Retired federal biologist, John Ormiston, carefully works to extract a Wilson’s Warbler from one of three nets to capture song birds east of Lake Como. Researchers place a tiny, numbered band around one leg after basic information is gathered about each one. The monitoring effort has been ongoing on the Bitterroot National Forest for 22 years.

The photograph was taken with a wide-angle lens probably at f4. I wanted to put the bird and man’s hands in sharp focus and allow the background to drop out as much as possible.

Judge’s Comment: Very clean, colorful, and unique perspective. Enjoyed all the elements of this.
MNA Calendar

May
15  Discounted lodging deadline at the Yogo Inn for the 132nd MNA Annual Convention. Call (406)535-8721 and ask for the MNA convention rate.
18  Member Educational Opportunity: Online Media Campus: Rural Journalism: Tracking Agriculture Register at http://onlinemediacampus.com/
19  Deadline to submit articles for the May Press Pass
29  MNA office will be closed for the Memorial Day Holiday

June
15  MNA and MNAS Board of Directors’ Meeting - Pine Meadows Golf Course, Lewistown
15, 16, 17  MNA office will be closed for the annual convention
16, 17  132nd MNA Annual Convention - Yogo Inn, Lewistown
16  Deadline to submit articles for the June Press Pass
16  Montana Newspaper Foundation Annual Meeting - Yogo Inn, Lewistown
16  Montana Newspaper Foundation Golf Scramble Fundraiser - Pine Meadows Golf Course, Lewistown
16  Montana Newspaper Foundation Dinner Train Fundraiser - Charlie Russell Chew-Choo, Lewistown
17  Montana Newspaper Advertising Service Annual Meeting - Yogo Inn, Lewistown
17  Montana Newspaper Association Annual Meeting - Yogo Inn, Lewistown
17  MNA Past Presidents’ Luncheon, Master Editor/Publisher Award and Montana Newspaper Hall of Fame Induction- Yogo Inn, Lewistown
17  2017 MNA Better Newspaper Contest Awards and Banquet - Yogo Inn, Lewistown

July
1  Annual deadline to file a County and Municipal Sworn Statement of Circulation
4  Independence Day - MNA office will be closed
21  Deadline to submit articles for the July Press Pass

WELCOME
New Associate Member

Montana Sportsmen ALLIANCE
Voice of Reason on Montana Fish and Wildlife Issues

CONGRATULATIONS
on joining the MNA Statewide Advertising Program:
Roundup Record-Tribune & Winnett Times

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

Jim Rickman, Executive Director | jim@mtnewspapers.com
Stacy Wirtz, Business Development Director | stacy@mtnewspapers.com
Ryan Stavnes, Member Relations & Client Services | member@mtnewspapers.com
mtnewspapers.com

825 Great Northern Blvd., Ste. 202
Helena, MT 59601
Phone 406-443-2850
Fax 406-443-2860

April 28, 2017
MEMBER PROFILE

ALASTAIR BAKER
Editor and general manager, Carbon County News

BORN, YEAR & PLACE:
May 2, 1962, Johor Bahru, Malaysia

EDUCATION:
B.A. English and History from Hull University, England; B.A. Journalism from University of Montana, Missoula

FAMILY:
Married to Rhonda for 18 years. Have two stepchildren, Brian and Kayla.

FIRST NEWSPAPER JOB:
Northwest London News organization writing general features and theatre reviews.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND DIVERSIONS:
I was on the Festival of Nations board for a number of years and a past member of Rotary. I’m presently on the Historical Society board. I also volunteer to help with the concession stands during the July 2nd-4th Rodeo. I serve the community better by covering events and showing support that way.

My diversions, if you mean hobbies, I’m a big Beatles fan, obsessive really. Also enjoy classic and foreign films, collecting vinyl records, traveling, reading, and watching my beloved Tottenham Hotspurs soccer team from the Premier League. We’re 2nd at the time of writing.

HOW DID YOUR CAREER LEAD YOU TO WHERE YOU ARE NOW?
There is a lot of trial and error and luck involved. I love writing, something I get from my father. I wanted to be a theatre reviewer at an early age and after graduating from Missoula I got my wish covering theatre for local London papers and a national theatre magazine called, imaginatively, Theatre Magazine. I came back to Montana to see a friend get married and met my wife and moved to Red Lodge. I started part-time as a sort of cub reporter for the Carbon County News (CCN) filing light stories and taking photos and then graduated up through the ranks reporting and editing both the Big Horn County News and Stillwater County News as well. I’m now the editor and general manager of the CCN.

WHAT’S THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU LEARNED ALONG THE WAY THAT PREPARED YOU FOR YOUR CURRENT ROLE?
To trust your instincts, be proud of your work and maintain integrity. It’s also important to make the newsroom a fun and supportive place, as stress levels can be high at times. I’m all for giving treats and recognition to the team.

WHAT ASPECT OF THE JOB DO YOU FIND THE MOST REWARDING?
The very fact that as a small-town newspaper we are completely unique when it comes to news. We are the last bastions of ‘real’ news and offer readers a look at the world from another angle. I think we have a huge opportunity to gain ground over the national media outlets and show that we are above the muckraking that has gone on and on in recent months. We also have a relationship with our readers because we know them, we see them at events, and they are friends. I like that. I also love it when I can get stories from several different towns sharing the front cover. That is a great feeling.

WHAT ASPECT OF THE JOB DO YOU FIND THE MOST CHALLENGING?
The political season! I’m a patient person normally, but this takes the cake. My Alien status prohibits me from voting so I’m essentially neutral and run the paper this way, although we still get complaints of bias from both sides of the political spectrum in the run up to election day. Secretly, I’m actually a Royalist at heart. Another chore is constantly fighting off Internet challenges to our advertising revenue.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHANGES HAPPENING OR PLANNED AT THE CARBON COUNTY NEWS TO MEET THE CHANGING MEDIA LANDSCAPE?
Our website is getting a facelift soon and will provide more space for advertisers, which will give us more revenue opportunities. We are also going back to basics and reestablishing more advertising around school events and students, a path we’ve strangely not followed for a number of years. We are also looking at ways to increase our readership.

HOW DOES THE MNA SERVE YOU AND YOUR NEWSPAPER?
The MNA is a comforting security blanket and you know there is an organization out there fighting for our rights. Jim Rickman, the executive director, is doing an outstanding job keeping the Montana news industry together, informed and in touch. I don’t know how he does it.
The Montana Newspaper Association has wrapped up most of its legislative work for 2017 and can mark it down as largely a successful session for the news industry and the public’s right to know.

We went into the 2017 session with a short list of our own bills we hoped to get passed, but also knew that we would likely get involved in other issues that would arise. In addition to the three bills on our agenda – all of which centered around the public’s right to know and to participate – we became active in a half-dozen other bills, several of which had critical impacts on the press and public information. As the session winds down, we can report that except for one of our own bills, which we ended up having to oppose due to amendments, the MNA was successful in securing the outcomes it wanted on all other issues.

We also learned some important lessons this year that we will take with us moving forward.

Our big disappointment for the session was having to kill House Bill 236, the bill we crafted to clarify that booking photos are public records. We worked closely with law enforcement and county attorneys, and with Rep. Frank Garner, R-Kalispell, to craft this important bill. But as previously reported and despite no opponents, the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee successfully amended the bill to limit the release of booking photos to specific circumstances. His amendments would have prohibited the release of booking photos except upon conviction or with the permission of the person photographed. We obviously had to oppose this and asked Garner, the sponsor, to kill it on the House floor. The loss was a lesson for us in ensuring that bill titles are written in such a way that lawmakers cannot substantially change the intent of the legislation.

The lesson learned is a lesson so many of my Associated Press editors taught me and that I passed on as an editor: “Write tight.” Bill titles mean a lot, and if your bill title is too generic, legislators can - and may - add to or change things in your bill that you didn’t expect. That’s what happened to us on HB236. Our bill title wasn’t “tight” enough, allowing the chairman to propose amendments that completely changed our intent. Rest assured, that won’t happen again.

But on all the other issues the MNA tracked, we were successful in securing the outcomes we wanted. Our two other bills, HB370 to revise who can record public meetings, and HB221 which deleted outdated and inconsistent public-records requirements for local governments, both easily passed the Legislature and were signed by the governor.

More importantly, we led efforts to kill or amend several bills, including HB553, an unconstitutional measure that would have prohibited news media from posting photos of fatal crashes to social media sites until next of kin are notified.

We learned several valuable lessons from that legislation, too. First: Just because a bill is obviously, patently unconstitutional doesn’t mean legislators won’t consider it and even vote for it. Although we were able to kill HB553 in committee, seven members of the House Judiciary Committee supported it. The second lesson we learned is how important allies are when it comes to legislation like this. We did not kill this bill by ourselves. The Montana Broadcasters Association and the Montana ACLU came in to help and were instrumental.

With the 2017 session wrapping up, our focus will be on the interim and what issues legislators will be looking at that could affect the newspaper industry and the public’s right to know. As we move forward, our hope is that MNA members will continue to keep us informed of any issues you hear that might need to be addressed in 2019. And again, I want to personally thank the members who assisted us throughout the session.
2017 Convention AGENDA

132nd Annual Convention
Yogo Inn, Lewistown MT - June 16 - 17, 2017

Thursday, June 15
3:00 pm   MNA & MNAS Joint Board of Directors’ Meeting

Friday, June 16
9:00 am   Convention packets available
9:00 am   Montana Newspaper Foundation Annual Meeting
11:00 am  Montana Newspaper Foundation Golf Scramble
4:00 pm   Montana Newspaper Foundation Pre-Dinner Train Cocktail Hour and Fundraiser
5:30 pm   Montana Newspaper Foundation Charlie Russell Dinner Train Fundraiser
9:30 pm   Hospitality suite opens

Saturday, June 17
8:00 am   Convention packets available
8:00 am   Montana Advertising Service Annual Meeting & election of officers
8:30 am   Montana Newspaper Association Annual Meeting & election of officers
9:30 am   Educational Session: John T. Cribb presents ‘Market Trends & What to Consider When Selling a Newspaper’
9:30 am   Educational Session: Summer Goddard presents ‘Creative Design Roundtable’
10:30 am  Educational Session: John MacDonald presents ‘2017 Legislative Session Recap’
10:30 am  Educational Session: David Keyes presents ‘Best Special Projects and Advertising Roundtable’
12:00 pm  MNA Past Presidents’ Luncheon
12:30 pm  2017 MNA President’s Award Presentation
12:50 pm  2017 Master Editor/Publisher Award Presentation
1:10 pm   2017 Montana Newspaper Hall of Fame Induction
1:30 pm   Educational Session (3 hours): Google News Lab, Mike Reilly presents “Google Trends; Fusion Tables; MyMaps; Earth; Google Translate; Google Image Search/Verification; Streetview; Cardboard and Cardboard Camera; Mobile Apps; Public Data Explorer and Scrapping Data with Google Sheets
5:00 pm   MNA President’s Reception
6:00 pm   Montana Newspaper Foundation fundraising activities
6:30 pm   2017 Better Newspaper Contest Awards Banquet
7:30 pm   2017 Better Newspaper Contest Awards Presentation
8:15 pm   Award intermission, entertainment and Foundation fundraising activities
9:45 pm   Welcome MNA Incoming President
10:00 pm  Hospitality suite opens

Our Mission:
To advance and sustain the news publishing industry in Montana
# 132nd Annual Convention

**Yogo Inn, Lewistown MT - June 16 - 17, 2017**

## Attendee Registration

<table>
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<tr>
<th>FRIDAY, JUNE 16</th>
<th>SATURDAY, JUNE 17</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Attendee General Convention Registration</strong></td>
<td>Past Presidents’ Luncheon, Master E/P Award and MT Newspaper Hall of Fame Induction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Golf Scramble Fundraiser for the Foundation</td>
<td>2017 Better Newspaper Contest Awards Banquet</td>
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<tr>
<th>Total Registration per Attendee</th>
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<td>$75 person registration fee is per person attending includes $54 donation to the Foundation</td>
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<td>$100 per organization attending includes $24 donation to the Foundation</td>
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### Attendee’s Name:

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Fee: $ per Attendee

**Total Registration and Events Fees:**

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No Payment Required at this Time - MNA Will Email an Invoice

Total of all Registration and Events Fees: $ 

### Please Send Convention Registration To:

Ryan Stavnes, member services
Email: member@mtnewspapers.com or Montana Newspaper Association
825 Great Northern Blvd, Ste 202
Helena, MT 59601
(406) 443-2850

Registration Deadline: May 26, 2017
2017 Montana High School Journalist of the Year

Terryn Premo received a $1,000 scholarship from the Montana Newspaper Foundation. Terryn is a senior at CM Russell High School in Great Falls and will be attending Montana State University Bozeman this fall.

The Miles City Star Reporter Position

The Miles City Star, a Monday-Friday afternoon newspaper in the economic hub of southeastern Montana, seeks an energetic, prolific reporter to cover the city beat and general assignments. This job is perfect for a beginning reporter with college newspaper or intern experience, or a reporter at a weekly looking to move up to a daily. You can, as our local community college advertises, start here and go anywhere. You’ll work under an experienced editor, and have the opportunity to amass an impressive portfolio. Or, like the reporter you’ll be replacing, you can stick around for a while. She held the job for nearly 20 years. Photography and social media experience is a plus. Some evening and weekend work required. Apply with published clips or links, a resume and at least three references to mceditor@midrivers.com.
Lee Enterprises, which owns the Missoulian and several other newspapers and magazines in Montana, has purchased Independent Publishing, including the Missoula Independent, the region’s alternative weekly.

Mike Gulledge, vice president – publishing at Lee Enterprises, said both papers will remain editorially independent. The news coverage from each paper will remain separate, as will the advertising operations.

“Independent Publishing is an excellent addition to the Lee portfolio in Montana and further expands our already strong audience in Missoula and the surrounding communities,” said Gulledge, who also is regional publisher of the Billings Gazette, Missoulian and Ravalli Republic. “I look forward to working with Matt Gibson and The Independent team to build on the success they have generated in the Missoula region.”

Gulledge said all employees at the Indy, as it is known, will have the opportunity to keep the jobs they have now.

Missoula Independent publisher Matt Gibson will remain publisher, and will continue to have editorial and advertising oversight of the weekly paper.

“I’m excited to bring the Independent and its talented staff under Lee’s umbrella,” said Gibson. “Together, we’ll maximize our resources to deliver strong local reporting, and we’ll offer unbeatable audience reach and marketing savvy for advertisers.”

Missoulian Editor Kathy Best will have no input on the Indy’s news coverage, nor will Gibson have input on the Missoulian’s coverage, said Gulledge and Best.

Gulledge said he met with Gibson last year regarding talks about a purchase.

“We’ll be stronger together,” Gulledge told the Missoulian staff during a recent announcement.

The sale includes Big Sky Orogenic Racing and Events LLC, an event marketing and promotional company which sponsors a number of running and lifestyle events. Independent Publishing also produces several annual specialty publications.

The Indy began publishing in 1991 and is distributed at more than 480 locations in Missoula, Ravalli and Lake counties. It also has a significant online presence at missoulanews.com.

Gibson has owned the Independent since 1997. He began his career as a reporter in Livingston in 1990 and is the former president of the Montana Newspaper Association. He has also served on the board of the Association of Alternative Newsmedia.

Independent editor Brad Tyer said that he was surprised by the move.

“I am a little disconcerted, honestly,” he said a couple hours after the announcement. “I think we all have a lot of questions. We’re not really sure how it’s going to work out.”

Tyer said he and his staff will continue to operate as they have been.

“For the time being, we have been promised continuing editorial independence, and that’s an appropriate promise,” he said. “We are all hopeful that that turns out to be the case.

“The core of what we do, or what any news outlet does, ought to be skepticism. We have a healthy dose of skepticism, but we’re all staying put. Nobody’s leaving their desk. We’re going to give it an opportunity to see how it works out,” he said.

“If we find out we don’t have editorial independence, you will see some staff changes,” he said. “As could be expected, until we get evidence that that’s not the case, we’ll take it at face value and keep doing what we’re doing.”

Tyer said he’s always worked for alternative weeklies and nonprofits, so he’s unfamiliar with working in more traditional daily journalism.

He said he’s conferred with his colleagues and they’re working on a story about the sale.

“It’s probably the biggest story in the history of the paper,” he said. “We’re going to give this news the full-court press and treat it the same way as we would if it happened to somebody across the street.

“Our default is to get back to work, and if we find out that something changes down the line and we can’t do that anymore, we’ll have to reconsider and no doubt will. But the attitude here is healthy skepticism.”

Lee Banville, an associate professor at the University of Montana’s School of Journalism, said it’s not unprecedented for a daily paper to buy a so-called “alt weekly.”

“Papers are bought in other cities,” he said. “The Baltimore City Paper was purchased by the Baltimore Sun, so it’s happened in a couple places. It’s not totally unheard of.”

Banville said that it remains to be seen if readers of the Independent will continue to be loyal to it if they know it’s owned by a large corporation.

“It has to do a lot with the implementation of it,” Banville said. “If it’s going to be a standalone editorial publication, so there’s sort of a firewall between the two, and if most of the people at the Independent are there in a month or six from now, (readers) will have a level of acceptance.”

Banville intimated that there might be a level of skepticism from the community.

“Some people will be waiting for that moment where it seems like the Indy is becoming a modified version of Corridor,” a specialty entertainment publication of the Missoulian, he said. “If that happens, they will make a decision about how they’re going to view that.

“Is it the entertainment weekly of the Missoulian or an alternative voice of news in Missoula? Structurally, it feels like they’re trying to keep it the latter. That’s right now. We’ll wait and see.”

Banville said alternative weeklies have traditionally challenged daily papers.
“The thing that alt weeklies bring to the community, where they’re strong and vibrant, is they often push the daily or major outlets on stories they feel might not be covered correctly,” he said. “It’s an alternative check on what the media is doing as much as they are on what the government is doing. So when they take the Missoulian on, will Lee (Enterprises) be OK with that?”

Banville said the news outlets have different roles in the community.

“The role of the Missoulian in Missoula is to tell everybody everything that’s going on with its city council, school boards, its food, its music and its culture,” he said. “It’s supposed to be the broad brush. For the size and resources the Missoulian is given, it does a really solid job of keeping everyone informed in the state and in their community.

“The Indy has a narrower focus, where they’re telling you long-form narrative stories and in-depth features. There are often times a heavy focus on politics, both at the state level and locally. And there’s a really heavy focus on music and arts.”

Banville said he feels the Indy has been successful at having different news coverage than the Missoulian.

“That has played out pretty well here,” he said. “The question is will they still be alternative when owned by a daily? Only time will tell – that’s a popular journalism saying. I would say it’s comforting to know they’re leaving in place the editorial structure. It’s interesting that they’re leaving the advertising structure in place.”

Banville said alt weeklies have been hit just as hard economically as daily papers. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, newspaper publishers cut more than half their workforce from 2001 to 2016, which equals more than 238,000 jobs nationwide.

“I think alternative weeklies have had a rough go as well,” Banville said. “Their model is so different. They’re always free. They’ve always relied completely on advertising. I don’t know of a subscription model. But since they don’t deliver to homes, there is a reduced cost.

“That model is in some ways dicier, because it’s not so based on subscriptions and home delivery. But they’ve sometimes weathered the economic downturns better than the dailies did.”

Last August, Gibson took over publisher duties from Lynne Foland as a cost-saving measure.

“There are revenue challenges because of the migration of readers to the digital side,” he said at the time. “The revenue per reader on the digital side is considerably less than the revenue from readers in print. It’s a challenge for all media of any kind and we’re not immune from that. But whatever challenges there are to the industry, overall, newspapers remain extremely powerful media.”
‘Mail goes by us like two times before it gets here': Rural Montana waits for Postal Service reform

By Tom Lutey, Billings Gazette

Rosebud School students know the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, which is why the U.S. Postal Service’s mail route to this tiny Eastern Montana town is a head-scratcher.

"The mail goes by us like two times before it gets here," said Lori Reierson, who works in the school’s main office.

Letters from the sorting center in Billings are trucked past Rosebud to Miles City, then trucked by again from Miles City to Forsyth, before making it to the school.

The mail has taken this spaghetti noodle route since 2011, when the debt-ridden U.S. Postal Service began cutting sorting centers and limiting local post office hours to four on weekdays and none on Saturdays.

USPS has closed processing centers in Butte, Havre, Helena,Kalispell, Miles City and Wolf Point since 2011. More mail now moves through processing centers like the one in Billings.

Observers say improvements aren’t on a fast track with President Donald Trump. Postal service reform hasn’t been a priority. Congressional leaders are forecasting postal reform in the next two years.

Still, mail-dependent businesses like small newspapers are lobbying for reform. Jim Rickman, executive director of the Montana Newspaper Association, said he’s writing congressional letters. Montana’s U.S. Sens. Steve Daines, a Republican, and Jon Tester, a Democrat, are both members of the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, which handles U.S. Postal Service matters.

“I just recently penned a letter to Daines’s office as an invitation for the National Newspaper Association to visit with him about how bad delivery service is for newspapers, especially community newspapers,” Rickman said. “So many local newspapers have had to basically work around this at a much higher expense.”

Local first-class mail has a gone from two-day delivery to three-day. That schedule doesn’t include Sundays and holidays. Mail that straddles those dates can take four days for delivery.

Second-class postage takes longer. Rickman said postal facilities along the processing route can sit on mail for up to three days if necessary. Multiple delays can keep a subscriber out of state from receiving a community newspaper for 14 days.

Postal Service problems are significant. Americans are paying more bills and doing more business online, and periodical mailing is down. Daily mail volume has diminished 59 billion pieces from a 2006 peak of 213 billion, to 154 billion pieces last year, according to USPS data.

Congress has also required USPS since 2006 to prefund health benefits for future employees, a mandate that puts the post office on the hook for a $5.5 billion deposit annually. The Postal Service is the only government agency required to pay for benefits for workers who aren’t currently on its payroll. Proponents argue USPS would be in better financial shape if the requirement were lifted, though the decline in mail would still be an issue. The Government Accountability Office found in 2012 that the majority of the nation’s 32,000 post offices operate at a loss.

USPS loses about $5 billion a year. It owes $52 billion to its retirement fund.

Rural Montana post offices have been on the chopping block. In 2012 there were 85 Montana post offices considered for closure, part of a bigger 3,700 post office cut nationwide.

Montana avoided closures, but settled for cut hours at 186 post offices.

“The Postal Service is critical for families, seniors, and small businesses, especially in rural states like Montana. To ensure the Postal Service can continue to support Montana’s economy, we need to pass a bill that puts the Postal Service on sound financial footing, prohibits any further facility closures, and improves delivery across the state,” Tester said.
Calculating your best revenue area for new subscribers

By Lewis Floyd, Sr. Associate, W.B. Grimes & Company

There was a time when we felt circulation at “damn the expense – full subscriptions ahead.” The understanding was the cost of delivery was offset by ad revenue. Then advertisers decided that “all circulation was not equal.” As more advertisers came to this conclusion, ads or inserts declined as they were specified for areas the advertiser believed worked best for them. As revenue declined, expenses were cut. In some cases publications pulled out of areas not generating ad revenue – in other cases subscribers quit from a lack of advertising or due to things they liked being removed from the publication.

In response to these declines, publications cut more expenses, increased subscription rates, and the circle began again with more cutbacks from advertisers. This is a cycle we must stop to survive, so how do we go about it?

My suggestion would be to do an analysis of advertising and subscription revenue by delivery areas offered advertisers. While in-paper advertising would likely be divided by total subscriptions, insert advertising would be divided by subscribers in areas paid for delivery of the insert. We already would know subscription revenue, and if different in delivery areas, that rate would be used.

Then you calculate revenue per area and divide by subscribers to see the potential value of a new subscriber in the area. To get a truer value you could just use the insert and subscription revenue; then it would be a safe assumption that revenue would increase by that amount for each new subscription. The in-paper advertising might also increase, but it would be a smaller factor and depend on things other than a new subscription.

At this point the most likely conclusion is to concentrate on growth in these areas, but there is no silver bullet for “bagging” subscribers. We are back to basic subscription methods, applied to specific areas, but subscription discounts and sales will not accomplish your goal in the long run. Your editorial staff needs to step up coverage of events and activities, clubs, and school coverage in the sections in which you desire to increase readership – you will need to provide new reasons for them to buy and read your newspaper. (If you were already providing all you could your penetration rate would be the best in the nation.)

Not sure how much trouble it could be, but working with a local school newspaper and including some of its articles could be an inexpensive answer for more school coverage. Perhaps you can connect with some newsletters covering local clubs, or copy church email announcements, using parts of their newsletters or emails.

As you apply these techniques and find success, you can look to the next best revenue area, and then the next, etc. – and before you know it the new slogan will be: “Determine the best area of revenue – get the subscribers in that area.”

Just saying …

The Power of Frequency: How an Ad Campaign Invented the Diamond Engagement Ring

By: Laura Sheridan, Brand & Marketing Strategist | Ad Agency Search Consultant | Keynote Speaker

We meet with so many companies that believe changing the look of their marketing materials and web site is the panacea for slumping sales. Savvy marketers realize that to be effective they must first uncover why anyone would want to buy from them and then repeat the same compelling and differentiating messages in the same manner, over and over and over again.

Companies that are constantly refreshing how they market themselves are brands that don’t stand for anything in the consumer’s mind. It’s a costly approach that often leads to failure.

De Beers Diamond Company shines when it comes to repeating its core message. How many times have you heard “A Diamond is Forever”? What comes to mind when you hear it?

That headline has appeared in every single De Beers ad since 1948. The diamond engagement ring is one of the biggest assets of a married couple’s relationship, yet it’s worth about 50% less than what the consumer paid for it the moment they leave the jewelry store.

So why do we feel compelled to buy them? It started when N.W. Ayer, an ad agency founded in 1869, created a multifaceted marketing strategy that changed social attitudes about diamonds. Their extensive research found that diamonds were considered a luxury reserved for the super wealthy. To sell more diamonds, De Beers had to appeal to consumers at many income levels.

Their solution? Strengthen the tradition of engagement rings and transform public opinion about diamonds from precious stones to a visible demonstration of one’s long-term commitment. Then, find a way to emotionally connect with their audience and repeat the message again and again.

Miller Brewing Company created a whole new market by identifying a unique selling proposition and then repeating it. It was 31 years ago when “Great taste, less filling” was introduced. The line was bold. It took a common perception, that lite beer didn’t taste good, and teamed it up with a phrase “less filling” that presented beer drinkers with a plausible justification for lower calorie, lower alcohol beer. Sales soared. Running a multifaceted marketing program featuring the same message in clever campaigns with retired athletes, coaches and celebrities was a huge contributor.

Absolut Vodka took a different route to differentiating their brand from the competition. Absolut smartly leveraged the most basic thing they were selling – a container – and created the most recognizable bottle in the world. Absolut’s packaging has effectively helped differentiate the brand in a way that’s hard for competitors to challenge. In fact, Absolut’s ad campaign featuring their bottle as the hero is the longest uninterrupted ad campaign ever. The bottle has appeared in over 1,500 separate ads.

You’re picturing one now, right? Why? Because they’ve so brilliantly kept their packaging and the design of their iconic ads consistent. Absolut was a small player必须ing only about 2.5% of the vodka market when the campaign launched. Fast-forward to today and they are the #2 vodka brand in the U.S.

Don’t have a budget like De Beers, Miller or Absolut? Then sharing the same meaningful and relevant message with your target audience over and over again is even more vital when it comes to building your brand. Starting from scratch every time one of your marketing professionals writes copy for a new marketing piece – be it a landing page, sales sheet or customer service response – is antithetical to brand building. The result of this inefficient approach? Every time your target audience sees one of your ads they have to figure out what it’s for, who it’s from and why they care (if they’re still reading it). Stop the madness. Conduct the research to figure out why a target customer needs to buy from you and then craft the language and visual presentation of the message. Then repeat it and repeat it and repeat it.
Editorial Content, Digital Publishing and Advertising Sales will be the focus of upcoming webinars.

The educational webinars are brought to you as a member service of the Montana Newspaper Association, in conjunction with the Iowa Newspaper Foundation.

For more information about each webinar, and to register, go to [http://www.onlinemediacampus.com/webinars/](http://www.onlinemediacampus.com/webinars/)

An advanced registration of $35 is required to avoid paying a late fee.

We encourage members to make the webinars a group educational event by gathering around a single monitor or projected image to take advantage of the one registration fee. Please allow a few minutes for discussion after the training.

Advanced registration will allow you to view the webinars at any time after the presentation date.

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**Friday, May 12 - As a Partner, What Can Facebook Do for News Publishers?**

**Presenters: Chris Thew & Jason White, Facebook**

If your newspaper company has (or wants) a thriving Facebook page, there are ways to improve reader involvements - and possibly generate revenue from the page. Chris Thew and Jason White, manager of U.S. news partnerships for Facebook, will get you up to speed on recent changes, including the Facebook Journalism Project.

*Register by May 9*

**Thursday, May 18 - Rural Journalism: Tracking Agriculture**

**Presenter: Al Cross, Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues**

If you’re in a rural area, there’s a good chance that agriculture is one of the most important topics you can deliver to readers. Al Cross from the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues talks about strategies for community papers to attack agricultural issues.

*Register by May 15*

**Thursday, May 25 - What Would Sammy Do? Top Priorities for Sales Today**

**Presenter: Sammy Papert, Wormhole LLC**

If you’re in newspaper advertising, there’s a good chance that sales growth is your number one priority. In this session Papert will cover the top sales priorities he has learned and refined through the years to grow audience, streamline processes and, most importantly, grow sales.

*Register by May 15*