Digital archiving comes to MNA

This month, we take the first steps in the process of digital archiving of all member newspapers.

You may recall from early correspondence that digital archiving will allow our association to establish a new website that contains 100 percent of all published Public Notices and expand the services and grow the customer base of our Clipping Service. Having a comprehensive Public Notice website, combined with our print product, is a critical responsibility of our association in providing the public access to our government.

We selected ArcaSearch as our vendor partner for the digital archiving program. ArcaSearch, based in Paynesville, MN, is a premier provider of archiving services for newspapers, magazines, county government, higher education, libraries and museums.

Thank you for providing the contact information of those in your organization responsible for Production and Public Notice advertising. We will work closely with these individuals on the process of coding Public Notices and posting PDFs of your pages on the very secure ArcaSearch FTP site.

Your PDF page files will be used only by our Clipping Service and by ArcaSearch to pull your Public Notice advertising for our website. You will have access to your archived files as a modern, searchable morgue and for electronic tear sheets. No one else will have access to your files.

Along with this technical conversion process, an extensive marketing campaign is being developed to promote the value and importance of Public Notices in our newspapers and our new website.

You will soon be receiving more details on the steps you’ll be required to take at your newspaper.

Our plan is to have new the Public Notice website available to the public in March 2014.

In the meantime, please contact Jim Rickman, MNA Executive Director at 443-2850 or jim@mtnewspapers.com with questions.

Mark Ibsen, a Helena area physician and musher, moves his team off the starting line in the 2013 Race to the Sky near Camp Rimini

Photo by Eliza Wiley, Independent Record Photo Editor
MNA Calendar

February
10 Begin accepting nominations for the MNA Hall of Fame and Master Editor/Publisher Award
13 2014 Better Newspaper Contest is closed for entries at 5:00 p.m.
19 2014 Better Newspaper Contest deadline for print entries to arrive at the MNA office
21 Deadline to submit articles for the February Press Pass
27 2014 Better Newspaper Contest judging begins by the Nevada Press Association

March
3-7 Newspapers in Education Week
12-13 NNA’s Leadership Summit: nnaweb.org/events
19 2014 Better Newspaper Contest judging ends by the Nevada Press Association
21 Deadline to submit articles for the March Press Pass

April
11 Deadline for MNA Hall of Fame and Master Editor/Publisher nominations
18 Deadline to submit articles for the April Press Pass
25 MNA and MNAS Board of Directors Meetings, Great Falls

June
12-14 129th MNA Annual Convention in Butte

Former Philipsburg Mail editor Michael Stafford dips his toes in the Atlantic ocean this month before beginning his trek across America.
MEMBER PROFILE

ERIN LEONARD, Co-Owner/Publisher, The Madisonian
Personal Stats
Born: 1977 in Long Beach, California
First Newspaper Job: Graphic Designer, The Madisonian
Family: Darbys of Sheridan, Montana/Mummies of Sheridan, Montana
6th generation Madison County native
Education: Marketing at MSU

SUSANNE HILL, Co-Owner/Publisher, The Madisonian
Personal Stats
Born: 1979 in Sheridan, Montana
First Newspaper Job: Sales Manager, The Madisonian
Family: Schulzs of Sheridan, Montana/Kearns of Dillon, Montana
5th generation Madison County native
Education: Health Promotion/Community Health Education/Nutrition, MSU

Community Involvement and diversions:
We actively support the four schools in our county by scholarship programs, outreach efforts and working with each school’s journalism programs. Our major focus is directly and indirectly impacting economic development in the area. We believe if our market is doing well, we will do well. We cooperate with the local Economic Development office and various chambers of commerce to ensure our special products are created with the big picture in mind. Members of our management team are on many community groups such as town councils and chambers of commerce and we are constantly thinking about ways to create and nurture relationships within each of the county’s communities.

How did your career lead you to where you are now?
We both started working at The Madisonian in 2011. Having grown up in the same tiny town, and being only two years apart in a small school, we still find it strange that we had never spoken to one another until the day we met at The Madisonian. Our work relationship was excellent from the beginning, so when the paper came up for sale in late 2012, we jumped at the opportunity. The previous owner was very supportive of the idea and made every effort to ensure it worked out for us all. The sale was final in December of 2012 and the past year has been an absolute blast.

What’s the most important thing you learned along the way that prepared you for your current role?
Erin has a remarkable background in design. In addition to that obviously applicable skill, she has a keen ability to relate to people—staff, readers, advertisers, sources, etc.—in various situations, while making them feel comfortable. Those strengths, combined with her knowledge of the area, the people and the differences between each of our communities, facilitated a smooth transition into her role.

Susanne has owned several businesses prior to The Madisonian. She understands the significant responsibility that lies on the shoulders of The Madisonian, and is also skilled in managing staff and creating and executing a solid business model. She has a great ability to push the company’s vision forward, while staying in touch with the current state of the actual business.

What aspect of the job do you find the most rewarding?
We believe the reason we work so effectively together is because we are so different. Consequently, the reward for one of us isn’t necessarily the reward for the other.

Susanne is much more active in the ‘business’ end of things. The Madisonian saw a year of tremendous growth in 2013. Seeing a personal reward for hard work, knowing her advertisers are realizing a return on their investment, and that more and more people are reading the paper each month are at the top of her reward list.

Erin, on the other hand, is much more interested in the creativity and design portion of the business. She receives compliments from the communities consistently, and knowing that her efforts are effective and appreciated is a big reward.

continued on page 4
What aspect do you find the most challenging?

While there is a new challenge thrown our way every day it seems, the majority of difficulties we face fall within a few themes.
1. Communicating news and/or advertising policies to people who don’t agree with them—often complicated by having to tell a valued advertiser ‘no’ on an issue relating to news. One frequently affects the other.
2. Covering each of our county’s communities fairly and equally when there are only so many pages in a week’s paper—and so many different versions of fair and equal.
3. While our team carries a good bit of business experience, we have experienced the most ‘on the job’ growth in the journalism area. Our previous editor, who left just before we purchased The Madisonian, has been a priceless mentor, always returning our SOS calls with wise and generous advice.

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

When we purchased the paper, it got back into the hands of ‘locals.’ This fits seamlessly into our hyper-local messaging and we promote it as often as we can. This gave us an immediate boost with our readers and advertisers and it continues to boost our relevance with our audience.

Additionally, we strive to use progressive design and break some rules. This has been received with countless compliments from readers and community excitement about our product.

What is your digital strategy right now?

We are currently redesigning our website to facilitate new, fresh opportunities to push our products and our advertisers socially—and to thus increase our reader and advertiser engagement. The social media and digital opportunities have proven very effective as ways to communicate with our audience in real time. Public safety issues, power/water outages, criminal car chases, livestock on roadways, dangerous wildlife in neighborhoods, weather threats, road closures and many more topics find their way to our facebook page. Advertising opportunities, time-sensitive sale reminders, contests and other fun content also find their way to our customers digitally. We have found that by keeping the content extremely relevant, original and brief keeps our ‘follower’ numbers growing and the attrition rate low.

What is your print strategy right now?

We are enjoying a very strong weekly product and a high advertising percentage. Consequently, we have chosen to focus additional effort on creating a solid quarterly publication to promote the area. We have called it The Loop magazine and it has been a hit with locals, visitors, and advertisers. The focus is to impact economic development. We use the glossy magazine to get sappy and inspirational with our audience—and, of course, it receives that hyper-local label we stamp on everything. The Loop is the term used by locals to describe the highway that circles through Madison County. The magazine is, consequently, a guide to “the loop” and it focuses on things that only a ‘hyper-local’ would know.

Need a new press ID?

Has your press ID expired? Fallen apart?
Or, maybe you’re a new reporter.

At the MNA, we are happy to provide you with a new press ID.
Please email your job title, newspaper affiliation and jpg photo to:
Susan Mullen, clips@mtnewspapers.com.
All good things, and good weeks, must end

By Ed Kemmick

Fifteen years later, I still love telling people that I once got paid to drive back roads from Yaak to Alzada, starting at the Dirty Shame Saloon and ending at the Stoneville Saloon.

Although opinions vary as to what years constitute the golden age of American journalism, I feel pretty safe in calling that seven-day drive in the fall of 1999 the golden week of my own career. That was the best, but there were a lot of good weeks. If my math is correct—and it usually wasn’t, which is why I was lucky to have had Tom Tollefson as my editor all these years—I put in 1,281 weeks with The Gazette as of Friday.

And Friday, December 27, was my last day on the job. I started as a regional editor, working 3 to midnight. In those days we editors would produce each issue of the newspaper by hand, like medieval monks, scratching away with quill pens to make 50,000 copies of every story.

Well, all right, it wasn’t quite that primitive. But, the technology we did use would be just as mysterious and comical to young readers who have never looked at a news story except on a smartphone.

Into the machine

I remember in particular this big, balky machine that would produce pages on a kind of photo paper that would then be waxed and slapped down on a stout sheet of paper before going to the pressroom.

The machine was always breaking down, and I can still picture Darci, a printer who fortunately was rather petite, stepping into the chemical-smelling bowels of the contraption to re-thread the photo paper.

I spent seven years on the night desk. It was a grinding, exhausting job (those monks would understand), so when I had the chance to go back to being a reporter, in 1996, I jumped at the chance.

After all those years of editing, reporting seemed like the best job in the world. Instead of editing 20 to 30 stories a night, trying desperately to cleanse them of errors and infelicities in a very limited time, I suddenly found myself enjoying the luxury of having an entire day to work on a single story.

I covered the city beat for many years. As time went on, my editors gave me increasingly more freedom to pursue stories that were more rewarding and a bit more fun than sitting through a four-hour City Council meeting.

All this and a paycheck, too

My co-pilot on many of those adventures was photographer David Grubbs, who made his own exit from The Gazette a year and a half ago. The people we met, the places we saw, the extreme weather we endured—damn, I should write a book. Wait, I did that, too. Did I mention I got paid for all this?

All good things must end, and a quarter of a century seems like plenty of time to do any one thing, except for marriage and parenthood, which I’ve been at even longer and will stick with.

etc.

By Indy Staff

It’s hard to believe, but the prevailing jurisprudence in Montana holds that the state can brazenly sue citizens who demand access to government records. That’s what happened to the Independent when it sought the disciplinary records of Lake County law officers accused of misconduct.

Reluctant to turn over the requested files without a court order, then-Attorney General Steve Bullock filed a lawsuit, naming the Indy as a defendant. The state argued that the accused lawmen had privacy rights that trumped the people’s right to know.

We couldn’t lay down and let the AG’s office hold sway over the court. To ensure the judge heard a strong argument for the public’s interest, the Indy lawyered up, and we more or less won, obtaining redacted versions of all the files we sought. Among the astonishing details, we found that Bullock himself had been badly embarrassed by the testimony of Frank Bowen, a warden with Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Bowen revealed how his FWP superiors, fearing the mess in Lake County made Bullock look soft on corruption, forced Bowen to stop pursuing his poaching investigation of several Lake County deputies, ordered him not to discuss his work and reassigned him.

Republicans tried to pry into the unfolding fiasco, convening legislative hearings to politicize the situation during Bullock’s gubernatorial campaign. But, with Bowen effectively gagged, they never got any meaty details until a year later, when we prevailed in court. By then, Bullock had already won the election.

You would think that once the court had sided with the Indy, we’d be entitled to some relief from the onerous legal burden. But, you’d be wrong.

Montana District Court Judge Kathy Seeley ruled that we had to foot our substantial legal fees entirely on our own—describing our request for reimbursement as “a substantial injustice” against the state.

Yeah, our jaws dropped, too. But, we’re not the first people to encounter this kind of twisted legal reasoning. In her ruling, Seeley relied on some similar recent cases, and they’ve all gone the government’s way on the issue of expenses. When it comes to attorneys’ fees, the judges have discretion, and they’ve consistently endorsed the now-routine practice of government entities running to court every time privacy rights might interfere with the public’s right to know, regardless of whether the privacy claim is a fig leaf for unwarranted secrecy or not. It turns out that in Montana your constitutionally guaranteed right to know only goes as deep as the pocket that pays your lawyer.

Montana Journalism ranked ninth in nation by news professionals

The University of Montana School of Journalism recently was ranked the ninth best college journalism program in the country in a poll by NewsPro magazine and the Radio Television Digital News Association.

The magazine and professional association surveyed news professionals for their 2013 top choices of J-schools around the country, both undergraduate and graduate. Responders emphasized the importance of fundamentals and practical application in programs, such as teaching AP style, grammar and different ways to write about news.

“We were incredibly excited to hear the news of our ranking by news professionals,” said Denise Dowling, interim dean of the School of Journalism. “It not only speaks to the decades of devotion to hands-on teaching by outstanding faculty, but also to the graduates who go out and make a difference in newsrooms across the country. The work they do in communities around Montana, the U.S. and the world shows they’ve got a rock-solid grounding in practicing ethical journalism in a rapidly changing media world.”

Of the top ten schools identified in the poll, UM also boasts the lowest yearly cost of attendance for both in-state and out-of-state undergraduate students.

The UM School of Journalism is one of the oldest journalism programs in the country, celebrating its 99th year in 2013. It was established in surplus army tents on the Oval in 1914 and moved to the Journalism Building - now Stone Hall - in 1936. In 2007, the program moved into the newly built Don Anderson Hall.

Undergraduate professional programs include print/online journalism, print/Web design, photojournalism, specialty reporting, television production, television news/documentary and radio. The graduate program focuses on natural resource and environmental science journalism.

The school will celebrate its centennial Sept. 26-27, 2014, welcoming alumni and current students to reflect on 100 years of excellence in journalism education.
More share their front pages
Poynter-December 25, 2013
By Jeremy Barr

Some newspapers may be dying. But their front pages aren’t.

Newspaper covers are increasingly being shared digitally—helped along by the ease of posting on Twitter, Facebook and other social media platforms.

But why? More than anything, these A1s are seen as an encapsulation of a historical event, to be seen and filed away for a distant time when we want to remember how much something mattered in its day.

Sharing a front on Twitter—or saving a digital copy as a PDF—is the modern-day equivalent of cutting out and saving a page from a significant edition, or just a funny New York tabloid front.

“Whatever the newspaper industry is struggling with today, there is a long history of front pages capturing history with a kind of permanence,” said Mark Jurkowitz, associate director of the Pew Research Center’s Journalism Project, in a phone interview.

Front pages provide a “sense of permanence in a broadcast culture where things disappear quickly,” he said.

Study: 42% read newspapers online

Print revenues for newspapers and some magazines may be down, but, according to data out from comScore, that doesn’t necessarily mean readership is down. See article by Kristina Knight at http://www.bizreport.com/authors/kristina_knight.html.

The most popular online newspaper hubs included the Mail Online (50 million unique visitors, October 2012), The New York Times (46.7 million unique visitors) and The Guardian (38.9 million unique visitors), finds comScore. Other top traffic getters included Tribune Newspapers, People’s Daily Online, Telegraph Media Group and WashingtonPost.com.

Meanwhile, the Newspaper Association of America notes that more than 1.13 million US consumers visited newspaper websites (November 2012), with the average daily traffic hitting about 22 million unique users. These readers spent more than four thousand minutes on-site and visited nearly nine times per month.

According to Pew Research, three-quarters of Americans say they ‘read a newspaper yesterday,’ whether they lived in an urban or rural area.

“While residents of urban, suburban and rural communities are similar in most of their reading habits with regard to daily newspapers, there are differences across communities in residents’ magazine/journal reading habits and in the frequency of reading either newspapers or magazines/journals on handheld devices such as a tablet computer, e-reader or cell phone,” the report noted.

The US is fairly evenly when it comes to regional reading habits - 57% of urban residents read newspapers, while 60% of suburbans do so, and 54% of rural residents read newspapers. Numbers are slightly different when looking at how these readers are engaging - urban (56%) and suburban (57%) residents are more likely to read newspapers via mobile devices than their rural counterparts (45%).

Postcards from Butte
By Matt Christensen, Editor

The Montana Standard recently launched a new special feature devoted to celebrating the history of Butte.

“Postcards from Butte” aims to capture the unique spirit of the community’s past. The first installment, in the Big Sky Life section, showcased historical postcards and factoids dating back decades.

But the new series isn’t limited to just postcards. On Christmas Day, the Standard published a full-color section of reproduced etchings of Butte scenes from the turn of the century. Tucked away in the archives for more than 100 years, these artworks are worth saving for your scrapbook.

Readers will see other installments of the “Postcards” series periodically throughout the next year.

The series can be tracked online in a special new website, postcardsfrombutte.com, where readers can click through installments of the “Postcards from Butte” series and learn more through exclusive digital features. They can find a link to the site at mtstandard.com.

In Memorium

Paul Anderson, 75, passed away unexpectedly in Port Townsend, Wash., on Dec. 6, 2013. Paul attended Cornell University, where he received a bachelor’s in history. Paul then attended the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, where he graduated with a master’s in history in 1965. Throughout his life, Paul’s employment mirrored his diverse interests. From 1965-67, Paul worked as a night editor at UPI in Salt Lake. In 1975, Paul returned to journalism, working as a writer and photographer at the Carbon County News in Red Lodge.

- 30 -
The Herald-News celebrating 100 years: 1913-2013

Northwest Montana Health Services
congratulates The Herald-News and celebrates with them on their 100th anniversary.

Darla and Sheridan Shumway continue the Down's tradition of journalism at The Herald-News.

The Herald News celebrated its 100th year in 2013 and has a long and storied history. The Wolf Point Herald News has mirrored the life of the community since its early beginnings.

The Wolf Point Herald was founded by Charles M. Hansen, who came from Bay, N.D. in 1912. The first issue was published March 7, 1913. The Herald was printed in an old George Washington hand press in the Hansen home and had 50 subscriptions.

The first plant burned down July 3, 1914, but a new plant was built and more equipment purchased. In April 1915, when Hansen was appointed postmaster, F.J. Weis, another North Dakotan who had homesteaded near Wolf Point, leased the property. At that time, the community had two newspapers, the Herald and the Fort Point Leader.

Weis hired George M. Jordan as editor. The Herald grew steadily and became known for its fine paper and solid publication. In 1919, with Marsh as manager, the newspaper was in good shape.

The Herald was sold to Joseph Lee Donlin, who, since 1935, had been publishing the Rosebud County News in Wolf Point. Donlin was a pioneer eastern Montana publisher, and he established the newspaper's reputation in the community.

The Donlins moved the newspaper to the present location on Main Street. Donlin sold the newspaper to Harry Downs Sr. in 1949. Downs and his son, Harry Downs Jr., moved the newspaper to the present location on Main Street.

The 2014 MNA BETTER NEWSPAPER CONTEST is now open


For Online Entry Instructions: http://www.mtnewspapers.com/2014-better-newspaper-contest-online-entry-instructions/
HELENA - The state Supreme Court has reversed an earlier ruling that made it difficult for individuals to file legal challenges against government agencies that ignore Montana’s open-meetings and open-records laws.

The 6-0 ruling Thursday says a person can sue an agency for violating the state constitution’s right-to-know and right-to-participate provisions, even if that person doesn’t have a direct personal interest in the matter.

That undoes a 2006 Supreme Court ruling that required a person to first prove he was injured or had a personal stake in the matter before filing a lawsuit over an open-government issue.

That ruling set a high bar for an individual to challenge an agency that denies access to a meeting or rejects a public-record request.

Justice Jim Rice wrote in Thursday’s majority opinion that the 2006 court wrongly applied the general requirement for “standing”—meaning an individual’s ability to bring a lawsuit—to constitutional provisions protecting the people’s right to observe and participate in their government.

“We believe such requirements impose standing thresholds that are incompatible with the nature of the particular constitutional rights at issue,” Rice wrote.

The attorney for Brian Schoof, the plaintiff in the case, said Friday that the new ruling corrects a significant wrong that prevented ordinary citizens from challenging a governmental agency that kicks someone out of a public meeting or denies access to a public record.

“This is huge,” said Mike Meloy, a Helena attorney who specializes in freedom of information cases. “The court has done what’s right.”

Meloy said government agencies have raised the 2006 decision as a defense in past cases he has been involved with in challenging both closed meetings and public records, making it difficult for the public to enforce their rights under the Montana Constitution.

Montana Association of Counties attorney Michael Sehestedt, who represented the defendants, said he was disappointed in the ruling, but it was the court’s precedent to overturn.

“It will be easier for people to sue even if they have no real interest in the matter or never displayed any interest,” he said. “But for people who truly are interested, they probably should have the right to litigate those issues.”

Schoof sued Custer County commissioners over a decision they made allowing them to receive cash payments from the county instead of contributions to their health insurance premiums.

The decision was made during a closed meeting in 2007, and Schoof said he did not learn of it until a deputy county attorney mentioned it during a public meeting four years later.

Schoof claimed the commissioners’ actions violated the state’s open-meetings statute, along with the Montana Constitution's right-to-know and right-to-participate provisions.

A district judge rejected his claims, saying he had no standing to file them and time had run out on a lawsuit.

Schoof appealed, and the Supreme Court in its decision reversed the lower judge's ruling and ordered further proceedings.

The Missoula Independent seeks a professional, highly motivated Sales Manager

We’re looking for a skilled leader to supervise a staff of display and classified sales reps, cultivate vital prospects and also provide some hands-on account management. Applicants should have a background in media, be goal-oriented, an excellent communicator, creative and driven to succeed. Sales management experience strongly preferred. This job opening represents an extraordinary opportunity for a strong leader looking to work in a super-stimulating environment.

Send résumés, including salary expectations, to Publisher, P. O. Box 8275, Missoula, MT 59807 or email to LFollow@missoulanews.com. EOE
Kelley Christensen has joined The Montana Standard staff as a reporter

She covers natural resources and land issues, Superfund, Forest Service and Bureau of Land Managements, Anaconda, rural communities in southwestern Montana—and writes feature stories. She is an accomplished photographer, as well.

Christensen grew up in Colorado. She graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with degrees in news-editorial journalism and English.

She worked previously at the Beatrice Daily Sun (page designer/copy editor) in Beatrice, Neb.; the Daily Inter Lake (business/agriculture reporter, weekend page designer/editor) in Kalispell; and the Hungry Horse News (managing editor) in Columbia Falls.

MNA’s Jeanne Bouma retires

MNA’s Accounting Specialist, Jeanne Bouma, will retire at the end of this month after almost 21 years of dedicated service to the MNA’s members, associate members and business clients. We will miss her wonderful sense of humor and forthrightness.

Jeanne started with the MNA on May 26, 1993, serving first under MNA Executive Director Charles Walk. Since that time, she has worked under executive directors Jim Fall, John Barrows and, currently, Jim Rickman.

In addition to her accounting duties, Jeanne has always served as the coordinator for the MNA’s Statewide Classified Ad Network (SCAN), and took on the job of coordinating the Statewide Display Advertising Program (SDAP) in January of 2013.

Jeanne was responsible for making sure entries in the MNA’s Better Newspaper Contest were submitted correctly each year, and sorted for shipping to the judges. Until 2013, she also spent many hours putting together the display of winning entries for the yearly convention, which members always looked forward to viewing.

She initiated Friday “Jeans Day” for the office staff, a tradition which continues today.

Steve Kadel named editor of Philipsburg Mail

He was a high school student in Hastings, Neb., when he caught the bug.

“I wrote sports part time for the daily paper there,” Philipsburg Mail Editor Steve Kadel recalled of his foray into journalism.

From there, he went to the University of Nebraska to pursue a degree in journalism.

His four decades of newspaper experience took him as far away as the Yangtze River in China, but he said he hopes to have found his last job on the banks of Flint Creek.

“There really haven’t been any big adjustments for me in coming here,” he said.

Kadel worked in a town of 800 as the Wallowa County reporter for the newspaper in Le Grande, Ore. His most recent stint had him editing the weekend editions of the Casper (Wyoming) Star-Tribune.

“In my last job, I wasn’t able to do any reporting. I was only editing staff stories, but I missed reporting and this was a great chance to get in a wide variety of reporting,” he said of his decision to relocate to Philipsburg.

Vicki Vaill named editor of The Herald-News

Vicki Vaill was recently hired as the editor of The Herald-News, Wolf Point, MT. Vaill comes from Pinehurst, N.C., most recently self-employed as a photographer and publisher of an online news blog. Vaill spent two years with the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Fort Worth, Tex., and was a regional editor for Kidsville News.

Seeley Swan Pathfinder adds new reporters

Colleen Kesterson started volunteering for the newspaper after her retirement in 2013, and will now be covering the Condon, Swan Valley and Salmon Prairie areas.

Sigrid Olson has lived in the Potomac Valley for the past 16 years and is excited to cover the community she knows and loves.

Scott Mansch receives award

Scott Mansch, Sports Editor at the Great Falls Tribune, recently received the 2013 PRCA Media Award for Excellence in Journalism - Print.

The Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association honors media members each year prior to the National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas.
My husband, Brian, and I used the Medifast/Take Shape for Life plan this past year and had a combined weight loss of 80 pounds. Once we lost our weight—it took him just two months to lose 52 lbs. and four months for me to lose 28 lbs.—we followed the basic principles of the plan to keep the weight off.

Eating something every few hours, drinking of water during the day and having a “lean and green” meal of sorts for supper, as well as exercising three or four days a week, are part of what we refer to as our lifestyle change. For us, Medifast wasn’t a diet; it was our guide to a healthier lifestyle.

A “lean and green” meal consists of a protein, such as chicken, fish, eggs, and three servings of vegetables. We’ve eaten a lot more salads this past year, tried veggie burgers, Meatless Mondays, stock up on Orange Roughy fillets when the Schwan’s man has them and grown accustomed to almond milk in our lattes and on our cereal.

Spaghetti squash is one vegetable that has become a staple for us. The easiest way I’ve found to cook spaghetti squash is in the microwave. I cut mine in half, scoop out the seeds and poke holes in it so it doesn’t blow up while it is cooking. I put a little water in a microwave-safe bowl and then put the squash in the bowl, cut side down, and cover loosely with plastic wrap. Cook it for five minutes or so, until the squash is cooked and then use a fork to scrape out the strands.

There are lots of websites with Medifast-friendly recipes, but my “go to” one is http://www.sandyskitchenadventures.com.

The following recipe from that website is among our favorite recipes and is very simple to prepare.

**Spaghetti Squash with Chicken and Pesto**

Pesto:
1/4 cup Ken’s Steakhouse Lite Northern Italian with Basil and Romano Dressing
1/2 cup fresh basil, chopped
40 pine nuts
1 garlic clove
2 Tbsp. grated Kraft Parmesan cheese

2 1/2 cups spaghetti squash strands, cooked
10 oz. grilled or baked chicken
1/2 cup Italian diced tomatoes, drained
1/3 cup shredded reduced fat mozzarella cheese

To make pesto, combine all the ingredients for the pesto in a small blender, food processor or Magic Bullet. Blend until desired consistency. Set aside.

Lightly spray a non-stick skillet with cooking spray and heat over medium-high heat. Add spaghetti squash, chicken and pesto. Stir until combined and heated thoroughly.

When heated, toss in the diced tomatoes. Divide the mixture into two portions. Sprinkle the mozzarella cheese between the two portions.

(This makes two “Lean and Green” servings.)
Billings Gazette Communications received a First Place Award in the Best Service Deal category at the 5th annual Second Street Online Promotions Awards. Media companies from across North America were honored in 27 categories for their outstanding contests, ballots, and deals programs.

Billings Gazette Communications launched www.hopontodaysdeal.com in August of 2010. Currently, they have over 22,200 registered users that look forward to great deals on a daily basis, which they receive via email. Each deal is also promoted in print, online and through social media in the Billings market. Billings recently was a finalist for small deals market of the year from Second Street and won an award for “Best Service Deal of the Year” for CARNU. From our partnership with CARNU, we have been able to grow their business, offer a great deal to our Today’s Deal customers and generate new digital revenue consistently through this deal and many others. CARNU reports that they receive new customers through the door every time they feature a deal on our site. We have offered everything from a vehicle detail to a boat detail during the fall. For more questions, contact Ryan Brosseau, Digital Media & Classified Advertising Director, at 406-657-1340.

The Great Falls Tribune presents a timely and creative campaign to promote its e-edition.
10 news design basics

A few years ago, I developed the Francis A. Henninger Grant Program, which helps me improve the look of even the smallest newspapers.

From my work on those projects, I’ve realized that many editors at these papers have hardly any training in proper news design. Many of them are just “winging it,” and they’ll freely admit it.

As a result of that realization, I now offer a seminar titled “News Design 101: All Basics. No Bull.” The presentation offers those editors an opportunity to learn some of the most fundamental techniques, approaches and practices of good news design.

Many of those who read this column also serve their community newspaper as editor, publisher, reporter, photographer, clerk, janitor, gofer, etc. And they, too, will admit they have little design training. So, I thought I’d share some of the tips in that seminar here.

1 Headline hierarchy. Place larger heads higher on the page. Give your lead news story the largest, boldest headline. Start big, so your smallest head isn’t teeny-tiny.

2 Use a dominant photo. Give your lead photo some size. At least three columns. Anything smaller doesn’t bring enough impact to the page.

3 Crop photos tightly. Look for the picture in your picture. Rid your photos of cluttered backgrounds and zoom in on your subject.

4 Avoid funky photo formats and frames. No ovals. No notched corners, no colored or embossed frames. We are community newspapers, not high school yearbooks.

5 Use modular design. Keep all the elements and packages on your page in rectangular format. There will be times when you will have to “dogleg” a story around ads, and that’s acceptable. But, stick to modular design wherever possible.

6 Keep briefs brief. No more than three to four inches. Anything more than that is a story: Put a headline on it and place it elsewhere.

7 Align to the baseline. Text and text-like elements such as captions, credits and bylines should all align to a baseline grid. This is easy to set up in your software and it gives your pages a more polished, professional look. It also saves you time trying to force the alignment of columns.

8 Keep design elements consistent. Set up standing heads, column sigs, page labels and the like so they are the same throughout your newspaper. Don’t fall into the trap of making this-or-that column “different.” Eventually, everything becomes different. And ... if everything is different, nothing is.

9 Use software style sheets. This is the easiest way to guarantee long-term design consistency. And, it helps speed the design process through every issue.

10 Create a design style guide. This need not be a full-bore, 40-plus page design manual. For small newspapers, it can be only two sides of a sheet of paper. Laminate it and place copies at every design terminal. It will keep you designing in the right direction.

So, there you have it. Follow these 10 tips and yours will be a better-designed newspaper. Now... and for the long term. WANT A FREE evaluation of your newspaper’s design? Just contact Ed edh@henningerconsulting.com, (803) 327-3322.

Ed Henninger is an independent newspaper consultant and the director of Henninger Consulting, offering comprehensive newspaper design services including redesigns, workshops, staff training and evaluations.