Best Sports Photo
Division 5
2014 MNA Better Newspaper Contest

By Casey Page, Billings Gazette

In this photo from January 2013, Jonas Olofsson of Rocky Mountain College skis the first run of the slalom at the Stano Cup Northern Division Qualifiers at Red Lodge Mountain.

The image was shot using a Canon 1d Mark III with a 70-200 2.8 lens at 1/1600th at f5 and an iso of 200.
# MNA Calendar

## January
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 office

## March
2 2015 MNA Better Newspaper Contest judging by the Kentucky Press Association begins
2 - 8 National Newspaper in Education Week
6 University of Montana School of Journalism Job and Internship Fair
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

## April
10 Deadline for MNA Hall of Fame and Master Editor/ Publisher nominations
17 Deadline to submit articles for the April Press Pass
17 MNA and MNAS Board of Directors’ meetings, Great Falls

## May
15 Deadline to submit articles for the May Press Pass

## June
11 MNA and MNAS Board of Directors’ meetings, Bucks T-4, Big Sky
12 Montana Newspaper Foundation annual banquet and fundraiser, Bucks T-4, Big Sky
12, 13 130th MNA Annual Convention, Bucks T-4, Big Sky
13 MNA and MNAS Annual Meeting and election of officers, Bucks T-4, Big Sky
13 Presentation of the 2015 MNA Better Newspaper Contest Awards, Bucks T-4, Big Sky
19 Deadline to submit articles for the June Press Pass

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Our newest Professional Member: The Montana Pioneer, David S. Lewis, Publisher

Our newest Associate Member: John MacDonald Consulting

Gary Moseman recently resigned as president of the Montana Newspaper Foundation after providing several years of leadership to the MNF

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Our Mission:
To advance and sustain the news publishing industry in Montana.

Jim Rickman, Executive Director | jim@mtnewspapers.com
Kevann Campbell, Business Development Manager | campbell@mtnewspapers.com
Randy Schmoldt, Accounting Specialist | randy@mtnewspapers.com

mtnewspapers.com
How did your career lead you to where you are now?

I worked at a print shop in Plains, which instructed me in the graphics and printing field. After seven years there, I was approached by the newspaper for a graphic artist position. I started when the Clark Fork Valley Press and Mineral Independent were owned by Lee Enterprises and worked under them for a year before Hagadone Corporation purchased the newspapers. At that time, Hagadone Corp. gave me the opportunity to advance and grow both papers. Six years in, I was promoted to general manager of the MI, VP, the Northwest Advertiser and the Lake County Leader. This past September, the Bigfork Eagle and West Shore News were added to my properties.

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

Community is crucial to the success of small-town newspapers.

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

All of it! All aspects of the newspaper appeal to me. I enjoy the opportunity to work with a broad spectrum of activities, and I love to multitask.

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

Keeping all community aspects represented in the newspaper.

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

Ensure that coverage is always hyper-local.

What is your print strategy right now?

We offer all avenues of printing, giving our customers a one-stop for advertising and printing of flyers, business cards, etc. For the Lake County Leader, we have recently adopted a fresh layout look.

How does the MNA serve you and your newspaper?

By keeping us informed of Montana standards for newspapers, and of developments at other publications across the state.
The Montana Newspaper Association hit the ground running in the first two weeks of the 2015 Legislature, working on a number of different bills all dealing with the public’s right to know and journalism protections. It was a busy way to start the session.

One of the bills of concern on the MNA watch list from Day One was House Bill 32, requested by the attorney general’s office, to criminalize the “misuse” of confidential criminal justice information. The MNA identified this as a bill of great concern for several reasons. First, we weren’t certain what the impetus of this legislation was and whether it was related to activities of journalists in Montana. Second, we were concerned that, as written, it could impact relationships journalists have with law enforcement sources. MNA discussions with the attorney general’s office revealed the source of this legislation: law enforcement had numerous examples of employees who were accessing the Criminal Justice Information Network for personal use or financial gain. In one instance, an employee had actually set up a side business selling background checks using the CJIN system. Although in every instance cited the employee was fired, the attorney general believed making such activity a criminal offense was necessary. The MNA successfully negotiated amendments to the bill when it was brought to the House Judiciary Committee that greatly narrowed the focus of the bill to deal specifically and only with employees who inappropriately access and use the CJIN system. While the MNA initially opposed the bill, we withdrew that opposition with the adoption of our requested amendments. The amended bill passed the committee unanimously.

The MNA also testified on HB42, which would allow the Public Service Commission an exemption to the public notice law and rules in certain instances. The PSC claims that it frequently has to issue Public Notices for utility rate increase hearings that never materialize because no interested parties show up. HB42 would allow the PSC to issue a Public Notice of a right to “request” a hearing, instead, and that if one was requested, a full Public Notice would be issued and a public hearing held. More bothersome, the bill made yet another exemption — stating that if the utility sent notice of a right to request a hearing directly to all its customers, it did not have to take out a Public Notice in a newspaper of record as required by state law. The MNA vigorously opposed this bill on both grounds. At the House Federal Relations, Energy and Telecommunications Committee, the MNA testified that allowing exemptions to the Public Notice law is a bad precedent and completely unwarranted. From my testimony: “The lack of public interest, whether perceived or real, in the business of the government does not negate the fact that the government has an absolute obligation to inform the public of its business. There should be no exceptions to that.” As of press time, the committee had not yet acted on this bill. If it passes committee, we will continue to oppose it.

The MNA was joined by the Montana Broadcasters Association to raise our concerns with another bill requested by the attorney general, Senate Bill 50, to revise Montana’s “surreptitious viewing and recordation” statute. This bill is a good-faith effort to update Montana’s outdated law regarding the viewing and recording or photographing of people in public places where they have an expectation of privacy, such as public bathrooms, changing rooms and athletic clubs. The MNA, as well as the Montana Broadcasters Association, supported that portion of the bill, but took issue with a language change that made it a crime —even while standing on public property — to view, photograph or film a person in a private residence “without the occupant’s knowledge.” Our concern was very simple. As written, the statute could be used to charge members of the media who are simply doing their job. Again, we were able to offer amendments that we believe will largely address our concerns. As of press time, the Senate Judiciary Committee had not taken action on this bill.

We continue to watch several other bills and bill drafts, including the mammoth HB123 regarding public records. The MNA reviewed this bill extensively and testified at an interim committee over the summer. This bill is largely a records management bill, establishing long-overdue laws and rules for the maintenance and preservation of public records.

We will also be testifying in favor of HB207 by Republican Rep. Daniel Zolnikov. This bill prohibits the disclosure of media information from electronic communication sources. Montana has one of the strongest reporter shield laws in the country already, and this bill addresses a potential loophole regarding information that reporters may receive by email or other electronic sources.
In 2014 your MNA warmly welcomed our new professional member, Montana Kaimin, and new associate members EDGE Marketing & Design, Montana Ducks Unlimited, Associated Employers, Milt & Gloria Wester, Montana Historical Society, National Institute for Money in State Politics and Blackfoot Media Group.

In 2014 your MNA published over 170 pages of the Press Pass, our monthly Montana newspaper industry newsletter, with new standing features of Sales and Marketing, Advice from the Experts, People and Papers, Member Profile and member award-winning photography.

In 2014 your MNA Legal Affairs Committee hired John MacDonald as our lobbyist. John’s background as a reporter, editor and public relations specialist has significantly advanced our professional approach to legislative issues. The MNA Legal Affairs Committee has taken a very proactive approach in committee meetings—and to bills—well before the start of the 2015 Legislative Assembly.

In 2014 your MNA offered our congratulations and fond farewells to our retirees Linda Fromm and Jeanne Bouma. And in 2014 we welcomed Accounting Specialist Randy Schmoldt and Business Development Manager Kevann Campbell.

In 2014 your MNA celebrated our 129th annual convention in Butte. The convention was packed with collegiality and educational opportunities for our members. We partnered with Montana PBS and Montana Public Radio to host the first debate after the primary election for Montana’s open Senate and House seats. We recognized and congratulated the 118 first place winners of the 2014 Better Newspaper Contest.

In 2014 your MNA fulfilled one of our primary aspirations to “collect and preserve the records of Montana journalism” by beginning the process of digitally archiving our member newspapers each week. We expect to annually preserve 150,000 newspaper pages that will preserve and chronicle the local activities and historic events of the communities we serve. Digital archives are available to members for research using key search words, e-tear sheets and other activities.

In 2014 your MNA rebranded our reading service as Montana News Tracker. Our new reading service now delivers digital files to our clients based on their search requests. We can also offer clients content from radio, television and the web. The innovation and new technology introduced to our reading service is helping produce an increase in total “clips” of over 200% compared to our prior manual process.

In 2014 your MNA made an investment in technology by upgrading our computers and software, and converted our accounting system to QuickBooks. These investments have improved accuracy, efficiencies and reduced administrative costs.

In 2014 your MNA launched our new public notice website, montanapublicnotices.com. This new site now contains nearly 100% of the public notices that appear in our member newspapers. The site is very user friendly and allows the public a single source to search for public notices and legal advertising.

In 2014 your MNA worked closely with the Montana Association of Counties and the Board of County Printing to secure higher rates for public notices and legal advertising.

In 2014 your MNA produced, on average, a 90% return on investment in advertising revenue for a member’s MNA dues. And in 2014 the MNA changed its business structure to allow Kevann Campbell, our business development manager, to devote all her time to generating new sources of advertising, revenue, increasing our ranks of professional and associate members, growing the client base of Montana News Tracker and increasing the fundraising activities for the Montana Newspaper Foundation.

In 2014 your MNA proudly administered Montana Newspaper Foundation financial grants to help support internship programs at the Great Falls Tribune, Billings Gazette, Whitefish Pilot and Big Timber Pioneer. The Montana Newspaper Foundation continued its support of education by providing The Dean Stone Award and Pat Burke Memorial Scholarship to University of Montana School of Journalism students and a scholarship to the Montana High School Journalist of the Year.

None of our work at the MNA office would be possible without our strong membership base. We look forward to 2015 and appreciate your continued engagement and support of our association.

Thank you and Happy New Year!

Jim Rickman, Executive Director
The attack that left 12 dead in the Paris office of a weekly satirical newspaper last week reminds us how important it is to protect our First Amendment rights, and that anyone or anything threatening them is an enemy of the civilized world.

When hooded gunmen opened fire in the office of a satirical newspaper based in Paris last week, they were attacking not only innocent bystanders in another country, but also our way of life in the West.

The publication’s top editor and a prominent cartoonist were among the 12 people who died early Wednesday, after the gunmen entered the third-floor offices of Charlie Hebdo and started shooting while uttering Arabic cries.

“Hey! We avenged the Prophet Muhammad! We killed Charlie Hebdo,” one of the attackers shouted.

The paper has a history of offending Muslims with crude cartoons of Islam’s holiest figure, the Associated Press reported, and in recent years it has published drawings depicting the Islamic prophet naked and in demeaning or pornographic poses.

And while this form of expression may be in poor taste, it should not be censored there or anywhere else. Free speech is the foundation of democracy, and civilized society can’t exist without it.

Imagine what your life would be like if people could not pen a sarcastic letter to the editor or voice an opposing view at city hall or the state Capitol. What if everyone had to keep their religious and political views private?

Where would we be as a country if nobody had spoken up about issues like slavery and women’s rights? Would we have earned the inalienable human rights we enjoy in our nation today?

When free speech is stifled by fear of retaliation from terrorists, government or anyone else, society misses out on views that can spark positive change. That’s why we must tolerate and embrace the free flow of ideas, even those that directly contradict our own.

This senseless slaughter of journalists in France serves as a reminder of how lucky we are to be able to argue, debate and challenge authority publicly in our country without fear of physical harm. While people in other countries are dying for their words, the greatest threat to most U.S. citizens who speak out is a little public scrutiny.

The attack also reminds us how important it is to protect our First Amendment rights, and that anyone or anything threatening them is an enemy of the civilized world.

Along with countless people throughout the world proclaiming “Je Suis Charlie” or “I Am Charlie,” we will stand in solidarity against this heinous attempt to silence fellow journalists working to present a diversity of views.

And even though we disagree with some of the things Charlie Hebdo has to say, we hope the publication will never have to stop saying them.

Editor’s note: Several Montana newspapers published news articles, cartoons and editorials on free speech after the attacks in Paris.

Hebdo and religion

January 14, 2015
By Dean Larry Abramson, University of Montana School of Journalism

While the J School was on winter break, our profession suffered a painful assault. There’s been a lot of smart commentary on the attacks in Paris, which did so much more than kill 17 people. For journalists, this atrocity also sparked some serious reflection about the boundary between free speech and protection of religious values.

A number of organizations, including my former employer NPR, have decided not to publish the Charlie Hebdo cartoons. Many said, basically, they are concerned about offending their readers. This is a dangerous line of reasoning. The Constitution protects religion from interference by government. But by tradition, and by law, we do not grant special protections to any belief system. They are all subject to criticism. I think that’s part of what the folks at “Charlie Hebdo” were, and are, trying to say. If you look at their drawings, you’ll see them skewering rabbis, the Pope and, yes, the Prophet Muhammad. Everyone is fair game.

Many societies do award special status to religious institutions. They ban speech that offends certain religious beliefs. French society does not, and jealously guards its secularism. This is one value American journalists need to uphold as well. When people demand that no one offend their beliefs, they are asking for something that US law does not sanction. Religious groups can shun blasphemers and bar them from their communities, but they cannot demand that society at large refrain from satire or critical remarks.

Journalists refrain from printing certain ideas and images all the time, because of lack of space or because they are trying to set a standard. I’m OK with that. But the Hebdo cartoons are now news-they are the news, and they should not be kept behind a veil in an effort to protect sensitive readers. Religious readers can avert their eyes, they can write letters, they can cancel their subscriptions. That’s the same right that every reader has when they encounter offensive language directed at their government or at their political party. If as a journalist you decide not to print the Hebdo cartoons, I hope you’ll do so because you think they are juvenile, or just hard to understand. But please, don’t hold back because you give special status to religion.
It’s that time of year again. The Montana Freedom of Information Hotline Inc. board has launched its annual fundraising drive, and, as of Jan. 8, has sent letters to all Montana Newspaper Association members, asking for their help in funding the FOI Hotline. Without the support of Montana’s news media, the Hotline would not be able to offer free legal help for journalists and citizens to make sure they gain access to public meetings and records.

The nonprofit FOI Hotline contracts with Helena attorney Peter “Mike” Meloy to provide expert, timely advice on access issues. Meloy, a recipient of the Montana Free Press Award, responds to questions about everything from secret meetings to denial of access to public documents. In 2014, Meloy responded to 198 inquiries, answering questions from 78 citizens and 120 print and broadcast journalists. This is the highest number of inquiries Meloy has fielded in a single year, and the last time the Hotline saw that kind of use level was in 2008 when 197 inquiries were made.

Meloy can be reached at 406-442-8670 — or by email at mike@meloylawfirm.com — or through the online query form at www.montanafoi.org.

The Hotline relies on donations from news media and grants to fund its budget of about $9,000 a year. The Hotline is applying for a $5,000 operations grant from the National Freedom of Information Coalition, but that funding is not a sure thing — and requires a 100% hard match from the Hotline. The Hotline need the strong, continued support of MNA members. The suggested donations are $50 for weekly newspapers and radio stations, $100 for small daily newspapers and TV stations, $200 for medium dailies, and $300 for large dailies.

How much can the FOI Hotline save your news business? The going rate for 30 minutes of advice from an attorney is about $200. A newspaper’s contribution of $50 to $300 to the Hotline gives the paper’s reporters unlimited access to a highly specialized public access attorney — at a bargain rate and in a timely manner.

That’s not all the Hotline offers. It also provides a wallet card with the Hotline’s contact information and a pocket guide to Montana’s FOI laws, available for download from the website and in print through the MNA and the Montana Broadcasters Association.

“As a journalist working in rural, depressed north-central Montana, I know firsthand that budgets are tight, but one of the main reasons we exist as journalists is to defend the public’s right to know and supporting the Hotline is a vital link to that effort,” Hotline Board Chairwoman Melody Martinsen, editor of the Choteau Acantha, said. “Please, watch for the letter from the Hotline and send your contribution, as soon as possible, to the Hotline Treasurer Clemens P. Work, 5055 Huckleberry Road, Missoula, MT 59803.”

Newspapers can also contribute using a credit card by going to the Montana FOI website and clicking on the “Donate” link on the upper right side of the Home page.

“Thank you so much to the generous Montana newspapers who donated to the Hotline in 2014,” Martinsen said. “We hope we can count on your continued support in 2015.” In 2014, 55 newspapers, other media entities and individuals contributed $3,698.25 toward the support of the Hotline.

Anyone with any questions about the Hotline can contact Martinsen at the Choteau Acantha at 406-466-2403 or email her at acantha@3rivers.net. Other members of the Montana FOI Hotline Board are: Vice Chairman Jon Stepanek, news director at KTVQ in Billings; Treasurer Clem Work of Missoula, retired University of Montana School of Journalism professor; Secretary Jackie Yamanaka of Billings, news director at Yellowstone Public Radio; Jim Rickman of Helena, executive director, Montana Newspaper Association; Dewey Bruce of Clancy, president/CEO of the Montana Broadcasters Association; Charles S. Johnson, chief, Lee Newspapers State Bureau, Helena; Gary Moseman, retired Great Falls Tribune managing editor; and Matt Volz, Helena, supervisory correspondent for the Associated Press in Montana.

THANK YOU! Montana FOI Hotline 2014 Donors

- Anaconda Leader
- Associated Press-Montana
- Big Horn County News
- Big Timber Pioneer
- Bigfork Eagle
- Billings Gazette
- Bitterroot Star
- Boulder Monitor
- Bozeman Daily Chronicle
- Carbon County News
- Cascade Courier
- Choteau Acantha
- Clark Fork Valley Press
- Conrad Independent-Observer
- Cut Bank Pioneer Press
- Daily Inter Lake
- Daniels County Leader
- Dillon Tribune
- Ekses, Ray
- Forsyth Independent Press
- Fort Benton River Press
- Glacier Reporter
- Glendive Ranger-Review
- Great Falls Tribune
- Hungry Horse News
- Johnson, Charles S.
- Jordan Tribune
- Judith Basin Press
- KATQ Plentywood
- KDBM Dillon
- KECL Missoula
- KTVQ Billings
- Lake County Leader
- Laurel Outlook
- Lewistown News-Argus
- Livingston Enterprise
- Meagher County News
- Miles City Star
- Mineral Independent
- Montana Broadcasters Association
- Montana Newspaper Association
- Philipsburg Mail
- Ronan Valley Journal
- Sanders County Ledger
- Shelby Promoter
- Stillwater County News
- Terry Tribune
- Valierian
- West Shore News
- Western News
- Whitefish Pilot
- Wibaux Pioneer-Gazette
- Yellowstone Public Radio

Melody Martinsen

January 21, 2015
“People we wish we’d met” story a Tribune tradition

By Erin Madison, outdoors writer, Great Falls Tribune

It’s amazing the stories you’ll find reading a year’s worth of obituaries.

It sounds morbid, but for the past two years I’ve greatly looked forward to writing the Tribune’s annual “people we wish we’d met” story. This year’s story published on Wednesday, Dec. 31.

The story comes together by reading obituaries in the Tribune, and occasionally from other sources around the state, and tucking them away when you find a particularly interesting one. Then, snippets of the obituaries are compiled for a year-end remembrance of those who were lost over the past year.

Long-time Tribune reporter and editor Paula Wilmot started the annual remembrance story in 2005 or 2006. She got the idea for the story watching a Sunday morning show that did a list of national celebrities who had died.

However, rather than focusing on celebrities, Paula wanted to remember every-day Montanans who may not have made headlines but still lived incredible lives.

“I always liked the stories about the local people and the Montanans who make the state work,” she said earlier this week. “I started just tearing out obituaries I thought were interesting.”

“My mother had died the year before,” Paula explained, which left her with a different perspective when reading obituaries.

After Paula retired, the story was passed down to regional reporter Kim Skornogoski, then to features reporter Kristen Inbody and now to me.

One of my favorite things about being a reporter is meeting so many interesting people and getting to learn about their lives.

Reading the obituaries each day in the Tribune feels much the same, and I really do come away feeling like I wish I had the chance to meet and talk to the people I read about.

Eloise Hopkins Dean Gagle of Billings was remembered in her obituary for “her cheerful countenance, her boundless enthusiasm, her compassion, her keen intellect and her always present sense of humor.”

She taught in Kansas during the Depression and the dust storms of the 1930s. I bet Eloise had some incredible stories to tell.

Norman Don “Duke” Mitchell, 84, of Choteau was a master pie baker. He developed a recipe for perfect pineapple pie, according to his obituary. I would have loved to have met Duke and sampled his pie.

Bonnie Een, 93, of Boise had a great love story. She met her husband Arthur “Smokey” Een while he was on a cattle-selling trip in Minneapolis. The Rudyard rancher wooed his future bride and continued to write to her when he returned home. He convinced Bonnie to run away from her mother’s home and come to Montana. Smokey met her at the Hingham train station where they were immediately married.

I wish I could have heard Bonnie and Smokey tell that story.

With New Year’s resolutions on the horizon, putting the story together gives me a chance to reflect on how I want to live my life and how I want to be remembered.

Russell Lee Danreuther, 60, of Big Sandy was remembered for giving the gift of music to his community. He played at weddings, funerals, homecoming programs and county fairs. Lelah Bernice Hill Kauk, 95, of Brady played piano at her church for 50 years.

I am not the least bit musical, so I certainly won’t be remembered for my music, but it’s a reminder that we all have gifts to share.

Lelah also made pre-game meals for her grandchildren, great-grandchildren and their countless teammates. Maybe someday I can be that kind of grandmother.

I often get teary eyed reading obituaries throughout the year, and by late December, I have a pile of obituaries long enough to fill several editions of our paper.

It’s hard to pare them down to a manageable length, and unfortunately I have to leave out some pretty amazing stories.

Mark Twain is quoted for saying, “There was never yet an uninteresting life. Such a thing is an impossibility.”

The stories every day on the obituary page make a good case that Twain was right.
Rural mail will suffer with more mail plant closures

By John Edgecombe, Jr., publisher, The Nebraska Signal, Geneva, NE
President, National Newspaper Association

January 21, 2015

A friend of mine from South Dakota noted that the U.S. Postal Service delivered a lump of coal to many small towns last Christmas when it proceeded to eliminate overnight mail in most of the nation in 2015. That was a good description. USPS will slow delivery officially by one day for First-Class and Periodicals mail. Many members of Congress have asked it to hold off. But USPS is plowing ahead.

It is time for lawmakers to consider how rural and small town mail is suffering.

The USPS plans to close more than 80 mail processing plants in 2015. Smaller plants will be consolidated into urban plants. It has already closed nearly 150 plants in the past three years and says service was not affected.

That is hard to believe, at least in small towns.

Longer road trips for most mail, traffic delays in urban areas to get sorted mail back to the local post offices, post office closings and shorter business hours have made claims of good service hard to trust. There is also the upheaval while workers lose their jobs or have to be retrained. Now, according to the nation’s mail agency, cost-cutting means admitting service will be even slower, even in urban areas, by at least a day.

What the public announcements do not say is that when America’s mail sneezes, rural mail gets pneumonia. Cutting a service day is a big sneeze even in the metro areas. But rural and small town mail had already contracted the illness. Many subscribers who receive newspapers by mail have been disappointed by late deliveries. The scattered reports we may hear of delayed credit card payments and business invoices would be much louder if consumers felt there was any point in complaining.

Unfortunately for many—seniors without Internet capabilities, lower income residents, rural folks without good Internet service and people who just don’t trust the Internet—the mail is a necessity.

The USPS inspector general last October chastised the agency for not fully analyzing the impact from its proposed plant closings and the Postal Service said it would do so—but only after its slower service standards go into effect. In other words, it will consider whether it can reach its goals after it has lowered them.

Even before the change, it has been hard to find out how well rural mail is delivered.

The Postal Service provides a public report to its regulator, the Postal Regulatory Commission, on how well it performs against its service standards. See Periodic Reports at www.prc.gov. USPS gathers information on speed of delivery from several sources, including its own digital scanning. The greatest volume of mail is in urban areas, so national statistics may look OK. But the law doesn’t require USPS to report on how the rural mail is doing. That is something Congress should consider.

For a list of cities where changes in mail processing are scheduled in 2015 go to https://ribbs.usps.gov/index.cfm. Then open “2015 Network Consolidations.”

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130th MNA Annual Convention
Bucks T-4, Big Sky
June 12 & 13, 2015
Gladys Shay recalls her ‘girl Friday’ journalism career

By Chris Peterson, Hungry Horse News, Hagadone Corporation

Gladys Shay recalls when she was just a child seeing the lights and hearing the fire engines outside the window of her Kalispell home as firefighters raced to save a burning house.

“And I automatically started writing a story,” she said.

Journalism was in her blood, even at that young age. One of four children, her mother Ella was a homemaker and her father George was a mainline conductor for the Great Northern Railway who transferred to the Flathead in 1929 to drive the Galloping Goose passenger train between Columbia Falls and Kalispell.

Shay went on to be the “girl Friday” for Hungry Horse News founder and editor Mel Ruder for 30 years, covering society news, city council and a host of other topics.

Her journalism career, however, started before she went to work for Ruder. As a kid, she wrote for the Kalispell Times, a weekly newspaper in Kalispell.

“I took my troop news every week to the newspaper,” she said.

In her teens, Shay worked in the Kalispell Times mailroom and traveled to Columbia Falls once a week to pick up ads from businesses. Shortly after graduating from Flathead High School in 1946, she was visiting her uncle, John O’Connell, mayor of Columbia Falls, when Ruder walked in and said he was starting a newspaper in Columbia Falls.

“He had egg on his tie,” Shay recalled.

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

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

Ruder hired printers over the years, but Shay was the only person who worked in the newsroom with him. They sat and typed stories at nearby desks, talking to themselves as they wrote. People often thought they were talking to each other, which wasn’t the case.

In fact, Ruder hated being interrupted when he was typing, a trait his wife, Ruth, never really figured out. Ruder would have a fit if Ruth interrupted him, Shay recalled.

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

Shay and Ruder had a lot in common, even if he was 20 years her senior. They had little patience and yet took each other’s advice. Their writing style was clipped. They left out articles like “the” to save space, and they were protective of their news and their sources.

“You didn’t dare let the Daily Inter Lake have anything before we did,” she said.

The two didn’t always get along.

“We always argued,” she recalled. “I read his editorials. I was the only one who could disagree with him.”

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

Weekly news was different a half century ago. There was no Internet or Facebook, so as society reporter Shay called around town to ask people what they were up to. The news stories were called “locals.” If Aunt Betty went and saw Uncle Lester for lunch, that was news. Shay said she didn’t really like the job – she’d make a dozen phone calls for an inch of copy, but people liked having their names in the newspapers.

She said she also re-wrote Ruder’s stories for regional dailies like the Missoulian and Great Falls Tribune, shortening them up for the daily presses.

Her life took an abrupt turn in the mid-1970s when her husband left her for another woman. Shay still had children to feed and the newspaper business didn’t make ends meet, so she quit.

“I never told Ruder why,” she said.

Ruder later said letting her go was the worst thing he ever did. A few years after that, he sold the paper to the Kennedy family from Wyoming.

Shay went on to work at the Montana Veterans Home as a receptionist and nurse’s aide and later managed a liquor store on Nucleus Avenue.

Shay has been active in a host of civic groups in Columbia Falls, serving as secretary or president of all of them at one point, including Eastern Star, PTA, Rebekah Lodge, VFW Auxiliary, Columbia Falls Senior Center, Columbia Falls Library Board and Columbia Falls Lions Club. She was the first female president of the Lions Club.

At 86, she still gets out, playing cards at the senior center and visiting with the ladies of the Red Hat Society.

She recalled an amusing tale when Ruder lived in the loft above the Hungry Horse News offices. He had put a Christmas wreath with a light in the window and asked Shay what she thought.

“You’re the only bachelor in town with a red light in his window,” she quipped.

Reese new Lake County Leader editor

David Reese is the new editor at the Lake County Leader in Polson.

Reese is the editor of the Bigfork Eagle and West Shore News, and will now oversee news operations at all three newspapers. Reese is a 1988 graduate of the University of Montana School of Journalism, and is a native of Missoula. He started his journalism career with the Associated Press, covering University of Montana sports, then went to the Bigfork Eagle in 1988 as a reporter, photographer and advertising sales person.

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Reese continued

He went on to the Whitefish Pilot, where he was a reporter and photographer, and then to the Daily Inter Lake, where he was the outdoors editor, contributing editor of the Flathead Business Journal, and a feature writer. Reese is the founding editor of Montana Living, a quarterly lifestyle magazine that he published from 1996 to 2010. He has traveled extensively in the Middle East, filming documentaries in Iran, Palestine and Israel.

Reese said weekly newspapers are one of the strongest markets in journalism and will continue to be in the changing landscape of the news industry.

“Weekly newspapers like the Lake County Leader and Bigfork Eagle are essential to our communities,” Reese said. “With the staff in place at the Leader, I’m looking forward to helping make the Leader a vibrant, community-centered newspaper that readers trust and rely upon.”

Laurie Ramos is the general manager of the Lake County Leader. She said the newspaper will continue to work to be the “backbone of the community” and will continue to grow with a solid staff of reporters, customer service representatives and advertising sales reps. E-mail Reese at editor@leaderadvertiser.com.

Michelle said the family has always followed the U.S. Postal Service’s unofficial creed when delivering the Inter Lake: “Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.”

Whatever the weather conditions, Mission Village residents have been able to count on the Oxford family’s loyal service. But all good things must come to an end, the family acknowledged. The Oxfords recently announced they’re retiring from the newspaper delivery business at the end of the year.

“We’re trying to relax and de-stress our lives,” Jefferson said.

Both Jefferson and Michelle had paper routes when they were young – Jefferson delivered the afternoon Spokane Chronicle, while Michelle was a young carrier for the North Platte Telegraph in Nebraska.

“We’ve always been big believers in reading the local paper,” Jefferson said.

Family of longtime newspaper carriers giving up Kalispell route

Over the last 18 years, the Oxford family has had some interesting encounters while delivering the Daily Inter Lake in the expansive Mission Village subdivision just north of Kalispell.

There was the time Jefferson and Michelle Oxford’s youngest daughter, Mercedes, got bit on the chin when she surprised a dog. She was about 7, but the family finished the route before heading to the emergency room.

Deer, skunks and raccoons routinely have startled Oxford family members during their early morning duty.

The family has delivered the newspaper on bicycles, in a golf cart and most recently in a classic Cadillac Eldorado.

“We went through a few [side-view] mirrors,” Michelle Oxford said with a laugh.

And there was a particular fire hydrant that got in the way more than once.

2015 MNA Better Newspaper Contest

We are looking forward to another great competition to showcase the very best the Montana newspaper industry produced this past year.

The contest entry website is open and the rules can be found at: http://www.mtnewspapers.com/2015-mna-better-newspaper-contest-rules/

A few items of interest for the 2015 contest:

- The entry deadline is Tuesday, February 17. Our schedule does not allow for an extension of the deadline this year.
- The good folks from the Kentucky Press Association will judge our contest.
- No changes in the contest categories this year.
- Some slight changes in the circulation divisions. Be sure to select the proper division based on your average net circulation as reported on your statement of ownership or sworn statement of circulation.
- This year, if you so choose, you may compete in the next higher circulation division than you would normally qualify for. Please let Jim know if you plan to do so.

Please contact the MNA office with questions.
‘Tis the season?

Of course it is! The statewide advertising programs are perfect for every season and time of the year. Here are some suggestions for the first couple of months in 2015:


Resource links
montanafairsandfestivals.com to search by festival or fair, timeframe and location; wintermt.com to search by location, type of event and time-frame with links to events; mtsae.com to search for associations, links to their websites with event calendars and annual meeting dates; montanachamber.com to search membership directory, direct links to 1,500+ Montana Chamber members, their websites and events; goexpospark.com for Great Falls area events.

New sales tools
New sales tools, including print ads, brochures, point of sale pieces and training events, are currently being created and will be made available in early 2015.

Statewide by the Numbers
The first “Statewide by the Numbers” virtual sales meeting will be held on Thursday, January 22, at 3 p.m. via gotomeeting.com. An invitation and request for an RSVP was e-mailed January 13, 2015, to ad managers. Space is still available. ALL member newspapers, those currently part of the network and those who haven’t yet joined, are encouraged to participate.

Seasonal series
The first ads of the seasonal series for Winter and Spring, with the new SDAP rates, are now available for download from the MNA FTP site. Please use these ads to promote the SCAN and SDAP programs and discontinue using the previous ads with outdated rates. Access the ad copy files located in the folder labeled Customizable SDAP & SCAN promo ads.

Tip & best practices
Thanks to our members for sharing the following tips for successful sales and service of the statewide ad programs in the new year.

From Jim at the Livingston Enterprise
Post-holiday season is an opportune time to run the statewide advertising programs promotional ads in the Livingston Enterprise. According to Jim, “timing is perfect” for running the new ads featuring the new rates.

From Shelley at the Laurel Outlook
“Cattle prices are at an all-time high this year…the highest they have been in 60 years!” To capitalize on this economic surge, Shelley created an ag page dedicated to the Montana ranchers who sell bulls off in February and replacement heifers that are dry after calving.

From Jeff at the Choteau Acantha
Statewide advertising programs are a perfect match for all sorts of clients, from those with camera-ready art to those who only have an idea and contact information. For the latter, Jeff offers his newspaper’s creative services and upsells the size in the process, designing a 2x2 and a 2x4, so the customer can see the impact difference. This service also works for a customer who only has a business card to work with. Jeff is able to take that basic contact information, enhance it with a message and call for action, and upsell in the process, increasing the chances for results and enhancing the statewide advertising program at the same time.

To share your comments, success stories, tips and feedback, contact Kev Campbell at 406.443.2850 or campbell@mtnewspapers.com.
Provide great value to your small advertisers

By Bob Berting, Sales Advice

There is a trend to create promotions for smaller advertisers and have them commit to a lengthy schedule running business card size ads. This is part of the thinking that generating quick profit is what will help keep the publication afloat. This could be the theme for a fantasy Broadway play: “How a publication can make money selling advertising – getting dollars from the little guy makes sense.”

How can the smaller advertiser get any value from any project?

The reading public gets little value from this approach, and the advertiser is not only throwing money away, but usually sees no good response or new business. What can be accomplished from such an approach? In the long run, the small advertiser realizes that funds used for such an endeavor has been wasted, and the publication running its business card size ads was only out to make some quick profit at its expense. Many times, a program can be designed with well-designed ads that will enable the advertiser to truly project not only the right image, but tell the story of its business in a meaningful way. In other words, the advertiser will recognize that the publication wants to give it value for its investment in the publication’s advertising program.

Why should the smaller advertiser invest in a stronger ad program?

The assumption should not be made that a smaller advertiser has a limited income and can only afford a business card size ad. In many cases, there is money spent on competing media that is not known. However, the

creative ad sales pro needs to make his or her publication the major player in the customer media mix. Smaller advertisers cannot only get increased value, but their advertising can be profitable to the publication. Here are some ways this is possible:

- Provide co-op help. If your salespeople can find co-op dollars for their smaller advertisers, they can help them into a stronger and more dynamic program with the publication.
- How can your pre-print insert service help? Can you provide zoned coverage for them? Will you let small advertisers share a common insert? Could you create a small advertiser coupon booklet to be inserted in your publication?
- Your website can be a great place for smaller advertisers who can have strategic placements that get great readership.
- How about sponsoring a seminar for your smaller advertisers? I have conducted over 300 seminars for the customers of newspapers, and they are extremely effective. Invite your regulars, inactives and prospects to a morning seminar that can start with a continental breakfast or end with a light lunch. Your smaller advertisers will greatly appreciate such an event sponsored by your publication.

Your staff can do a better job with your smaller advertisers.

These advertisers can be cultivated to grow into more dominant, high profile advertisers that will get more response from their ads in your publication — but not running business card size ads in full pages over a long-range program. (c) Bob Berting 2014

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:

(c) Bob Berting 2014