



## Kolepp joins the Pathfinder team

After working in 48 states, living in eight countries and on three continents, Mike (M.J.) Kolepp, new reporter and photographer for the Seeley Swan Pathfinder, is back living in the community he calls home, Seeley Lake.

## Lone Peak Lookout in Big Sky adds photographer

Mike Coil started his photography career as a staff photographer for his high school year book in 1964. He has been shooting as a freelance photographer ever since. Mike moved to Montana in 1976 and helped set up the Big Sky Weekly (now known as Explore Big Sky) and simultaneously started contributing photography and articles to the paper. He has also contributed to the Lone Peak Lookout at Big Sky, Montana and various local magazines. From 2009-12, Mike worked as the photo editor for Big Sky Seasons in Big Sky, Montana. Mike is well-known in the Bozeman area for his prize-winning wildlife and action sports photography. In 2009, Mike took first place in the Outside Bozeman photo contest, pro division, for his shot of an owl in flight in Yellowstone National Park. In August of 2009, Mike was granted a temporary White House press pass to cover the President's visit to Bozeman and earned a cover shot in the Big Sky Weekly of the President and his family deplaning from Air Force One. Mike regularly covers local football, including the MSU Bobcats, the Bozeman Hawks and the Big Sky Big Horns. In the spring of 2013, Mike was in the French Alps for a week covering the British National Children's Ski Championships for Racer Ready magazine of Great Britain and the local Montana papers. Mike lives in Bozeman with Kristin, his wife of 40 years, and in addition to his photography enjoys skiing, fly fishing, biking, hunting, gardening and camping with his two grown children and two grandsons.



## Derek Brouwer joins the Independent Record as business and education reporter

Originally from Pittsburgh, Derek is a 2013 graduate of Montana State University, where he served as editor at the MSU Exponent. Brouwer said he is eager to become part of the Helena community and cover two of its cornerstones: education and local business.

"Derek is going to make a great addition to the Independent Record," said IR Managing Editor Greg Lemon. "He brings a lot of passion and commitment to the newsroom. Covering

school and education news is important to us and our readers. Derek is going to continue our vision of providing the best local news in Helena."



## Bill Vander Weele promoted to position of editor at the Sidney Herald

After serving as sports editor at the Herald for 14 years, Vander Weele has been the newspaper's managing editor since April 1998. During his time as the Herald's managing editor, Vander Weele has guided the Herald in producing award-winning publications. Honors that the Herald has won in the Montana Newspaper Association's Better Newspaper Contest have included general excellence, best overall design, best front page, best in-depth reporting and best editorial page.

Individually, during this time, Vander Weele has received honors for best editorial writing, best column writing and best feature photo.

"Our goal remains providing top-notch community journalism to our readers," Vander Weele said. "Whether it's in print or online, I feel our readers trust us as their source for correct and complete local news."

## New reporter at Culbertson Searchlight

Nancy Mahan has been a reporter for the Culbertson Searchlight newspaper since June 15 and loves it as much as she does being head cook for the kids at the Culbertson School. Her goal for the Searchlight is to keep the community connected by sharing all adventures, accomplishments, and accolades.

Nancy moved to Culbertson in January 2012 from Roseburg, Oregon, in search of an adventure. She found the small town transition easy and the landscape/wildlife to be just as wonderful here as it was living on the Umpqua River.

She is looking forward to cooking at the school again and coming to the Searchlight office after school to keep the stories and the advertisements coming.



## Big Horn County News welcomes new reporter

Levi Old Elk will cover stories and events as reporter for the Big Horn County News. Old Elk was born in Montana and graduated from Hardin High School in 1995. He is a member of the Crow Tribe and attended Little Big Horn College and MSU-Bozeman where he gained experience in journalism writing articles for the Billings Outpost and The Original Briefs.

# PEOPLE and PAPERS



## Montanan Standard hires editor

Matt Christensen has been hired as the new editor of The Montana Standard.

The former city editor of the La Crosse Tribune in La Crosse, Wis., Christensen has worked at newspapers in Twin Falls, Idaho, and Winona, Minn. He is a graduate of Iowa State University and a native of East Moline, Ill. As editor, Christensen will oversee print and online news operations.



## Stover signs with Herald-News

New Wolf Point Herald-News editor, Al Stover, is originally from Spokane, Wash., and a recent graduate of Eastern Washington University with a bachelor's degree in journalism and a minor in visual communication design.

## Michelle Donahey to join the Billings Gazette retail advertising sales department

Donahey has been a member of the Gazette team for 12 years and brings with her an extensive knowledge of print, online and social marketing strategies. She had previously been the sole representative for the Montana Land Magazine publication for the last 10 years. Donahey has been successful in helping to market and increase business for her classified accounts in the real estate, retail, automotive and auction categories.

## Miles City Star staffer wins state writing award

Miles City Star won a third place in environment/natural resources for a story in the Montana Newspaper Association's annual contest.

The article, titled Oil 101, was written by Star staff writer Don Cogger. Cogger, who was born in Minnesota but grew up in Anchorage, Alaska, has been with the Star for three and a half years. Cogger has a communications degree with an emphasis in print journalism from St. Cloud State University.

The story dealt with impacts of the current oil boom in eastern Montana and western North Dakota.

## Sidney Herald partners with Google

Online readers of the Sidney Herald are now asked to take a short survey to access full versions of stories. Wick Communications and the Sidney Herald are partnering with Google to implement a survey component on its sites.

Robert Arrowsmith, publisher of the Sidney Herald, said Google works with companies looking for market research, and news sites are attractive survey points because of various groups who read online news. Individually, the newspaper receives a small percentage for each survey, but the total impact helps defray hosting and staffing costs for the newspapers' websites.

Arrowsmith added that at no time during taking this survey do Google or the marketing research firms capture any of your personal information.

When reading online, a news story will show the first few paragraphs, then the reader is required to answer a few multiple-choice questions in order to view the rest of the story

## Choteau Acantha wins national awards

The Choteau Acantha advertising staff has won two awards in the National Newspaper Association's 2013 Better Newspaper Advertising Contest.

The Acantha, competing in the daily and non-daily division for newspapers with fewer than 10,000 subscribers, placed third in the "Best Single Ad Idea—Black and White" category for Megan Klingaman's "Feeling Pain at the Pump?" advertisement for Van Motors in Conrad.

The Acantha received a Honorable Mention in the "Best Series Ad Idea—Color" for Klingaman's advertising series on the Old West Lumber store expansion.

## Kyle Houghtaling joins the Anaconda Leader

The Anaconda Leader has a new sports writer with Montana native Kyle Houghtaling, 23, joining the staff in early August. Houghtaling [pronounced hotel-ing] was in high school when he decided to pursue journalism as a career.

He received a degree in journalism and a minor in political science from the University of Montana. While in college, he worked for the UM student paper, where he covered Grizzly sports, including basketball, tennis and hockey. He also interned at The Missoulian.

## Editor joins Searchlight, Herald-News staffs

Daniel Lawrence is the new editor for the Culbertson Searchlight and will be contributing writer for the Wolf Point Herald-News.

Lawrence is originally from Fort Scott, Kansas, a small town amount an hour south of Kansas City. He earned an associate of science degree in American History in 2009, followed by a bachelor of science degree in American History with a minor in journalism from Emporia State University in Emporia, Kansas. The Searchlight is his inaugural writing position.

## New face at the Independent-Observer

Melissa Huber is a Conrad native, graduating from Conrad High School in 2004. She attended Central Washington University, where her love of acting was switched to a love of writing. She would like to write a novel someday.

# PEOPLE and PAPERS

## Business journal keeping the valley covered

Last month, the Flathead Business Journal celebrated its 22nd year of continuous publication telling the stories of northwest Montana's business community.

## New faces at Outlaw Partners

Newest faces at Outlaw Partners bring a quiver of talents, a fresh approach and game-changing creativity.

**Joe Paulet**, videographer/photographer from Portland, Ore., studied digital media production at the Art Institute of Portland.

**Alexandra Sidun** has been design assistant since May. Currently enrolled at James Madison University in Virginia, Sidun plans to take her experiences back east for her senior year this fall.

**Lauren Rieschel**, editorial assistant, is a boarding student at Stevenson School in Pebble Beach, Calif. Rieschel plans to utilize her experience in Outlaw's editorial department to help with her high school newspaper.

**Matt Hudson**, editorial assistant, was born and raised in Great Falls, Mont. As a summer editorial assistant at Outlaw, Hudson reports and writes stories for publication and contributes to in-house meetings and discussions. Hudson will resume his senior year at the University of Montana School of Journalism.

Photo provided by Eliza Wiley, Independent Record.

For more great MNA member photos go to [mtnewspapers.com](http://mtnewspapers.com)

## Getting funny: Daily Comical gets a revamp

After two separate reader surveys, the Bozeman Daily Chronicle introduced revamped offerings of comics and puzzles. The new lineup includes seven new comic strips, the daily version of the Los Angeles Times crossword and a new math puzzle, KenKen.

The Chronicle initially asked readers to suggest comics they'd like to see as part of the newspaper's daily lineup. The paper then narrowed that list to 10 finalists, and readers were asked to cast votes for the potential additions. More than 1,000 readers chimed in, either online or by mail.



**Blue Heavens** is the title given this image by Billings Gazette photographer James Woodcock of a lenticular cloud formed as high winds blew over the Crazy Mountains this past January. The photograph earned The Mel Ruder Photojournalism Award at the MNA Better Newspaper Awards presentation in June. Congratulations Jim!

# SALES & MARKETING

## Where to Improve Current Ad Schedules

Help merchants see when they need to advertise by doing a timing test with them. Graph advertising expenditures for clients versus their sales figures as shown in the 4-Step Ad Plan. This can be done as a percentage of sales if they don't want to give you exact figures. The graphs can be done weekly or monthly, depending on how much interest merchants show and how much they trust you. Chances are fairly high that a merchant's ad expenditures and sales trends don't look much alike on the graph.

**When helping a merchant determine a monthly, quarterly or annual budget, consider these steps:**

**1. Start with frequency.** People buy products and services all year. Allocate week-to-week expenditures because that's the amount each week that will vary.

**2. Heavy payroll weeks.** Look for particularly heavy payroll weeks of major employers. You know that the first week of the month Social Security and welfare checks are in circulation.

**3. Heavy store traffic and sales weeks.** What are the naturally heavy store traffic and sales weeks? What are natural sales events such as the Fourth of July, Labor Day, back-to-school, Mother's Day, etc.?

**4. Tie-ins.** Are tie-ins possible with national and local merchandising or promotional events? Are special co-op funds available?

**5. Competitive arena.** What are competitors doing? Are they advertising heavily? They can't be ignored in a merchant's overall advertising strategy.

**6. Creative strategy.** What's the creative strategy (multi-item ads vs. individual merchandise ads) favored by the merchant? Multi-item omnibus ads expose more merchandise at a lower cost per item because several items share the headline and signature costs.

**7. Newspaper discounts.** What frequency discounts does the newspaper offer? It might be advantageous for the advertiser to run more linage to obtain the extra discount.

**8. Special sections.** What targeted special sections are appropriate for the advertiser?

**9. Color ads.** Use of color has a striking effect on readers' noting of ads. Studies have shown that color also increases sales of merchandise in the ad. Retailers are constantly seeking opportunities to bring more people into their place of business, whether it's the primary mall in town or a single location. They know that theirs is a numbers game and that the more people who come through, the higher sales are likely to be because shoppers tend to be buyers. Holidays are often used as a theme for sales. Not surprisingly, most months include holidays, so it's very common for a retailer to build a sale around one. A few of the most popular holiday and seasonal events include post-Christmas, New Year's and Martin Luther King Jr. Day (January); Presidents Day, Lincoln's and Washington's birthdays and Valentine's Day (February); Easter and arrival of spring (March or April); Mother's Day and Memorial Day (May); Father's Day (June); Independence Day (July 4); summer (June-August); back to school (August or September); Labor Day and Grandparents Day (September); Columbus Day and Halloween (October); Election Day, Veterans Day and Thanksgiving (November); Hanukkah, Christmas and New

Year's Eve (December). Of course, local dates and events in most communities also dot the calendar. Ad themes are built around events such as those above, and ad headlines and body copy flow naturally from those themes. Who hasn't seen a Sizzling Summer, New Year's Clearance or Christmas in July sale announced in the paper? Retailers can use other themes and approaches.

Source: NAA

### Newspaper promotion by the Great Falls Tribune.

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