I made this image during a fishing trip to the Dearborn River in late May of 2013. I camped out with friends at Bean Lake along the Rocky Mountain Front near Augusta the night before floating the river. We stayed up late talking around the campfire and called it a night around 11:30. Just then, we noticed the first columns of light beaming down from the sky.

I happened to have a Gitzo Travel tripod in my truck for fishing photos. We doused the fire to kill the light and I set the tripod up with a Nikon D800 and a 20mm Nikkor f/2.8 lens. I shot a number of 30 second exposures at f/3.5 and ISO 500. It was a little hard to tell what I was getting in the viewfinder in terms of sharpness, but the colors were stunning, so I just kept shooting. The attached photograph is of Josh Bergan and Liz Juers of Belgrade admiring the aurora borealis near the shore of Bean Lake.

The northern lights put on quite a show. The lights would appear as shifting waves of green and yellow light, but also blue and purple columns that seemed to stream down through the sky. It was the first and only time I have seen the spectacle.
MNA Calendar

December
24  Christmas Eve - MNA office closed at noon
25-26  Christmas - MNA office closed

January
1  New Year’s Day- MNA office closed
5  64th session of the Montana Legislature convenes
7  2015 MNA Better Newspaper Contest opens for entries
15  MNA & MNAS board of directors’ meeting, Helena
16  Deadline to submit articles for the January Press Pass
22  Member Training: “Statewide Advertising Programs by the Numbers” Virtual Sales Conference: GoToMeeting #1

February
9  Begin accepting nominations for the 2015 MNA Hall of Fame and Master Editor/Publisher Awards
17  2015 MNA Better Newspaper Contest is closed for entries at midnight
20  Deadline to submit articles for the February Press Pass
23  Deadline for print entries for 2015 MNA Better Newspaper Contest to arrive at MNA

March
2  2015 MNA Better Newspaper Contest judging by the Kentucky Press Association begins
2 - 8  National Newspaper in Education Week
15-21  Sunshine Week, Open Government is Good Government
20  Deadline to submit articles for the March Press Pass
23  2015 MNA Better Newspaper Contest judging by the Kentucky Press Association ends

Thanks

- Mike Meloy for presenting a recent, well-attended training session on open meetings to newly elected county commissioners and other county officials.
- Cary Shimek, Rick Graetz and others at the University of Montana for the ongoing “This is Montana” series providing MNA member newspapers terrific content and images.
- Melody Martinsen, Chairwoman, and the volunteer board of directors of the Montana Freedom of Information Inc. Hotline. The group held its annual meeting in November and continues to be an invaluable resource to the media, public and government. montanafoi.org

In warm appreciation of our association during the past year, we extend our very best wishes for peace, prosperity and happiness throughout the holidays and new year.

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

DARLA DOWNS: Publisher/Owner
The Herald-News (Wolf Point) and The Searchlight (Culbertson)

PERSONAL Stats
Born, year & place: Sidney, MT, 1974
First newspaper job: My first newspaper job was “helping” my parents Harry and Ina Downs and grandmother Mamie Downs at The Herald-News when everything was taller than I. Many hours were spent at the office “helping” while my parents worked. I started working full-time at The Herald-News in 1996 in ad sales/circulation and took over as publisher in 2006.

Family: I have three daughters: Rebecca, 22; Katelynn, 19; and Jessica, 16. Katelynn now is the fourth generation to work at The Herald-News full-time.

Education: I graduated with honors from Wolf Point High School in 1992 and graduated cum laude from the University of Great Falls in 1999 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Systems Integration and a minor in Accounting.

Community involvement and diversions: I am currently the Montana Newspaper Association third vice president 2014-15; Montana Newspaper Advertising Service board member and past president; Wolf Point Elks Lodge #1764 trustee and am a Past Exalted Ruler (I served as Exalted Ruler for three one-year consecutive terms); Montana State Elks Association first vice president 2014-15; secretary of Wolf Point Walleyes Unlimited chapter; Optimist Club of Wolf Point member and past president; member of the Wolf Point Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture; past chairman of the chamber’s Business Booster Committee; and was a Girl Scout leader for 12 years when my daughters were younger.

I enjoy hunting, fishing and spending time outdoors and try to do it as often as I can get away from the office.

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

After graduating from high school, I started taking college courses, majoring in accounting. While I liked accounting, I enjoyed working with computers more and switched majors after two years. I kind of “fell” into working in journalism long-term. In 1996, my grandmother asked me to fill in at The Herald-News while my father was on vacation. At the time, computer technology was very limited at the paper and changes were looming on the horizon. I went to work at The Herald-News full-time that year and began the tedious process of converting the antiquated Addressograph circulation mailing system to a computer-based one. Under my guidance over the past 19 years, we’ve converted from film/darkroom and pasteup layout to digital photos and computerized pagination. My grandmother retired in 1994 and my father semi-retired after the sale of the paper in 1999.

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

The most important thing I’ve learned would have to be how critical it is to stay involved in the community. After all, it’s called community journalism for a reason. Community journalism is more than city councils and school boards. It’s about a community’s people.

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

The aspect I find most rewarding are those occasions when you get a “thank you” or “attaboy” from a reader. People have a tendency to make sure we know when they have a complaint about our coverage, but, with their own busy lives, many don’t often take the time to share praise when they think we’ve done something right. Journalists often hear how “mean” we are from people in government when we ask questions about what they are doing and why, and hold their feet to the fire for the decisions they’ve made, so that makes those occasions even more special when readers express their appreciation to us for informing them about what their government is doing, or for doing a feature on someone they know.

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

The aspect I find most challenging is employee recruitment. Convincing qualified job applicants that Wolf Point is a great community to live and work in, despite the challenges — the area’s rural nature and the dwindling business community and number of residents living at or below the poverty level, and the problems that arise due to drug and alcohol abuse — is sometimes difficult. Wolf Point is located on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation and on the edge of the Bakken oilfield. While we have not seen much of the oilfield-related business growth, home rental prices have soared out of the price range for non-oilfield workers, which makes recruitment even more difficult.

We have enhanced the brand of The Herald-News by staying active in the community and showing our support to local non-profit organizations.

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

The Herald-News has had a limited-content free website for many years and has begun utilizing social media to drive traffic to the website. We are looking at implementing a digital subscription program to help eliminate some of the phone calls from out-of-state subscribers regarding missing or late papers.

What is your digital strategy right now?

The Herald-News has utilized the advertising and editorial training sessions for many years and has been awarded internship grants several times in the past 10 years. The MNA’s lobbying efforts are invaluable and the association’s ad sales efforts help us reach more advertisers on a statewide level than we normally would be able to do, but the best part of the MNA is the opportunity for networking with fellow journalists that it provides.

How does the MNA serve you and your newspaper?

William H. Hornby, a former managing editor, executive editor and vice president at the Denver Post, and one of the founders of the Yellowstone Newspaper Group, has died. He was 91.

Hornby, who began his four-decade career at the Post as a copy reader, died on Tuesday, the Post reported.

Born in Kalispell, Montana, on July 14, 1923, Hornby graduated from Stanford University and the London School of Economics. He worked in Paris for the U.S. government’s Marshall Plan and in San Francisco for Stars and Stripes, the U.S. military newspaper. He joined the Post in 1957, and he wrote a regular op-ed column for the newspaper before retiring in the mid-1990s.

An advocate for press freedoms, Hornby was placed on the American Society of Newspaper Editors’ freedom of information honor roll. He served as a president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors and was a trustee emeritus of the University of Montana Foundation.

Hornby served as board chairman for History Colorado and a board member and trustee of the Colorado Historical Foundation. His wife, Barbara Sudley Hornby, served as director and president of the Colorado Historical Society.

- 30 -
How do you know?

What is being reported about you in the media? Unless you have the enormous amount of time required—and access to the hundreds of articles, advertisements, press releases and all mentions of you or your organization—you most likely do not know who, what, when and how your story is being told in the media.

News Tracker service tracks, manages and analyzes the endless flow of news and information found in newspapers, broadcast, web and social media, based on the key search terms you choose.

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is our new statewide public notice and legal advertising website

The website is made possible thanks to you, our members, and your dedication to code your public notices and upload your newspaper pages. This is the second ad in an ongoing series to promote the value of public notices and the website to our readers. We encourage you to publish the promotional ads as often as possible, especially prior to the 2015 Montana legislative session. Ads can be found in a folder at the MNA ftp site.

View Montana Public Notices Free Online!

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A free service provided by newspapers of the Montana Newspaper Association.

Your online source for public notices in Montana.
Would you like to find or track a bill?

You can find and track the progress of legislative bills from current and past sessions using a free online service called LAWS (Legislative Automated Workflow System).

**Using LAWS, you can find:**
- Complete text of legislative bills
- Up-to-date status of bills
- Committee hearing schedules
- Agendas for committee hearings & floor sessions
- House and Senate votes on bills

**You can search the LAWS database using one or more of the following search criteria:**
- General subject matter
- Keywords
- Bill number

- Bill sponsor
- Bill status

You can also create a preference list. This feature allows you to monitor any number of bills that are of particular interest to you by creating a free, password-protected online account.

You can sign up for notification by e-mail of public hearings scheduled for the bills on your preference lists.

**Please go to:**
Two students from The University of Montana’s School of Journalism have been chosen to provide news coverage of the Montana Legislature’s 2015 session for scores of newspapers and radio stations across the state. The session begins January 5.

Michael Wright will provide weekly coverage for interested newspapers across the state. Wright, a senior, hails from a dairy farm in southern Idaho, and has written for the Montana Kaimin, Big Timber Pioneer and Montana Journalism Review. The Montana Newspaper Association helps fund Wright’s coverage.

Madelyn Beck, who has worked with Montana Public Radio, In Other Words, and Public Radio Exchange, will provide daily reports to more than 50 Montana broadcasters. Beck came to the University of Montana from a ranch near Manhattan, Mont. Her coverage is made possible by grants from the Greater Montana Foundation and the Montana Broadcasters Association.

The students’ work this session will be supervised by UM Adjunct Professor Courtney Lowery Cowgill, a former Associated Press reporter and editor and the current managing editor of the online news site PBS MediaShift. The 2015 session marks the 12th time journalism students have covered Montana’s regular biennial legislative sessions for newspapers and the fifth time they have provided coverage for radio stations.

Boulder Monitor Editor Jan Anderson said while community newspapers like hers can get to Helena to cover the Legislature occasionally, only a reporter covering the Capitol day in and day out can fully cover the complexity of the issues playing out there. That’s where the UM program comes in.

“The best way for our readers to know how well the state lawmakers they elected are representing their interests is to have a reporter at the Capitol watching,” Anderson said. “The UM Legislative News Service allows us to help our readers keep track of the issues that have local implications.”

Peter Christian of KGVO Radio in Missoula said the student radio reports are an integral part of his station’s daily news offerings.

“One of the most meaningful relationships between the business and educational sectors is the internship. Both the student and the professional contribute and benefit immensely from out-of-the-classroom learning.” Interested students are encouraged to visit http://www.carroll.edu/employment/stujobs.cc for more details.
When you walk into Kate Hunt’s exhibition room at the Missoula Art Museum, in the moment before the motion detector flickers on the lights, you can smell the art before you can see it: Elmer’s glue, ink and newsprint, as clear as if you were suddenly transported back into your elementary school craft room.

After the lights come on, you see the art itself: in one corner, two towering stacks of compressed newspaper drunkenly columning up the wall, reaching for the ceiling. Nearby, a large quilt-like structure, woven from newspaper, stands in stiff waves. And along the wall to your left, glued newspapers form dark images of flags, frozen and abstract.

It’s easy to speculate about what it all means. Maybe the artist is commenting about the changing face of print media in today’s world. Maybe she’s showing us the impermanence of current events, or the uselessness of the 24-hour news cycle, or the importance of recycling.

Or maybe not, says Hunt, who has been working extensively with newspaper since she attended the Kansas City Art Institute almost four decades ago. Her choice of newspaper as a medium has little, if anything, to do with the news and everything to do with how she approaches art.

“It’s not that I use newspaper for the newspaper,” she says. “But newspaper lends itself so easily to me. Because of craftsmanship issues and because of its economy, it gives itself to me. When I work with wood, it’s a disaster. Anything I build is not level. As hard as I try. With newspaper, it doesn’t matter. It has forgiveness to it. It’s a forgiving material.”

Basically, the widely-available, cheap and highly-malleable material is exactly what Hunt needs to aid her artistic process, from start to finish. It’s something that can make her visions come to life and it’s something that she can experiment with freely, without worrying too much about precision or making mistakes.

The artist grew up in Chester, a small, rural town in Montana’s north-central plains. Severely dyslexic and feeling somehow different from her classmates, she has always, for as far back as she can remember, related better to the non-verbal aspects of thought and creativity.

"I always had to be doing something or building something," she says. "I was always dreaming in non-literal ways. In our backyard, I would try to figure out how to get out of the wind but stay in the sunshine. I've always built. I've always been that person. It never dawned on me that I was different. It was who I am."

Hunt doesn’t start a project with an idea or a vision or a concept. She doesn’t want to convey a particular idea. Instead, she starts with a question. Usually a “What if...” question that sets some criteria or outlines a few interesting rules.

“I can’t put my work into words,” she says. “I couldn’t do it in grade school and I can’t do it now.”

To get a better idea of her process and product, it might be easier to pick one sculpture to explore. “Floor” is the centerpiece of the MAM exhibit. It’s 30 columns of newspaper and steel, so tightly packed that you can walk on it solidly—and Hunt encourages people to do just that. The project came about in 2010, when Hunt was invited to a collector’s house in Omaha, Neb., with a handful of other select artists. The collector’s home was an amazing treasure trove of art, to which one of the other artists asked, “Where would you even hang another piece of art in here?”

Hunt latched on to the question and a new project was born. She would construct a sculpture for the floor, and as always, newspaper seemed the perfect vehicle.

“I didn’t build it with intention of the collectors buying it, but I want to imagine it in that space,” she says. “Standing on art to discuss the other art. To be totally surrounded by art. To have it embedded on your soul.”
On recent regular dog walk through my neighborhood in Helena, a mere few weeks before the start of the legislative session, I came across two members of Montana’s upcoming Legislature hauling an assortment of bags and boxes from a car into a duplex they had rented together for the session.

“Pillows!” one of the legislators announced to me, smiling and proudly holding a black garbage bag over his head. “For those occasions when I GET to sleep.”

It was meant partly in jest, but it was a reminder to me of exactly how busy and chaotic the lives of Montana’s citizen legislators are every two years. Most of them uproot themselves from their jobs and families, find temporary shelter in the Capital City and then work to pass their own legislation while trying to make sense of all the other bills on which they’re asked to vote. Throw in all the after-hours events they’re expected to attend and the hundreds of constituent meetings they’re asked to make time for and, well, “chaos” may be an understatement.

It’s with that in mind that I always try to approach each legislative session; understanding that I am one of dozens of “special interests” that any given legislator may talk to on any given day. And I am likely NOT the legislator’s priority. To be effective in an arena like that means being well-organized, well-prepared and – maybe most importantly – brief and to the point.

As the Montana Newspaper Association gears up for the 2015 session, we’ve spent considerable time preparing for what many believe may be a session even more chaotic than “normal,” if such a thing exists. With more than 2,000 bill draft requests already filed – and dozens more expected – our focus has been filtering through each of these to determine which, if any, may impact the newspaper industry. We’ve prioritized the bills and issues and begun putting together our talking points and strategies. To date, we’ve identified a number of them and shared some of those with you in my last update.

One of the bills we are continuing to monitor closely is House Bill 123, to generally “revise” Montana open records laws. I mentioned this last month when it was still in draft form as LC0448. The bill, now available online at http://leg.mt.gov/bills/2015/billpdf/HB0123.pdf, is the result of an interim study group that was tasked largely with making recommendations on how to improve the retention of public records at both the state level and local level. The current bill does not contain any significant policy changes, and the MNA has expressed support for its current form. However, some local governments and agencies have raised issues with specific language in the bill that they believe may greatly expand the workload of government employees. The bill sponsor has requested a fiscal note to address those concerns. The MNA will continue to monitor this bill closely.

Another bill we are continuing to watch and discuss is House Bill 32. The bill is now available online at http://leg.mt.gov/bills/2015/billpdf/HB0032.pdf. It was requested by the state attorney general’s office, and would criminalize the “misuse” of confidential criminal justice information. The bill makes it a misdemeanor offense for someone who is “entitled to access confidential criminal justice information” to intentionally disseminate it or otherwise misuse it. While the criminal charge would not apply to members of the news media, news organizations worry the bill could have a chilling effect on their ability to gather even non-confidential information from police and prosecutors, who may simply decide not to provide ANY information to the media for fear of being accused of a crime. The MNA’s concerns are shared with some other organizations, and we will keep our membership updated on this bill’s status.

As I noted in my last update, I hope MNA members feel free to contact me directly during the session if they have questions or concerns about any legislation they see. It isn’t always possible for us to review every bill in detail, so if you come across something that you think should be on our radar, please let us know. In the meantime, happy holidays to everyone.
Montana Newspaper Foundation...  
our future is fueled by you

In 2014, grants from the Montana Newspaper Foundation supported the following activities in Montana:

- University of Montana Dean Stone Award: Breanna Gaudioso
- University of Montana Pat Burke Memorial Scholarship: Megan Marolf
- Montana High School Journalist of the Year Award: Meri DeMarois
- 129th MNA Annual Convention Educational Programs

Internship Awards:

- Brianna Loper, Whitefish Pilot
- Sean Plemmons, Billing Gazette Communications
- Katherine Leonard, Great Falls Tribune
- Michael Wright, Big Timber Pioneer

A special “Thank You” to the individuals and organizations that made contributions to the Montana Newspaper Foundation in 2014:

- Great Falls Tribune
- River Press
- Boulder Monitor
- Livingston Enterprise
- Bozeman Daily Chronicle
- Dennis Swibold
- Cut Bank Pioneer Press
- Carbon County News
- The Valerian
- Les Loble
- TownNews
- Billings Outpost
- Associated Press
- Laurel Outlook
- Jim and Dee Strauss
- Matt Gibson
- Belgrade News
- Shelby Promoter
- MDU Resources
- Sanders County Ledger
- Choteau Acantha
- Milt and Gloria Wester
- Darrell Ehrlick
- Montana Newspaper Association
- Jim and Sherri Rickman
- Glacier Reporter
- Missoula Independent
- U of M School of Journalism
- Athlon Media Group
- Inland Empire Paper
- Montana Lottery
- Dillon Tribune
- Flathead Beacon
- Lewistown News-Argus
- Matt Volz

The MNF fundraising goal in 2015 is $12,000. This will sustain our current programs while growing the Foundation. We encourage you to make your tax-deductible—monetary, as well as an in-kind—gift in support of education and the advancement of the Montana newspaper industry.
States train officials in public records access

By Jenni Bergal, The PEW Charitable Trusts

When Washington state Rep. Gerry Pollet took office in December 2011, one of the first things he said he did was start preparing a bill that would require open government training for public officials.

As a citizen activist and public interest attorney, Pollet thought the government needed to do a better job promoting openness and improving compliance with state sunshine laws that require records of public agencies to be available to the public.

Pollet’s first attempt failed, but he kept trying. This year, with the help of a Senate colleague and the state’s attorney general, who requested it, the legislature approved a training measure that Pollet hopes is a model for other states.

“Training is essential. The more education we can have on the government side, the better,” said David Cuillier, director of the University of Arizona School of Journalism and chairman of the Society of Professional Journalists’ Freedom of Information Committee.

While the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requires federal government information be available to citizens, every state has its own open records law that allows the public access to records and documents. Each state also has a law that requires most government business to be conducted at meetings that are open to the public.

Open government advocates say that training, such as learning how to comply with public records requests and what the penalties are for failing to do so, is critical because it strengthens citizens’ access to information and improves government accountability.

“If we’re going to make public officials legally responsible for a violation of the law, then we need to teach them what the law requires them to do,” said Barbara Peterson, president of the First Amendment Foundation, a Florida-based open government watchdog group.

Accountability and taxpayer dollars

A report by the Washington state auditor’s office identified more than 250 open government-related issues in 2012. Most
Public records access continued
dealt with one-time violations, such as inadequately maintaining public meeting minutes. But some were more significant, including inadequate notification about special meetings and executive sessions, or council members reaching consensus through email rather than in an open session.

“Public access to government actions and information is fundamental to accountability,” the report stated.

Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson, a Democrat, said he sought the training measure because he wanted to ensure that the people who deal with public records and open meetings know what the law requires of them. “Taxpayers shouldn’t pay a big penalty for the failure of their elected officials to turn over documents,” he said.

In recent years, there have been a flood of cases in which public agencies in Washington have agreed to big settlements or been ordered to pay major penalties for failing to comply with open government laws. Washington’s state Supreme Court allows penalties to be increased when there has been a lack of training in a public records lawsuit.

Earlier this year, Snohomish County agreed to pay $575,000 to settle a lawsuit filed by an environmental group that said it had been thwarted in its efforts to get public records in a timely manner. Among the records were emails that agricultural advisory board members apparently had used from their personal accounts to conduct board business.

Last year, a judge fined the University of Washington more than $720,000 for withholding public records from a professor who said she was wrongfully denied tenure. That case is being appealed.

Washington’s new law, which took effect in July, requires many elected and appointed officials to undergo sunshine training.

It applies to elected and appointed local and statewide officials who are subject to the public records act, as well as agency officials who must abide by the open meetings act. It includes everyone from the governor and attorney general to county commissioners, school board members and local sewer district officials. It also affects public records officers working for state and local agencies.

Training begins

Between 5,000 and 6,000 officials will need training, which can be presented in-house by an agency’s legal counsel or other staffers or trainers, the attorney general’s office, the state auditor’s office or groups such as the state school directors association. It can be taken online or in person.

Nancy Krier, the assistant attorney general for open government, already has trained more than 1,200 people since July, including members of the Washington Association of County Officials.

“I think when you know better, you do better,” Krier said. “It’s important because it helps our transparency in government.”

Krier said that training videos are available through the attorney general’s website and YouTube. As of mid-November, the public records video had gotten more than 6,000 views on YouTube. The open meetings version had more than 5,000.

Krier said it was important to offer the training online, given the state’s geography and the number of people involved. “Our state is divided by a mountain range. Traveling is a big issue, especially during the winter months,” she said. “With the way people work nowadays and learn long-distance – we’re the land of Microsoft – we’re pretty comfortable with computers.”

The training is based on an honor system, and participants aren’t required to document that they’ve taken it. But Ferguson, the attorney general, said he is confident that officials will abide by the letter of the law.

Those officials, however, won’t include the Washington Legislature. The new law exempts legislators, who already are excluded from the state’s open meetings act and most public records requirements.

The House version of the bill initially included new legislators and required incumbents to get updated training every two years. Those provisions didn’t make it into the final bill. “It was made clear that the bill would not pass” with those provisions, Ferguson said.

Some states lead the way

State attorneys general often advise public agencies about open government issues and sometimes provide voluntary instruction. But few states make training a requirement for elected officials.

One is Texas, which since 2006 has mandated that elected and appointed officials who serve on governmental bodies, ranging from state agencies to local boards and commissions, get training in open records and public meetings laws. The attorney general’s office often conducts the open meetings and public information courses, which are an hour each.

The training can take place online, by video or in a classroom. Officials must attend the open meetings portion, but they can designate a staff member to take the public records training on their behalf, if that person is primarily responsible for responding to requests for records.

According to the Texas attorney general’s office, the measure was enacted because failure to comply with public records laws can result in civil and criminal penalties for public officials and lead to a “general breakdown of public confidence” in government.

Maine also mandates open government training. But its law encompasses the legislature, which is not exempt from the state’s Freedom of Access Act.

Maine’s law, which took effect in 2008, requires most elected officials, including the governor, county commissioners and municipal officers, to get training within 120 days of taking office. It was amended in 2012 to include public access officers, who are designated by each agency to acknowledge records requests and determine how long it will take to respond.

Brenda Kielty, an assistant attorney general who is Maine’s public access ombudsman, said training for most officials is self-administered and can be completed online. Once it’s done, the person gets a certificate, which is on file.
Public Records Access continued

Legislators, however, receive training in person. In the last legislative session, Kielty said she trained most of the incoming legislature. She has a session scheduled for new legislators in December.

“It’s very important because the law is frequently amended,” she said. “The Freedom of Access Act reflects changes in technology, and it has to do with information and communication. Being current on that is important.”

In Florida, the legislature passed a law in 2013 that required ethics, public records and open meetings training annually for all constitutional officers, such as the governor, state attorneys, sheriffs and elections supervisors, beginning this year. It later expanded the law to include elected city officials starting in January.

Peterson, the Florida open government advocate, said that while it’s good that legislators passed the measure, it actually focuses on ethics training rather than on open government. She said that the law requires the state’s Ethics Commission to adopt rules establishing the course’s content, but the panel doesn’t have the authority or expertise to create standards for sunshine training.

“It never addressed what the standards should be or who is supposed to oversee the program. There’s no formal process for getting these programs approved. It’s absurd,” said Peterson, who has conducted open government training sessions for public officials.

Cuillier, of the Society of Professional Journalists, suggests that states mandate training not only for elected officials but for agency staffers who deal with the public’s requests for records. “The day-to-day work is really done by clerks and people on the ground,” Cuillier said. “They handle the bulk of the requests and that’s where most of the problems lie.”

Daniel Bevarly, spokesman for the National Freedom of Information Coalition, which represents journalists, attorneys and open government watchdogs, said he thinks more states will pass bills requiring training for both public officials and employees.

“We keep seeing more lawsuits and an increase in public records requests. Municipal and state governments are paying high attorneys’ fees,” Bevarly said. “It’s not a smart use of public resources, and the political advantages that can be gained by being more transparent makes it a little more digestible for states to get behind this.”

Montana Journalism Review releases 2015 edition

Montana Journalism Review, the award-winning magazine produced by students of the University of Montana School of Journalism, has released its 2015 edition.

For the 44th issue, the nation’s oldest journalism review expanded its coverage of media and journalism to neighboring states with a new section called “Neighborhood Watch.”

Managing Editor Austin Schempp said the new section provides MJR a chance to serve a wider audience. “We felt that there was an audience we could reach in surrounding states with issues and news that aren’t covered by other magazines,” Schempp said.

The theme of the 2015 edition of the magazine is “Shift.” Staff and contributors focused on the shifting landscape of the media industry and how journalists, news sources, and audiences are adapting to change.

MJR also investigated the state of television news in Montana with a three-part cover story featured in the center of the magazine.

Throughout the fall semester, the MJR staff worked on producing multimedia content and increasing its subscriber base. The magazine’s production is part of a J-School capstone course.

At the J-School’s Centennial event in September, MJR staff members connected with alums and gained 100 more subscribers through a quiz asking, “Which type of Montana journalist are you?” The quiz, along with other exclusive content, can be found on the MJR website: mjr.jour.umt.edu

Graduate student Abbey Dufoe worked on a new tablet edition that will be released separately.

Montana Journalism Review was founded by Dean Nathaniel Blumberg in 1958. Since 2012, journalism professor Henriette Lowisch has served as its editor-in-chief and mentored students through MJR’s production. In 2014, MJR won several national and regional awards for design and storytelling.

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The MNA statewide advertising program provides a great opportunity for growth in the new year. Display ad space is limited to 32” each week and was sold out several weeks in November and December. Thank you to all the participating member newspapers that published the statewide ads and congratulations to all those newspapers that sold ads and retained 50 percent of the revenue on each one! Considering that, for those newspapers selling ads in 2014, the average SCAN revenue retained was $1,000 and the average SDAP revenue was $1,900, statewide advertising programs can provide a revenue generating tool that will pay a good portion, if not all, of a newspaper’s annual membership dues!

MNA will continue efforts to create awareness of the programs by both member newspapers and advertising clients, and provide resources and tools to educate and support sales team members to maximize this revenue source. Goals in 2015 are to increase the number of newspapers in the statewide network and to increase the overall level of sales activity. Currently, 58 member newspapers participate in SDAP; 67 in SCAN. The programs offer benefits, primarily low cost revenue generation, for newspapers of all size and in every area of the state. One hundred percent participation would further ensure a robust and complete statewide offering.

Statewide advertising program revenue is projected to grow by 20 percent in 2015. The path to achieve that includes concerted sales training tools and resources, monthly communications and a rate increase. The MNA’s Statewide Display Advertising Program (SDAP) rates will increase by 2.5 percent effective January 1 with discounts still available for frequency purchases of six weeks or more. The new SDAP rates are:

\[ 2 \times 2 - \$406 \mid 2 \times 4 - \$812 \mid 2 \times 6 - \$1,218 \]

Rates for the Statewide Classified Advertising Network (SCAN) will remain at $149 for 25 words. When compared to other statewide programs, MNA is still very inexpensive and cost-effective for a variety of advertisers!

To share your comments, questions and feedback, please contact Kev Campbell at 406.443.2850, campbell@mtnewspapers.com.

New sales tools, including print ads, brochures, point-of-sale pieces and training events, are currently being prepared for download from the MNA FTP site. Access the ad copy files located in the folder labeled "Customizable SDAP & SCAN promo ads."

Thanks to all those newspapers already running the statewide promotional ads!

Lewistown News-Argus, Saturday, November 15, 2014
It’s long been known to neuroscience that stressful situations trigger a fight/flight response. This is useful in life-threatening situations, but less so in business, where a cool head works best in a crisis.

The fight/flight response tells your brain and nervous system to take immediate physical action. At work, that’s most likely to manifest itself via an emotional explosion or storming out of the room. Those reactions only make a bad situation worse.

In other words, a fight/flight response at work is a failure to appropriately gauge the seriousness of a situation. Your brain is releasing chemicals intended to save your life during a bear attack—when all that’s really happening is standard workplace issues.

An optimistic attitude makes it less likely that you’ll jump into fight/flight because you’re less likely to interpret a situation as a dire disaster. As Jon Pratlett, a pioneer in using neuroscience in leadership training, says:

The way you explain setbacks, mistakes, and disappointments to yourself can dramatically affect your outcomes. Whether your thoughts are pessimistic or optimistic will affect the choices you make, and actions you take.

It is, therefore, in your interest to cultivate an optimistic attitude about failure, because it reduces your emotional need to have a fight/flight reaction. That frees you to make better decisions, especially when things are happening quickly.

To cultivate an optimistic attitude about failure, you must change your inner dialog so that it characterizes failure as impersonal, impermanent, avoidable, and limited, rather than personal, permanent, inevitable, and pervasive.

1. **Don’t take failure personally.**

   Pessimists tend to take failure personally. They believe that the problems are the result of who they are, rather than what they did. “I’m a born loser.”

   Optimists tend to take failure philosophically. They see problems as puzzles they must solve to succeed in the future. “What must I do differently?”

2. **Treat failure as a temporary event.**

   Pessimists tend to see failure as permanent. They believe that trying after you’ve failed is beating your head against a brick wall. “That didn’t work, so why bother?”

   Optimists tend to see failure as temporary. They believe that failure is a signal to try a different approach based upon what they’ve learned. “That didn’t work, but this might.”

3. **Take responsibility for your failures.**

   Pessimists blame their failures on fate. They believe their failures are the inevitable result of outside forces that they cannot control. “It was bad luck.”

   Optimists focus on what they could have done differently. They believe that failure results from their own mistakes within the context of what’s possible. “I played my hand poorly.”

4. **Keep failure in perspective.**

   Pessimists bloat failure out of proportion. The failure seems so huge to them that everything else in life becomes unimportant. “Why do these things always happen to me?”

5. **The big picture.**

   Optimists see failure as limited in scope. They see a failure as a bump or obstacle in the road to success. “I learned a tough lesson, but it’s time to move on.”

Geoffrey James is an author and professional speaker whose award-winning blog, Sales Source, appears daily on Inc.com.