Best Sports Photo
Division 5
2017 Better Newspaper Contest
By Julia Moss, Great Falls Tribune

Titled: Great Falls Rumble

Tommy McMillen battles Ian Stewart during the Great Falls Rumble at Heritage Inn. McMillen won his debut match in 42 seconds.

Judge’s Comments: You can almost feel the fury in this photograph. I love the texture created by the overhead lighting; the highlight on the glove headed into the opponent, coupled with the shadowing around the eyes, is reminiscent of a painting. A wonderful example of making art out of sport.
MNA Calendar

November
1  Deadline to return your 2018 MNA Rate & Data Survey
8  Montana Newspaper Foundation 2018 Internship Grants open for applications
9  Member Educational Opportunity: What Newspapers Must Do to Keep Public Notices - 10:00 am
   Free GoToMeeting webinar - Register at https://goo.gl/forms/F31ay88c5Elpl28V2
9  Member Educational Opportunity: Online Media Campus: Engaging Readers with Email Newsletters
   Register at http://onlinemediacampus.com/
10 Deadline to submit articles for the November Press Pass

December
8  Deadline to submit articles for the December Press Pass
15 Application deadline for the 2018 Internship Grants
22 2018 Internship Grant winners will be announced
25 MNA office will be closed for the Christmas holiday

January
1  MNA office will be closed for the New Year holiday
4  2018 Better Newspaper Contest open for entries
19  MNA and MNAS Board of Directors’ meeting in Fort Benton
19  Deadline to submit articles for the January Press Pass

Thanks
To the Madisonian and West Yellowstone Star for joining our Statewide Classified and Display Advertising Networks. MNA now has 63 papers on the Display Ad Network and 67 papers on the Classified Ad Network. Thanks so much for being a part of these statewide programs!
2017 Better Newspaper Contest Winners

BEST FRONT PAGE

Division 1
Weekly newspapers with circulation of 1,250 or less
By Mackenzie Reiss, Big Timber Pioneer

Division 4
Weekly and daily newspapers with circulation of 4,501 or more
By Stacy Mantle, Havre Daily News

To view all the first-place winners of the 2017 Better Newspaper Contest, please visit the following link:

October 27, 2017
Our 2018 Better Newspaper Contest is only three months away. Now is the time to prepare by collecting and selecting your best work from 2017. Look for rules and any contest changes in December. The contest will open on Thursday, January 4, 2018.

### 2018 Better Newspaper Contest Categories

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<td>602</td>
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Kyle Rickhoff advances his career with Lee Enterprises

Kyle Rickhoff recently resigned as 1st Vice-President of the Montana Newspaper Association. Kyle has accepted a new position with Lee Enterprises, the parent company of Billings Gazette Communications.

Scott Squillace, Yellowstone Newspapers, advanced to 1st Vice-President and Tyler Miller, Independent Record and Montana Standard, advanced to the 2nd Vice-President of the Montana Newspaper Association.

MNA President Darla Downs, the board of directors and the MNA staff offer their sincere thanks to Kyle for his years of service to the Montana Newspaper Association.

Anton Kaufer joins MNAS Board of Directors

Anton Kaufer, director of advertising, Daily Inter Lake and Hagadone Digital Montana, has joined the Montana Newspaper Advertising Service Board of Directors.

In his role as director of advertising, Anton Kaufer leads advertising strategy, business growth and sales development for the Daily Inter Lake, Whitefish Pilot and Hungry Horse News, as well as Hagadone Digital Montana. He also writes a monthly digital marketing column for the Flathead Business Journal, providing insight and tips for local businesses. He joined the Hagadone team in January.

Anton has been involved in digital marketing for the last 25-plus years and held several sales and advertising leadership roles throughout New England and Louisiana. Before moving to Montana, he served as the director of sales for the Shreveport Times/USA Today Network in Shreveport, Louisiana.

New to the Flathead Valley, Anton hails from western Massachusetts and studied business at Berkshire Community College and the University of Lowell. Through the years, he’s been actively involved with numerous non-profits and community activities. He’s currently enrolled in Leadership Flathead and on the board of the Boys & Girls Club of Glacier.

He and his wife Betsy live in Creston with their 22-year-old son Alex. In his spare time, Anton enjoys cycling, hiking, cooking and exploring his new community.

Opinions: left or right, we’ll publish them

By DEB HILL, managing editor, Lewistown News-Argus

Recently, a reader objected to something we published on the opinion page.

The editorial and accompanying political cartoon addressed Congressman Greg Gianforte being photographed for a mug shot. Both were submitted by regular News-Argus contributors. Our reader was not amused.

It is …“time for respect of your fellow person, not hateful rhetoric. Think past your own opinion now and then,” the person wrote.

This isn’t the first time our paper has been accused of political leanings one way or the other, and I am sure it won’t be the last. From time to time, readers assume items on our opinion page reflect the points of view of those who work here.

Ironically, most who guess at the political alignment of the News-Argus staff get it wrong. It would be very hard to get it right, as we have an extremely mixed group working here, ranging from very liberal to very conservative.

Continued on Page 6
Opinions
Continued from Page 5

But what concerns me about this isn’t so much whether people think we are liberal or conservative, but that some believe we would use our paper as a vehicle for promoting only those viewpoints aligned with our own.

Actually, we work very hard to ensure our viewpoints don’t show up in our news coverage. It’s a key commandment taught in Journalism 101: the opinions of the reporter have no place in a news story.

We go so far as to hold everyone else who sends us material to the same standard. To do that, we take a close look at whether the information is factual or not.

If it’s an opinion, it’s going to be labeled as such.

If the entire piece is someone’s opinion, it will more than likely show up on our Opinion page… the one place in the newspaper where we welcome points of view.

If the opinion is related to a certain topic – for example, agriculture – we might run it on a page dedicated to that topic, but clearly labeled as a “Guest Opinion.”

If someone we are interviewing for a news story expresses an opinion, we are duty-bound to say whose opinion it is. That’s why we use quotation marks around their statement and identify who is speaking by providing their name and title.

We work diligently to sort out what is a fact and what is an opinion. To the great annoyance of some of our writers, we’ll even ask them to verify facts or figures in their editorials.

“Why do I have to do this?” one of our frequent writers asks us every time. “It says right on the top of the page ‘Opinion.’”

Why? Because we are determined to let our readers know where the information comes from, whether it is a fact that can be verified or is someone’s point of view. How else can you assess what you read?

As for that political cartoon and editorial about Mr. Gianforte: like everything on our Opinion page, both are just that…the opinions of those who submitted them. We run the letters, editorials and cartoons we receive without regard to politics or point of view, as long as they meet the standards for a family newspaper and are not libelous.

Agree? Disagree? Let us know and we’ll be happy to publish your point of view as well. It’s as easy as writing us a letter or sending us an email.

Pulse of America National Shopping Survey

The Montana Newspaper Association is pleased to announce an exceptional member service that should help each of you generate more advertising revenue in 2018. The MNA has partnered with Pulse Research to do a comprehensive Montana shopping survey of our members’ audiences. There is no cost to the MNA and our membership.

Pulse Research, www.pulseresearch.com, was founded in 1985 by a former newspaper publisher who realized the need to provide papers with tools to sell more advertising. Since that time, Pulse has taken the industry lead with its cutting-edge sales programs, all of which are based on market research. Pulse understands the challenges facing today’s media outlets and strives to provide the tools which will help clients thrive in a rapidly changing business and social environment.

Program Details:
• Our goal is to reach a statewide sample size of 400 individuals completing the Pulse survey by January 2, 2018
• The MNA encourages our members to promote the survey by placing ads in your newspaper and website
• Survey promotional ads are available at www.pulseresearch.com/poa.html
• As space is available, the MNA will promote the Pulse survey using our Montana Statewide Advertising Network
• Updates will be provided on our goal of 400 completed surveys
• Pulse will provide the MNA with survey results early in 2018, which your teams can use in effective presentations to help your local businesses

If you have questions, please contact Jim Rickman, executive director, at (406) 443-2850 or jim@mtnewspapers.com
The Pioneer News Group Co. announced recently it is selling its newspapers, websites and other properties — including the Bozeman Daily Chronicle and Belgrade News — to family-owned Adams Publishing Group.

The sale will include 20 other daily and weekly newspapers in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Utah, along with a commercial print facility, various shoppers and websites. The sale is expected to be finalized Nov. 1. Terms were not disclosed.

The Chronicle’s 106-year tradition of covering local news in southwest Montana will continue without interruption. The staff will remain unchanged.

“I can’t think of a better fit for the Chronicle than with Adams,” said Stephanie Pressly, Chronicle publisher. “Adams is another independent, family-owned group, committed to their local communities and employees. This means a bright and secure future for local journalism and our hometown papers.”

The Pioneer News Group is a family media business owned by members of the Scripps family. The Scripps family has a long history in newspapers, starting with E.W. Scripps, who started the Detroit Evening News in 1873 and the Cleveland Penny Press in 1878, which led to a bigger chain of newspapers that included the St. Louis Chronicle and Cincinnati Post.

Pioneer Newspapers was formed by James G. Scripps in 1986. The company is owned by Leighton Wood and his children Stedem, Marnie, Heather and Laura, and eight next-generation family members. Marnie Roozen is chairwoman of the company’s board of directors.

“It has been an honor for my family to serve our communities over these many generations,” said Roozen. “We cherish the friendships we have created with our employees and truly feel we are a family. It is because of our dedication to our communities and employees that we are so pleased that Adams Publishing Group is purchasing our media division. Adams shares our values as well as a deep commitment to the future of community newspapers. It is heartening to know our papers will be in very capable hands.”

The company was recently renamed Pioneer News Group to reflect its expansion to produce news and advertising, both in print and expanding digital formats. Mike Gugliotto is president and CEO of Pioneer.

“I’m very proud of the outstanding work Pioneer employees have produced as our industry continues to evolve, facing related challenges and exciting new opportunities,” said Gugliotto.

“It’s been a privilege to work with some of the most dedicated, determined and creative people in the business, with the unwavering support of the Wood family.”

Adams Publishing Group owns and operates 100 community newspapers in 11 states, including the acquisition of five newspaper publishing companies in 2016. The company is based in Minneapolis. In addition to its community newspaper company, the Adams family owns radio stations, outdoor advertising companies, a wine distribution business, label printing companies, and a large interest in Camping World Holdings, a publicly traded national network of RV dealers, affinity programs, the Good Sam Club, and other RV related products and services.

“We’re very excited to welcome the Pioneer group of community newspapers, commercial print facilities, and other print and digital products and services to APG. We’re especially pleased to welcome Pioneer’s over 500 dedicated associates to our community newspaper group,” said Steve Adams of the Adams Publishing Group. “The Wood family, along with Pioneer’s dedicated employees and management team, has done a stellar job of creating new and compelling products and services, both in print and digital, in the face of an ever changing media landscape. We commend their efforts, and look forward to continuing their proud journalistic tradition in the communities Pioneer serves.”

Jo Dee Black, a veteran editor at the Great Falls Tribune, is taking over as the top newsroom leader.

Black has worked as a reporter and a business and features editor at the Tribune for 17 years. She will become its news director, providing overall supervision for all news staff and content.

“It is a privilege to work with the Great Falls Tribune’s dedicated team of journalists who bring us stories from northcentral Montana and investigate issues important to our communities,” said Black. “We are humbled by the trust our sources and the confidence our readers have in the Tribune and we work every day to earn those assets.”

Black is a 1986 graduate of Concordia College, in Moorhead, Minnesota and started her journalism career as a reporter at the Cut Bank Pioneer Press. She first began writing for the Tribune as a correspondent in 1998.

She will report to Carol Hunter, Plains regional editor for the USA TODAY NETWORK, of which the Tribune is a part.

“I’m pleased to promote from within the Tribune staff for this important position,” Hunter said. “Jo Dee has deep roots in Montana and understands its issues and its people. She will uphold the Tribune’s tradition of community involvement and public-service journalism.”

Black takes the newsroom reins from Jim Strauss, who has served as president, publisher and editor. Strauss, who joined the Tribune as executive editor in 1995, will retain the title of president and publisher and devote himself fully to leading revenue initiatives. Gannett Co. Inc., parent company of the Tribune, has shifted to a structure that separates leadership of its revenue and journalistic functions.

Strauss was the last leader in the company to fill both roles.

Holly Kopeikin, Tribune director of sales and part of the Tribune’s advertising team for eight years, will be a key leader in this new structure, Strauss said. Kopeikin will continue to report to Strauss. “This change will allow us to better focus our energies for our customers, and I’m fortunate to have two longtime Tribune managers as strong as Jo Dee and Holly to help lead us forward,” he said. “These two are not only respected in our building but also throughout the community, as they are active in and committed to the Great Falls area.”

“I will miss the daily connection with the passionate and dedicated members of our news team, but I look forward to having more time to work with our talented sales team to deliver the best digital, print and event solutions for our advertisers,” said Strauss. “The Tribune’s content is in good hands, with Jo Dee and our team. I know Jo Dee will be working closely with all of her staff, especially Content Coach Scott Thompson and longtime Sports Columnist Scott Mansch. Our coverage will only get better.”

The Tribune is the oldest business in Great Falls, starting as a weekly newspaper in 1885 before converting to daily publication two years later. It won the Pulitzer Prize for explanatory reporting in 2000 for its examination of alcohol abuse and its impact on the community. Today, the Tribune reaches the largest audience in its history through the combination of the daily print edition, the greatfallstribune.com website, its e-edition and Facebook and Twitter accounts.
**In Memoriam**

**Wesley Karl Eben**, 69, of Hardin, died Saturday, September 16, 2017. He was born on Dec. 22, 1947, in Paris, TX.

His formative years were spent in Mesquite, TX, where he graduated from Mesquite High School and also where he met Barbara von Zurmuehlen, who became his wife of 48 years! He loved his family.

A football scholarship led him to Austin College in Sherman, TX. There, he earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology and later was inducted into the Austin College Football Hall of Fame. He loved football.

He spent eight years on active duty in the U.S. Navy after being drafted into military service in 1971, where he experienced the exhilarating joy of flying the A-6 Intruder. He served an additional 10 years in the Navy Reserve and finished his military career with the rank of Commander. He also earned his private pilot’s license and became a flight instructor. He loved to fly.

After finishing a two-year course of Bible study at Shiloh Training Institute in Hamilton, MT, he stayed on for several years as a Bible instructor and continued teaching throughout his life.

He completed a master’s degree and most of his doctorate program in guidance and counseling at Montana State University in Bozeman, MT, before accepting a position as counselor at Hardin High School in 1983.

He retired from that career, only to begin another with the Big Horn County News, where he eventually served as publisher. Hardin Chevy was his last field of endeavor, and he only recently stepped down.

Wes was curious, studious, generous, hard-working and playful. For years, he carried a football, baseball, bat and mitts, along with a Frisbee or two, in his car – always at the ready for a fun game with the kids. He taught, not only his son, but also his daughters, to throw a football as well as – or better than – most of the boys they knew. They benefitted from having an All-American quarterback for a dad. He loved to play.

But there was one thing that defined him above all the hard work and accomplishments, careers and achievements. He served Jesus and people, whenever and wherever he could. It was just what he did; no accolades, no fanfare, only a strong work ethic that simply said, “Let’s get it done, let’s make it work.” He loved the Lord.

**Georgianna Taylor**, 78, of Hamilton, died on October 24, 2016.

Georgianna was born on May 25, 1938, in Ipswich, SD. Georgianna excelled in the classroom and was a talented vocalist who graduated from Cut Bank High School in 1956 and attended the University of Montana. She married John Kavanagh in Cut Bank in 1959 and they had two children, Brian and Barb, and later divorced. Georgianna completed her bachelor of arts degree in journalism from the University of Montana in 1968. She was an accomplished journalist who worked at the Shelby Promoter, the Cut Bank Pioneer Press and The Missoulian.

Georgianna later married Alan R. Taylor. The pair raised their families in Missoula and Fort Collins, Colorado. While living in Fort Collins, she was on the staff of The Coloradoan, where she was employed as a sports reporter, feature writer and sports columnist.

When she returned to Montana, Georgianna settled in Hamilton and began working again for The Missoulian. She co-authored the popular “Dirty Fingernails” weekly column with Molly Hackett. She was also a sports and feature writer in The Bitterroot View, which was published weekly by The Missoulian.

Georgianna also co-authored two gardening books, “The Compleat Gardener” and “A Year in the Garden” with Molly Hackett. Her love of gardening and expertise were well known throughout the Bitterroot Valley.

Her unselfish and giving nature were most evident in her volunteer work and support of the local Hospice, Habitat for Humanity and many other community programs. She was a charter member of Chapter AW-PEO in Cut Bank and later demitted to Chapter BC in Hamilton. She was honored as a 50-year member in PEO in 2008. Her other interests included playing in the Hand Bell Choir, volunteering around the Bitterroot Valley, and collecting hedgehog memorabilia from around the world.

More important to Georgianna than her career and community accomplishments was her role as a mother and grandmother. She passed many of her skills, interests and a passion for helping others on to her children and grandchildren.

Matt is rooting out typos and criticizing the plays of the Denver Broncos and UM Grizzlies from the other side now.

Matt was born March 11, 1967, in Denver.

He attended Havre High School, graduating in 1985. He went to the University of Montana and graduated in 1990 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism.

He worked at the Havre Daily News, rising through the ranks from reporter to managing editor.

He came to the Billings Gazette as a copy editor and page designer in 2001. He always had a large container of candy at his desk, from Red Vines to Tootsie Rolls, and he won many friends in the newsroom with his ability to correct typos, his institutional knowledge of Hi-Line history and, of course, sports.

In October of 2009 he was diagnosed with lymphoma. He never felt sorry for himself; he took the treatment in stride, joking about having “rat poison” flowing through his blood stream and talking about what he would do when he got better.

He did get better and returned to the Gazette, offering candy and wisdom, talking about how he had the immune system of a baby.

The cancer returned in 2016. Despite the diagnosis, Matt kept talking of his plans for post-recovery, hoping to work at a newspaper again and returning to reporting. The next steps in treatment were just hurdles to be jumped en route to that goal.

But his body wasn’t in agreement with his mind, and he became ill, finally giving way Saturday, Sept. 23, with his wife Milene at his side.

Richard (Dick) Harvey Nordhagen, 88, passed away on September 22, 2017. Dick was born January 3, 1929.

Dick attended Choteau Elementary School and graduated from Teton County High School. During high school he got a job at the local newspaper office, the Choteau Acantha.

Dick and Viola Joan Rowley were married on April 9, 1955, in Bynum, Montana, and had one girl and four boys.

Dick became the owner and publisher of the Choteau Acantha in 1961. He greatly valued and was appreciative of the many who worked for him through the years.

Dick saw many changes in his 47-year career at the Acantha. He was in the generation that went all the way from hot lead to desktop publishing. Indeed, when we purchased the business, he still had a 1946 Kluge letter press, but he also had a brand new Apple Macintosh computer and printer. Dick ran the paper with a conservative hand, faithfully chronicling the comings and goings of the community, births, deaths, weddings, high school and elementary school sports, and more.

He loved sports, and was active in serving in the community as a volunteer fireman, a member of the Lions Club, and the Choteau Chamber of Commerce. He also served five years as the Bishop of the local LDS ward.

Lorraine Kurfiss Remington, 89, passed away on Oct. 16, 2017. She was born Feb. 28, 1928.

Lorraine graduated from the University of Montana with a Bachelor’s of Journalism. While there, she was a member of the Delta Gamma sorority where she made many lifelong friends, and a member of the Theta Sigma Phi, a national honorary society for women in journalism. She graduated near the top of her class in 1950.

Lorraine was employed in 1950 by the Montana Fish and Game Department where she edited their first magazine. She married George Remington in 1951 and moved to Honolulu, Hawaii. While living in the Aloha State, she was assistant director of advertising at Aloha Airlines. They eventually returned to Helena.

Lorraine wrote weekly columns on arts under the pen name Lee Wyn for the Helena Independent Record. She was also a freelance editor and writer for several businesses and publications.

A devoted supporter of the arts, Lorraine was a member of the Helena Arts Council, Helena Civic Center Board, Helena Symphony Society and Montana Arts Council Advisory Committee. Also an artist in her own right, she studied pottery at the Archie Bray Foundation.

While George was president of the Montana Newspaper Association, she founded an annual scholarship program with the Women of the Press Association. It funded summer newspaper employment for a junior in journalism at the University of Montana. The program was funded through sales of arts and crafts, and other donations from the association. This scholarship later became the Pat Burke Scholarship in memory of an association member.

The family moved to Billings in 1976, when George became publisher of the Billings Gazette. Lorraine continued to do some freelance and creative writing, as well. George and Lorraine traveled to France and England and bought property in the piney hills near Columbus. They built a hexagonal log home where they spent weekends and summers. When George retired in 1986, they moved there for the next 10 years.

Lorraine wants to be remembered as a gentle person who loved her family more than they’ll ever know. She loved spending time outdoors, especially fly fishing. She loved the beauty she found in nature and people, especially children – she loved babies.
People prefer newspapers for their local news over TV and the internet, according to a survey conducted for the National Newspaper Association. The majority of those who responded stated their preference for local news was:

- 33% local newspapers
- 30% TV (cable/local stations)
- 11% internet
- 5% radio
- 5% social media

When asked if there were any other sources where respondents got their local news, the majority, 19%, said no. Of the others who had picked another main source for local news, the community newspaper came in next at 18%.

- 56% of the respondents said they read a print newspaper that covers their community specifically
- 4% read their local paper online only
- 7% read it online and in print

The majority of respondents, 30%, have been reading their local newspaper for more than 30 years. The survey highlights the loyalty readers have for their local newspapers. Responses also included:

- Less than 5 years—14%
- More than 5 but less than 10—16%
- More than 10 years but less than 20—22%
- More than 20 years but less than 30—18%

The reason people stick with their local paper is because they want to know about what is going on in their community.

- 84% said they read their local paper for local news, information and obituaries
- 2% read them for state and national news

Newspapers have a strong pass-along factor:

- 46% share their newspaper with at least 1 other person
- 12% share their newspaper with at least 2 other people
- 10% share their newspaper with at least 3 other people
- 6% share their newspaper with at least 4 other people
- 8% share their newspaper with at least 5 other people

That adds up to 82% of local community newspaper readers who share their paper.

The respondents indicated that they are interested in their local communities.

- 61% read their local paper for school news somewhat often to very often
- 46% read it for local sports somewhat often to very often
- 60% read their local paper for the editorials or letters to the editor somewhat often to very often
- 51% said they read the public notices in their local newspaper somewhat often to very often

Totaling all the respondents showed that 81% of the respondents read public notices at least some of the time.

Contrast this with the number of people who visit their local government website:

- 46% said they never visit their local government site
- 25% said they visit their local government website somewhat often to very often

The local newspaper is an important part of people’s lives, according to the survey.

- 75% of the community newspaper respondents said they look forward to reading their paper
- 54% said they trust their community newspaper somewhat to extremely well
- 46% said their community paper does a better job than other news sources of helping them understand the news somewhat well to extremely well
- 71% said their paper is extremely useful to them personally, from somewhat well to extremely well

When asked about paying for content on the newspaper’s website:

- 12% said they would pay to read the paper’s content from its website
- 64% said they would not be willing to pay for access to news if the paper said it was necessary to charge for internet access to support its newsgathering efforts

The survey was conducted by Susquehanna Polling and Research based in Harrisburg, PA. From March 6 to April 5, 2017, the company contacted 1,000 households across the country.
If you ask any editor in a newsroom what one of their biggest issues is, chances are online comments would be toward the top of the list.

Between a Facebook page and a newspaper.com site, readers can leave hundreds of comments a day. And moderating them can take time. The comments themselves can also descend into name calling or unnecessary political debates.

A lot of news websites have abandoned comments altogether, with the most recent high-profile organization being NPR. With many in the industry moving on, why keep using comments on your website? Is it worth your time?

While comments may take up valuable time to moderate in a newsroom, studies have shown that commenters are more civil to each other when a staff person is moderating and responding.

One study from the Engaging News Project found that uncivil comments were reduced when the TV station participating in the study had either a reporter or another staff member respond.

An even larger study conducted by ENP and the Coral Project involving 20 newsrooms found that a majority of readers wanted things like questions answered or factual points clarified.

At GateHouse Media, we still have comment sections on our websites and encourage editors to moderate them.

Here is some advice for editors who spend time interacting with readers in the comment section:

Kent Bush, publisher of the Shawnee News-Star, wrote in an email that moderating comments can reduce the number of comments received, but what comments are posted tend to be more respectful.

Bush removes comments from the Facebook page when posters resort to name calling, threats or make false statements. He also will message a poster privately to explain why a comment is removed.

Alan Shaw, the analytics and engagement lead producer for the Sarasota Herald-Tribune, tries to respond to all legitimate questions, or loop in a reporter to answer them. He has also found that temporary bans are an effective way to let posters cool down a bit. “Some of those we’ve banned complain that I’m ruining the comments, but my goal is to make it a more civil place where people can weigh in without fear of being attacked,” Shaw wrote in an email. Here is an example where Shaw responded to a question from a reader in the comments about a fatal accident. The reader used the comments to ask details about the accident, as it was a relative who was killed.

Ron Sylvester, the editor of the Hutchinson News, wrote in an email that he also tries to respond when readers make statements about a news story that are inaccurate, or if they gossip about the publication. If our readers ask us questions in the comments and we don’t respond, what does that say about our relationship with our readers? Comments on the site is the one place that belongs to the readers. And if they are asking questions or offering suggestions, it’s important to respond to them.

He also follows the same advice he does for writing stories: “Just like any other form of writing, don’t post the first thing that comes to mind. Revise it. Schedule it for later, if you need to, so you have time to make more revisions later,” Sylvester wrote.

If you’re overwhelmed with how to moderate, keep a few basic rules in mind:

- Promote the good
- Ban or delete the bad
- Ignore the rest

The most important thing you can do in comment moderation is to let your community of readers know that you are watching and that you care about what they have to say.

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**2018 MNA Rate and Data Survey**

The annual Rate and Data Survey is the ultimate tool used by the MNA to accurately represent our membership for advertising and other services.

With 84 member newspapers, we enjoy the challenge of processing the hundreds of details involved in print and digital advertising as we strive to develop easy-to-understand presentations and proposals for our potential clients. Our goal is to respond to our client advertising requests within 24 hours, making the information in the Rate and Data Survey an invaluable administrative tool for the MNA staff.

The 2018 Rate and Data Survey can be found on the MNA website or at the following link:


We ask for your commitment to fully complete the survey and return it to the MNA office by November 1. And, as always, we welcome your updates at any time to help us accurately represent your newspaper.

Thank you in advance for your assistance. Please contact Stacy with questions at (406) 443-2850 or stacy@mtnewspapers.com.
Alex is an ad manager who wants his sales team to be professional from start to finish. “Some sales people talk too much, especially at the end of a sales conversation,” he said. “It’s like a car that diesels when you turn off the ignition. The engine just keeps on going.” Dieseling was common in the early days of catalytic converters. I used to have a car that had that problem. After I turned it off, it sputtered for about five seconds – even after I removed the key. It was like the car had a mind of its own.

“It can be a real challenge to bring a conversation in for a landing,” Alex said, “so we put a lot of emphasis on turning the end of an appointment into a transition to the next step. We want to leave our prospects on the top of the mountain, not let things run downhill at the end.”

That approach reminds me of the Walt Disney quote: “The way to get started is to stop talking and start doing.” If a sales person has had a productive meeting, it’s time to shift gears and go into action.

“I’ve heard about a helpful four-step process,” Alex explained. “Thank them, summarize what you’ve talked about, ask if there are questions, then mention the next step. That ends the discussion on a positive note with everybody on the same page.”

Here’s how it works:

1. Express appreciation. “In a lot of conversations, a simple ‘thank you’ indicates that the conversation is nearing a close,” Alex said. “That sets things in motion for you to end the meeting the right way.”
2. Summarize the conversation. “Think of bullet points,” he said. “A summary should be a quick restatement of the main points you discussed. It’s usually best to cover them in chronological order. You can say something like, ‘Let me recap to make sure we’ve covered the things that are most important to you. We talked about key point A. Then we talked about key point B. And we discussed the differences between strategies C and D.’ This is the old idea of saying what you’re going to tell them, then telling them, then telling them what you’ve told them.”
3. Ask if the summary covers everything. According to Alex, asking “Does this cover all the bases?” is a simple way to find out where things stand. “It’s important to show that you value their input. If something hasn’t been covered thoroughly – or even worse – if an important issue hasn’t been addressed, you’ve got more work to do.”
4. Specify next steps. “Every meeting should end with some kind of action plan,” he explained. “If possible, set a deadline. For example, you can say, ‘I’ll have that proposal ready for you by next Monday. Let’s set a time to go over the details.’ That’s a simple, professional way to end a presentation. It’s a clean landing with no doubts about what happens next.”

It sure beats sputtering, doesn’t it?

John Foust has conducted training programs for thousands of newspaper advertising professionals. Many ad departments are using his training videos to save time and get quick results from in-house training. E-mail for information: john@johnfoust.com