Best Feature Photo  
Division 5  
2014 MNA Better Newspaper Contest

By Casey Page, Billings Gazette

The photo was taken at a wool farm outside of Billings.

The sheep there are a little more tame than most sheep, and seemed to be comfortable with the reporter, me, the cameras and the dog.

I shot only a couple of frames from my knees in the dirty straw, with the camera held down to the ground tilted up.

It was a little bit of luck that the focus was just right, and the dog and sheep turned their heads away at that moment.

Shot on my Canon 5D with my 16-35mm f/2.8 lens at 16mm, ISO 50, f/7.1 with the shutter at 1/640 seconds on manual.
**MNA Calendar**

**September**
1. Labor Day, MNA office closed
4. Newspaper Carrier Day
19. Deadline to submit articles for the September Press Pass
19. MNA & MNAS board of directors meeting, Bozeman
26. U of M J-School Centennial: Don Anderson Hall open house
26. U of M J-School Centennial: Dean Stone tribute and reception
26. U of M J-School Centennial: All-alumni & friends party in the Adams Center Field House
27. U of M J-School Centennial: Parade float, tailgate and Griz football Saturday
27. U of M J-School Centennial: All-Kaimin reunion Saturday night

**October**
1. Deadline to file USPS Statement of Ownership, Management & Circulation Form 3526
1. 2015 Rate & Data Survey emailed to MNA members
17. Deadline to submit articles for the October Press Pass

**November**
1. Deadline to complete the 2015 Rate & Data Survey
3. Montana Newspaper Foundation 2015 Internship Grant application opens
21. Deadline to submit articles for the November Press Pass
27-28. Thanksgiving - MNA office closed

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**In Memorium**

**Mark Mascarenas**
Mark Mascarenas 49, of Great Falls, passed away Sunday, August 3, 2014. Mark was born March 1, 1965 in Denver, CO, and was educated in Shelby, MT, graduating in 1983. He later attended Montana State University in Bozeman, MT and graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Business.
Mark was a long-time employee of the Great Falls Tribune Classified Advertising Department, leaving for medical reasons after serving his valued customers for almost 20 years.

**Peter James 'Jamie' Kelly**
MISSOULA - On Thursday, August 7, 2014, the world lost a beautiful soul. We lost a passionate jazz pianist, a gifted writer and journalist, a comic, a philosopher, a budding but brilliant paralegal, and baseball certainly lost its biggest fan.
Jamie was born May 10, 1968, in Helena, but spent most of his life in Missoula, a city that was his heart’s home. He inherited his love for baseball from his dad and shared it with his brothers. His days as a Little League pitcher were some of the most joyous of his life. He considered baseball to be a perfect, almost mystical game.
As a freshman in high school, he discovered the piano and from the moment his fingers first touched the keys, it became his. Anyone who saw Jamie perform could see that Jamie brought all of himself into his music and to hear him play was a gift.
Jamie's love of music was nearly matched by his love of writing. He was a graduate of the University of Montana School of Journalism. He enjoyed a long career at the Missoulian as a copy editor, reporter, and most famously for his memorable and thought-provoking column, “Fatuous Twaddle,” which inspired laughter, tears and even sometimes anger from his loyal readers.

- 30 -
Brian was born in Shelby on Sept. 10, 1960. I was born in Glendive on July 12, 1959. He attended Missoula Hellgate for three years but then moved to Shelby to live with his father, John his senior year and graduated from Shelby High School in 1978. I graduated from Wolf Point High School in 1977.

Brian worked summers for his dad at the Shelby Promoter and is the fourth generation of Kavanaths to be involved in the business. Sam Gilluly’s, *The Press Gang*, noted, “The Kavanagh family has a near-record period for a one-family newspaper publication in Montana.” (And that book was published 30 years ago!)

I dabbled in newspapers back in high school, where I was a co-editor of the high school newspaper. At Carroll College, I was a reporter on the college paper and then served as co-editor one year.

Brian and I met at Carroll and married four years later. I graduated magna cum laude with a BA in English and a minor in communications in 1981 and Brian graduated the following year with a BA in Business Administration and a minor in History. He played basketball for four years for the Saints and is member of the Saints Athletic Hall of Fame. Between the two of us, we have one three-credit journalism class.

We have three sons, Brandon 31, Kevin 28 and Nate 21 and all three have worked at the paper at one time or another. Two of them were fired more than once. Kevin is married and he and wife, Alyssa, are expecting their first child (a boy) and our first grandchild in November.

We attended our first newspaper convention 31 years ago, in 1983 and have only missed a handful since then, usually because Brian was coaching his team in a summer tournament.

We purchased the Glacier Reporter in Browning from Brian’s dad in 1986 and later the Cut Bank Pioneer Press and Shelby Promoter in 1995. We added The Valierian, which serves the communities of Valier and Dupuyer, in 2004.

Our newspapers, and both of us, have won numerous writing, advertising, photography, design and online publication awards, including General Excellence and General Excellence in Advertising in the Montana Newspaper Associational annual Better Newspaper Contest. I won first place for “Best Editorial” in the National Newspaper Association’s contest in 2008. We leave the contests and awards to others now. We were awarded the 2006 MNA President’s Award by Jeff Martinson and were named MNA’s Master Editor Publisher recipients in 2008.

We have Mike Meloy and the FOI Hotline on speed dial and have the “watch dog” reputation for keeping an eye on local government and being a voice for freedom of information, opening meetings and the public’s right to know. We also pride ourselves on owning newspapers that are very community-oriented, and believe our role as publishers carries with it a responsibility to not only educate, inform and entertain our readers, but also to be involved in growing our communities.

Brian has been a basketball coach for nearly as long as we’ve been married and was Cut Bank’s head varsity boys’ basketball coach for 21 years, retiring in 2011. He came out of retirement last year to coach the eighth grade boys’ team. He guided his high school teams to four state championships, and had a streak of qualifying his teams for the state tourney nine out of 10 years. He has been named the Montana Coaches Association’s Coach of the Year four times and was Montana’s nominee for the National High School Basketball Association’s Coaches Hall of Fame.

He is a former director on the Montana Newspaper Advertising Service board, a charter member of the Cut Bank Education Foundation and Alumni Association board and has served on both the Cut Bank and Shelby Chambers’s board of directors. He was also named Cut Bank’s Citizen of the Year in 2012. Brian also gives rural Montana a voice through his recent appointment to the AAA Mountain West Board of Directors, which serves AAA members in Alaska, Montana and Wyoming.

I am a former Chamber President (two years) and currently serve as the organization’s secretary. This is fifth (3-year) term as a Chamber board member. I am a charter member of the Wishing Well, a non-profit organization that raises funds for our hospital. I also sit on the Chamber’s Economic Development Board, Glacier County Port Authority and Community Policing Board. I received the Great Falls Tribune’s “Women to Watch” award in 2007 (ages 36-65). In 1992, I was one of two recipients of the Cut Bank’s Outstanding Citizen Award. (The other was Jim O’Day, a former newspaper publisher.)

We both volunteer for the Harvest Food Pantry, are members of St. Margaret Catholic Church and will guest bartend for any charitable group or fundraiser that asks for our help. We are members as well as officers of the Cut Bank Booster Club. Brian is President and I’m the secretary.

continued >>
continued from page 3

Many people marvel at the fact we have been able to work together for nearly 32 years in a business that, at times, feels like we are on call 24/7, always racing to meet a deadline, attend a meeting or take a picture. We pride ourselves on the fact that we’ve been able to do it while still making our family our first priority.

Important things we’ve learned and rewarding aspects of this job:

The opportunity to meet and associate with people from all walks of life over the last 30 plus years has been one of the highlights of our newspaper careers. Community journalism is all about people. Everyone has a story. Community journalists are the ones who take the time to find out those stories and share them with their readers.

Also, having people think of us as their “go to” source for just about everything: What’s the movie this weekend? How can Sen. Daines use my tax dollars to send out mass mailings? Why is the city digging up my street? What time does the library open? Who has money to help the CASA program? We get all those calls and more.

And if we don’t know the answer, we’ll find it.

We’ve also learned how to shift gears and take time for ourselves. We can’t do it all nor do we want to anymore. Our advice to our peers in publishing:

You need a good staff and then you need to let them do the job you’ve hired them to do.

You need to take vacations…three days, seven days, 10 days. It doesn’t matter how long those vacations are, but they are a must. Your staff can do it without you--give them the chance.

We believe adapting to the changing ways of the word means expanding your newspaper to include both the print product and some type of social media and online presence. We have had websites for years, but only in the past three years or so have we started charging for our e-editions. And people gladly pay to have the newspaper readily accessible on their electronic devices and it saves us from the barrage of complaints from unhappy out-of-state readers whose papers are always late. We also have Facebook pages for our papers.

MNA and its staff are great resources for all MNA members not just us. MNA brings the “newspaper fraternity” together to share ideas, problems, and camaraderie. MNA offers an accessible avenue of continuing education throughout the year for those who choose to take advantage of the seminars. The MNA’s lobbying efforts provide us with a strong, informed voice on key issues facing our industry and the sales efforts by the staff are beginning to pay off with additional advertising revenues.

University of Montana Journalism School Names Pollner Professor for Spring 2015

The University of Montana School of Journalism has chosen editor and media design consultant Ron Reason for the spring 2015 T. Anthony Pollner Distinguished Professorship.

UM J-school Dean Larry Abramson announced the selection, saying that a committee of faculty and former Pollner professors agreed on the choice after a rigorous vetting process.

Principal of his self-titled consulting company, Reason has helped newspapers and magazines worldwide improve their design strategies. He has 25 years of experience working with publishers from Dubai to Chicago as they aim to build a distinctive brand in the digital age.

Before he opened his own consulting firm, Reason was on the faculty of the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, a media think tank and training program in St. Petersburg, Fla. Before that, Reason spent 10 years in various editing, design and photography roles at the St. Petersburg (now Tampa Bay) Times.

Reason will serve as the inaugural faculty member for the spring professorship, ushering in an expansion of the 14-year-old T. Anthony Pollner Professorship, which has grown from a fall professorship with writing and reporting as its focus to a spring professorship with visual storytelling and online journalism as its focus.

“This new program will be a terrific addition for students interested in the role that visuals play in the journalism business,” Abramson said. “Reason’s recent experience with industry will provide an important link to the tough design decisions that news outlets face today.”

Reason will teach a course that examines how media outlets have used design as they adapt to the digital era. Reason also will serve as an adviser to the Montana Kaimin, UM’s student-run independent newspaper.

The professorship is named after T. Anthony Pollner, a graduate of the school who died in a motorcycle accident in 2001. Generous support from friends and family of Anthony Pollner has made both professorships possible.

The fall installment of the professorship will bring William Glaberson to campus. The former New York Times reporter will teach a course on covering the courts. Reason also will serve as an adviser to the Montana Kaimin, UM’s student-run independent newspaper.

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The fall installment of the professorship will bring William Glaberson to campus. The former New York Times reporter will teach a course on covering the courts. Glaberson will deliver the T. Anthony Pollner Lecture at 7 p.m. Monday, Sept. 29, at the University Center Theater on the UM campus.
Headlines and headaches

By Darrell Ehrlick, Editor
JULY 27, 2014 BILLINGS GAZETTE

Headlines give me headaches. That’s about the easiest way to say it. I love my job. I love this community. And I enjoy being a journalist. You’d think crime coverage, or deadlines or even dealing with the Sudoku puzzles would cause a more dramatic rise in my blood pressure. Nope. Headlines.

Of the hundreds of calls dealing with angry readers or those just offering feedback, headlines are the most challenging and among the most frequent.

Let me explain why by asking a question: Can you tell me any story in four-and-a-half words? That’s the length of the average newspaper headline – 4.5 words. And no matter how precisely we use those 4.5 words – heck, double to nine – it’s hard to summarize a story perfectly in just those few words.

Nuance and details

Nothing is more obvious when it’s wrong in big, black, bold type. The problem boils down to nuance and details. No matter what story we cover (the average story length is around 325 words), the causes, the issues or the background shade the story in such a way that writing a succinct, completely encompassing headline is darn near impossible. But that doesn’t stop the folks at The Gazette, or any paper for that matter, from trying.

Headlines on stories, briefs and text that points readers to different parts of the newspaper – an average edition will contain more than 200. A Sunday edition may contain triple that number. I can sit here and point out that 598 of 600 is a 99.7 percent accuracy rate. And most folks would say that if they could be successful in business in 99.7 percent of their endeavors, it would be an overwhelming success. In the newspaper business, if you blow two headlines in one edition, it’s a very bad day for the page designer and the editor. But headlines are also a great exercise in describing what really matters. In some cases, when a writer is struggling to put together a story, I ask, “What’s your headline?” There’s a near-perfect correlation between struggling to find a story’s point and not being able to write a headline. Writers who know what the story is about usually come up with a headline instantly. If they can’t write a headline, it usually means they haven’t crystallized the heart of their story.

Each word counts

The beauty and art of headline writing, though, is in making each word count. Every word has to be so much more important.

The art of headline writing ultimately comes down to a clever quip by Blaise Pascal (although it’s often attributed to Mark Twain): “I would have written a shorter letter, but I didn’t have the time.”

When you’re given a lot of space to write plenty of words, you become less worried about making each one count.

I can’t begin to tell you how many conversations I’ve had with readers that begin something like this: “Your story is fine, but the headline is wrong.” That shouldn’t mean that we should be given a free pass on headlines that don’t quite measure up.

Every business and industry has its challenges. It’s kind of like a baker complaining that it’s hard to make great cake. Some readers wonder if we have copy editors who are asleep. They often wonder: “How could something like this slip through?”

And it would be easy to wonder if they’re not sleeping or tuned out. But just the opposite is true. The Gazette prints three editions every night. That means we have three different deadlines, each requiring new headlines to be written and new stories to be placed on the page. In other words, new opportunities for mistakes. It’s often so crammed at the end that there’s just enough time to make a few headline wording decisions. That’s about it.

As one copy editor recently told me, “We plan our pee breaks based on what time the presses start.”

DON’T GET LEFT in the dark
FIND OUT if the restaurant in your neighborhood applied for a liquor license OR government agencies are buying the products your company makes OR the assets of your late aunt’s estate are being distrubuted AND MORE

READ PUBLIC NOTICES
FOR PUBLICATION at www.MontanaPublicNotices.com

MNA launched montanapublicnotices.com, our new, statewide public notice website on May 1.

We encourage MNA members to publish print ads to promote the site. This is the first ad in an ongoing series to promote the value of public notices and the website. Ads can be found in a folder at the MNA ftp site. Thank you!
This promotional ad was published in the July 20, 2014 edition of the Bozeman Daily Chronicle.

Congratulations to the staff of the Chronicle!
The School of Journalism recently played host to nine Chinese students, all making their first trip to the United States.

The students are studying journalism and languages at Shanghai International Studies University and will spend a month on campus learning from UM professors and media professionals in western Montana. The exchange was organized by Professors Dennis Swibold and Clem Work and UM’s Office of International Programs.

The partnership began this spring when Swibold visited SISU to teach. Three of the group – Tang Jinglei, Lin Li and Zhang Kaiju – are graduate students who took the special two-week intensive course on the American Press and Politics this spring from Professor Swibold at SISU’s sprawling suburban campus.

“It was great to see them again,” Swibold said.

In addition to studying American news practices, the students are taking in the sights. They spent the Fourth of July on the Flathead Indian Reservation, attending the 116th annual powwow of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. They interviewed elders and dancers and shot photos and video for reports that will appear in SISU’s campus newspaper and website. Some even joined the dancers.

Lu Nan, a junior from Dongyang, a “small” city of more than 750,000 people in Zhejiang Province, said she was impressed with the Missoula Valley at first sight.

“When I got off the plane and walked out of the airport, the first word that came to my mind was ‘paradise,’” with fresh air, clear sky and green mountains,” she said. “Missoula is a peaceful city, and everyone here is willing to help, just like friends.”

A trip to Missoula’s Saturday morning farmers markets sealed the deal. “The big smiles and the welcome words when people learned we are from China touched me deeply,” she said.

The group has toured Glacier National Park and is scheduled to visit Yellowstone National Park and the Montana state capitol building in Helena.

Each day, the students study stories from Missoula-area news outlets as a way to learn about issues important to the community and to improve their English. They’ll also study First Amendment law and journalism ethics.

Visits with Missoula’s Mayor and J-School alum John Engen and other officials are on tap, along with a tour of the Missoulian and a trip to watch the city’s courts in action. Their final week will be spent shadowing professionals at Missoula’s newspapers, TV stations and Montana Public Radio.

Only three of the students are from Shanghai. The rest hail from Anhui, Shandong, Sichuan and Zhejiang provinces.

Zhang Kaiju, one of the three graduate students in the group, said many things have impressed her, including Don Anderson Hall, the Montana Kaimin and the senior projects such as the Montana Journalism Review. “The students) get all the stories and pictures by themselves and operate the media themselves, and they do a really great job,” she said.

Another surprise, she said, are Missoula’s Wi-Fi-equipped buses that also accommodate people with bicycles, baby carriages and wheelchairs.

“I found people in Montana are so nice and kind,” she added. “Whenever I get lost and ask people for help, they always help. People will always say hi to you, even if they don’t know you.”

Montana’s natural beauty drew raves too. “The environment is great, and there are a lot of animals living harmoniously with human beings,” Zhang said. “I’ve never seen deer and so many squirrels, coming and going, before.”

You can follow the students’ experience at www.sisuinmontana.org.
Don’t steal newspapers to get coupons

By Jill Cataldo
JULY 26, 2014 GREAT FALLS TRIBUNE

Each week when I peek into my email inbox, I’ll see reader questions like these: “Any tips on how to get coupon inserts? I’m new and missing the last few weeks of inserts.” “I need more coupon inserts than what comes in my paper. How can I get a bunch more?”

My answer to this question is always the same – subscribe to your local newspaper, or buy extra copies of the paper on the newsstand. There are no authorized ways to obtain large numbers of additional coupon inserts. While it’s true that you’ll find websites offering clipped coupons and whole inserts for sale, this is an unauthorized “industry.”

Most coupons contain wording stating that they are void if sold. Additionally, you have no way of knowing whether or not the coupon you’re “buying” is a legitimate coupon or a counterfeit.

Unfortunately, the “simply buy more newspapers” advice isn’t enough for some coupon extremists. Some resort to stealing newspapers to get more coupons, and it’s always sad to me when I see stories in the news about this issue. The newspapers are none too happy about it either.

Here’s an email I received from a newspaper distributor:

Dear Jill,

In the last couple of years, the problems caused for us by extreme couponers are major. Bundles of advertising sections for the Sunday paper are being stolen so the couponers can sell the whole bundles to other extreme couponers. People drive through neighborhoods after the papers have been delivered and steal them from driveways.

There are so many problems with this (besides the outright illegality of stealing something that isn’t yours). One is that the person who delivers the papers is blamed for not delivering the papers. They also get charged for each of the missed paper complaints. At our business, the going rate is $2 per daily paper and $4 for each Sunday paper. They are only paid on average less than 15 cents to deliver each paper Mon-Sat, and maybe 25 cents average for each Sunday paper.

Then, the distributor pays a separate person to go out and deliver papers again to the people who complained they were missed. For every extra (stolen) paper that causes a complaint, these complaint delivery people have to waste more gas for which they don’t get reimbursed.

You wouldn’t think that theft accounts for many complaints, but I think we would all be surprised if we could prove how many really are stolen and not “missed.”

Many customers, especially those whom you know are couponers because they subscribe to at least four papers, will claim to always be missing the coupon sections and request additional ones.

We even now have to deal with our own delivery people either stealing other people’s papers to sell to couponers, or not deliver their own “free” advertising papers so they can sell the coupons. We had a former delivery person who we knew was stealing papers for this reason.

It makes me disgusted with people who do this. Shame on these people. For the couponers and sellers of coupons to profit by causing expense and frustrations to the people who deliver papers 365 days a year without a day off (and the hardest papers to deliver are on the holidays of Thanksgiving and Christmas when the workload at least doubles with more papers, bigger ads and double deliveries of the free papers that contain the ads and coupons).

I doubt there is any solution to this problem anytime soon, especially since even the police won’t do anything when we can tell them exactly who is stealing papers and coupons, and the people who do this don’t care; they have no morals about this type of crime. Like I said, they think it is a victimless crime. Nay, they don’t think it is a crime.

– Susanne M.

Smart Living Tip: Never steal newspapers in order to get more coupons! I’m not sure why some people view this as a “victimless crime,” as it hurts the carrier, the newspaper and others. Is it really worth facing arrest over coupons?

CTW Features. Jill Cataldo, a coupon workshop instructor, writer and mother of three, never passes up a good deal. Learn more about Super-Couponing at her website, www.jillcataldo.com. Email your own couponing victories and questions to jill@ctwfeatures.com.

Sports writer wanted

The Anaconda Leader is presently seeking a full-time sports writer for our semi-weekly community newspaper in Anaconda, MT.

Stay in the Big Sky Country! Sports writing ability and computer skills are necessary. Competitive salary and benefits.

For more job specifics, please contact Dean Neitz, Publisher, or Kathie Miller, editor, at the Anaconda Leader, 121 Main Street, Anaconda, MT 59711. Phone (406) 563-5283, or email leadernews@anacondaleader.com.
What the newspaper trends of 2014 mean for industry’s future

By Caroline Little

The newspaper industry has transformed in a way that we could not have imagined just a decade ago. Across the globe, there is a renewed energy to innovate, strategize, and meet these growing opportunities and challenges. That was the theme of the World Newspapers Congress, which I had the pleasure of speaking at earlier this month, and it rings very true for our industry in America.

We are more than halfway through 2014. From the creative solutions and trends I am seeing, we are in an excellent position to further evolve and thrive for the rest of this year and far beyond.

Newspapers continue to command a huge audience and remain the most-trusted source of news and information. While that will not change, there has been a key shift in the way information is delivered and audience is engaged. The World Editors Forum revealed their Top 10 Trends in 2014, and it is intriguing to explore the way those trends will impact our business.

The importance and influence of data and analytics on every part of our industry cannot be underestimated. It is only going to grow. Much has been made of recent ventures in data-focused journalism, such as statistics and data-driven predictions that will figure more and more heavily in mainstream journalism. Publishers and journalists across the country are now relying on hard metrics to assess the readership and engagement of a given story, and the more we do so, the more successful we will be as we understand what interests drive our unique audiences and tailor our offerings accordingly.

As I’ve noted before, data plays a critical role in our increasingly personalized world.

The days of a one-size-fits-all solution to news are ending, and newspapers are in a strong position to capitalize. We have enormous amounts of data at our disposal to deliver a customized news experience. The opportunity lies in analyzing and leveraging that data to create and strengthen our products for consumers and advertisers.

As we do this, we will see advertisers follow. The advertising landscape has likewise changed dramatically, as consumers now choose whether or not they view ads and insist on relevant, personalized material. Advertisers are looking for precisely targeted audiences, and newspapers’ data on user engagement and experiences will enable them to deliver exactly that.

Another trend that will significantly shape our industry is thinking about mobile strategy first, instead of it being tacked on as an after-thought. Excellent video products have become critical storytelling vehicles for newspapers, with the possibility that our quick, agile videos – perfect for mobile platforms – can challenge traditional broadcasting. Our focus in video over the next few months should focus on refining individual formulas for creating successful videos and integrating them even better with our other content offerings.

The ways in which journalists report the news may be changing but the essence of a free press is not, despite being challenged on multiple fronts around the world. We have seen journalists in Venezuela and Hungary threatened with violence or had information suppressed in the past couple of months.

Here in the United States, New York Times reporter James Risen could face stiff fines or jail time for not sharing confidential sources, which shows why we need a federal shield law for reporters to be able to cover our government without fear of prosecution.

Newspapers are at the forefront of research and planning for the explosion of wearable tech, developing and refining the types of journalism that will be most successful. The ubiquity of social media, push notifications and short-form stories for apps has created a distinct, on-the-go audience that will look for even more immediately available, “snackable” content with the influence of wearables.

However, as Reuters’ Digital News Report points out, that will create greater audience segmentation as younger generations use smartphones and tablets to constantly consume news, while more traditional offerings remain the product of choice for other generations.

Newspapers are tasked with balancing and integrating strategies across each platform and generation to effectively reach every audience. Indeed, one of the biggest mistakes leaders in any industry could make today is eschewing one platform for another, trendier medium without considering how they complement each other.

As we enter the second half of 2014, it is encouraging to look at the amount of growth, innovation and new investment we have seen in the first half. I am proud to say that next year, the NAA will partner with the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers in bringing the World Newspaper Congress to our hometown of Washington, D.C.

I’m eagerly anticipating where our industry will be in 12 months. With the wealth of talent and energy at our disposal, I have confidence that these trends forecast a very bright year.

Little is president and CEO of the Newspaper Association of America.
Library now has most current Pioneer archives online

By Michael Wright July 24, 2014

Big Timber Pioneer

With the push of a button, Kate Lewis finished a four-year project. On June 28, the day of Sweet Grass Fest and the Big Timber Carnegie Library’s centennial celebration, Lewis went into her library office and, with the push of the button, told her computer to index the year 2000’s Big Timber Pioneer archives, the final step to putting them online as a part of the Montana Memory Project.

The Montana Memory Project is a joint venture between the Montana State Library and the Montana Historical Society, and its goal is to create a digital database of Montana’s past on a free website.

Lewis’ part for the last few years has been to upload archived newspapers to the library computers and then to the site’s server. Her efforts were funded by about $15,000 in donations and a $1,000 grant from the Montana Memory Project. She went through a long process to add over 100 years of newspapers to the site. Old newspapers had to be scanned and turned to microfilm. Then, the microfilms were sent to a digitizing company in Iowa that put the newspapers on a hard drive and sent it back to Big Timber. The library has the copyright to newspapers up to 2003.

Lewis said she decided to only upload newspapers to the year 2000 because it seemed like the right place to stop. Now, she is putting the final touches on the data. She is going through each year and adding the proper newspaper editor’s name to the database. MW Hatch was the first editor in 1893, and the first newspaper in the digital archive is headlined by a story about a train running nonstop from St. Paul, Minn., to San Francisco, Calif. The last issue entered into the archives was edited by Dale C. and Beccy Oberly, and a photograph of a deer eating grass appears on the front, with the headline, “Dining Out.”

Digitizing the archives is one of the final things Lewis will do as the librarian. She will retire in 2015, shortly after her birthday, and she is proud to end with such a big project. “It’s a legacy I can leave behind,” she said.

Gannett to spin off its publishing business

By Roger Yu and Kim Hjelmgaard
USA Today

Gannett, the owner of USA Today and the Great Falls Tribune, will create two publicly traded companies next year as it moves to separate its broadcasting and digital businesses from its publishing division the company said. It is a strategic move similarly adopted by competitors to shield more profitable business lines from the decline in print advertising.

“The bold actions we are announcing today are significant next steps in our ongoing initiatives to increase shareholder value by building scale, increasing cash flow, sharpening management focus and strengthening all of our businesses to compete effectively in today’s increasingly digital landscape,” Gracia Martore, Gannett’s CEO, said in a statement.

The planned spinoff of the publishing business, including USA Today, 81 other daily newspapers and their affiliated websites, will be implemented through a tax-free distribution of its publishing assets to shareholders. The publishing business, which will retain the name Gannett, will be “virtually debt-free” after the separation as the broadcasting and digital company will retain the existing debt.

Robert J. Dickey, currently president of Gannett’s U.S. Community Publishing division, will become CEO of the publishing company. The broadcasting and digital company, which will be renamed and headed by Martore, will own or provide services to 46 television stations and operate several websites that are not tied to newspapers.

Gannett also said Tuesday that it will buy all Cars.com shares it doesn’t already own from Classified Ventures, totaling about 73 percent, for $1.8 billion in cash, and the move nearly doubles its digital business.

Gannett said it anticipates the initial combined dividend of the two companies “will not be less than” Gannett’s current 20 cents per share issued quarterly.

Thou shalt not steal!

Dillon Tribune
Wednesday, July 30, 2014

Hey, it’s one of THOSE commandments ... you know, the ones that are on billboards and in Bibles and the Quran and the Torah and other holy books.

This week’s yield from our newspaper machines included at least three washers and three electrical junction box slugs. At least you’re willing to risk the wrath of the Almighty just to read the Dillon Tribune!
Smokey Sunset

By Chris Peterson, Hungry Horse News, July 23, 2014

This is a sunset on the Swan Crest. I’m re-creating a hike (with modifications) from the Jewel Basin to the Mission Mountain Wilderness Bob Marshall took 86 years ago as part of a recognition of the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act.
Higher or lower? The challenge of newspaper pricing in print and digital

By Henry Taylor

Determining how to price a print edition is still a major concern for newspapers. After all, that chunk of paper is still where the bulk of most publications’ revenue comes from.

Which strategy makes more money – decreasing your cover price and gaining more market share, or putting the price up, losing some audience, but making more from the loyal hangers-on?

And what about the relationship between price and volume? Does altering one side of the equation have more of an effect than altering the other? And what’s the relationship between print pricing and digital?

According to Nick Zarb from financial consultants Simon-Kucher, pricing should be more of a focus than volume, and we can expect cover prices to go up.

“Price increases will have more of an effect than price decreases on affecting volume, because you obviously sometimes have a very loyal print readership that doesn’t tend to switch and tend to be a little bit older.’

“There has been a large amount of switching to digital – the majority of that has probably happened now and papers have a remaining loyal print user base – so we’ve seen some quite big price increases across the different newspapers recently, particularly on the broadsheets, which are starting to push the prices up as they realize that actually, they can make more money from price increases than trying to steal readers from other newspapers through price wars (which used to be the case in the past).”

Free vs paid

But how do price hikes square with the fact that many publishers offer the same content online for free?

Zarb says it’s products like weekend editions that really offer value for audiences, who like to sit back and read at a more leisurely pace when they have the time, and as a result are prepared to pay more for them despite quite aggressive price rises:

“Obviously digital did have a big effect in that there’s a free alternative but people still see the value of particularly the weekend papers which have undergone a slower decline than the weekday papers where the news is less commoditized.”

Audience overlaps means some papers can be quite fearful of putting up prices, says Zarb, who highlighted the fact that The Times might be quite worried about putting up prices because a lot of their audience overlaps with papers like The Daily Mail, which tend to be quite aggressive on pricing.

How to buy beer

That fear contributes to a lack of thought among some papers, as former Head of Digital for The Times, Tom Whitwell, mentioned in a talk for Adaptive Labs’ Harnessing event in February this year:

Whitwell’s example of how introducing cheaper beer can drag down the original market and introducing a more expensive offering can drag it up is to some extent replicated in the newspaper business, says Zarb, but it’s a more complicated game because of the disruptive effect of free online content:

“In some ways the difficulties the newspapers have is that there are free alternatives for people to go to and it tends to be quite difficult to get people to convert there. If you want to have a quite expensive offering, you need to demonstrate the value that people will be getting for a more expensive offering.

“You have The New York Times where they have the typical offering but they’ve also got a premier version that gives you behind-the-scenes access for a few extra dollars per week, and that’s about adding value onto the standard offering to try and capture those segments of customers that are willing to pay more. I think particularly with digital news you’ve got a big portion of people that either aren’t willing to pay anything or are only willing to pay a little amount because there are free alternatives available particularly for commodity news.

“The Guardian is priced quite highly compared to The Times and that creates anchor points in terms of whatever [a new] price should actually be. So as long as those prices are communicated to the market and people understand that newspapers are expensive, then you should start to see that trickle down across different broadsheets, for example.”

The effect of unbundling

The New York Times example is particularly interesting too, as it has aggressively unbundled its digital subscription offerings – there are six options to choose from, ranging from $6 to $45 a month.

“But can all of the cheaper options on display cannibalize the higher-tier offerings or do they work as drivers to the full-fat subscription? It can go either way, says Zarb, but it’s crucial to understand your consumer needs if you don’t want to cannibalize your sales.

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However, introducing a more expensive option is a much easier option, Zarb says, because it means the only way people can go is up. That also means you could be missing out on a large portion of the market that perhaps isn’t buying your (currently mid-priced) product, for example, but if you measure consumer needs properly and understand there’s a proportion of customers who do need those unbundled products and will pay more for them, you should start to see uptrading.

And if your uptrading goal is to drive people to the print subscriptions, where the greater advertising mark-ups lie, then a key factor is a smaller price differential between the digital and print product on offer.

That may help to explain the difference between The Telegraph’s and The Times’ digital offerings – both center-right, both similarly-sized papers producing similar amounts of content, yet The Times charges £20 a month while The Telegraph charges £20 a year. The Times’ comparatively high price looks at least partly like a strategy to protect print circulation.

**Finger in the air**

But are publishers doing enough to think about pricing? A Simon-Kucher Global Pricing Survey from 2012 found only seven percent of media companies make pricing a priority in the boardroom. That compared with 47 percent of energy and utilities companies.

Zarb says media companies’ approach to pricing still has room for improvement:

“Finger-in-the-air pricing – particularly when you’ve got large subscriber bases that can be quite sensitive, and a competitive market – it’s quite important to understand your consumers and their pricing sensitivities as to what will happen if you change price.

If you put £1 a month onto a subscription for a magazine or a newspaper, that can be worth quite a lot to the bottom line in terms of millions, but actually is that the right thing to do? Could you have put £1.50 on and made more money out of that? These small price changes tend to be quite finger-in-the-air with media companies when they could be a lot more precise.”

One thing’s certain, and that’s that media companies can’t keep cutting their way to profit. The Telegraph’s Barclay-brother owners are reportedly particularly hard task masters when it comes to operating profit, and often get their way as a result of aggressive newsroom cuts.

But legacy media companies are now up against leaner, cheaper-to-run digital-only operations. Granted, those digital startups don’t have the same established trust, quality, and reputation, but will markets value those qualities above free, shareable content that can be read wherever, whenever?
Readers send their questions to Kevin for honest answers

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So much to write about, so little space. That’s my dilemma this morning.
I’ve had people writing and calling, wanting my thoughts concerning some quotes from well known industry “experts” about changes at Gannett and Scripps. Readers have been asking what I think about The Times-Picayune adding two print delivery days - that’s back up to five days a week delivery - plus returning to a full broadsheet page.
Our industry must be in a free-fall. Or is it?
My dilemma doesn’t revolve around those things, however. I promised to pen a question/answer column this month and I keep my promises.
I might have to write a second column later, but for now here are a few questions I’ve received over the past few weeks from readers:

Q From Heidi, in Iowa:
Our publisher suggested I email you with an InDesign question that we have. Occasionally we will receive pre-built ads in pdf format that were built in InDesign. When we pull the PDF onto our pages in InDesign and the PDF the page to send to press sometimes a white box will appear on the ad or part of the art will be whited out. Do you know what could be causing this?

A I still get asked about these white lines all the time, Heidi. Karen wrote a couple of days after you, putting it like this: “What causes the white lines in a PDF? This inquiring mind wants to know. I got one from a client this morning and it was loaded with them.”

These white lines come during the creation side of the PDF process. So there’s not a lot you can do to keep it from happening, other than hoping your advertiser stops sending you PDF files with white lines. I have a couple of pieces of good news for you, though.
First, these lines are due to issues with transparency. Those issues have decreased over time and are much less common than they were a few years ago. As your advertisers upgrade their software, this will happen less often.

Q Those pesky white lines still cause designers problems.
Second, these lines don’t print most of the time. They are “visual elements” that don’t exist when printed.
Should it still concern you that you have lines on your page, there are a few fixes on your end. One of the easiest is to turn off the “Smooth Line Art” option in Acrobat.
A A second fix is to open the PDF file in Photoshop at a high resolution (600 or higher) and save the file from there.

Q From Jim, in Chicago:
I’ve been very happy with our NewEdit/Quark newspaper pagination set up. However, in the process of purchasing new hardware and software I learned that Baseview had priced themselves out of our market. So we are now about to use InCopy/InDesign. (We’ve purchased and installed the new Macs, and shortly will begin to switch over). Any suggestions, comments and advice you can offer in this process would be greatly appreciated.

A First, let me congratulate you on making the move to new hardware and software. You should see a tremendous increase in productivity, after a few days of growing pains while you learn the new software.
The best advice I can give to you is to have an expert trainer come in to work with your staff for two days. Learning InDesign and InCopy is simple, with good training. Without it, I’ve seen staffs work at a snail’s pace for months and years, never really getting a grasp on how to use the software efficiently. Good trainers pay for themselves in no time.

Q From Carrie in North Carolina:
My publisher asked me to ask you if there is any open source software, in place of Adobe and Quark products, available that would work to produce our publications. So I’m asking. Is there?
A No, Carrie. There isn’t. Sure, you could use Gimp to replace Photoshop, but anything beyond that would require a significant investment in time. There are many good open source apps out there, including OpenOffice, Inkscape and Gimp. But there is a reason Adobe and Quark products aren’t cheap. If you want to create a quality publication, investing in quality hardware and software is a necessity.