Reporting for the National Newspaper Association’s Day on Capitol Hill, Tom Mullen met with Montana’s entire congressional delegation and most of Idaho’s.

“Both Democratic Senator Jon Tester and Republican Congressman Steve Daines agreed that the current bill to amortize advertising expenses is a bad idea. Neither of them think it will go anywhere. That bill was introduced by former Montana Sen. Max Baucus and was originally designed to eliminate advertising as an expensable item for businesses. It’s a bad idea as it would constrict the growth of business. Amortizing the expense over 10 years, the latest plan, makes sense only if you make your money as an accountant,” Mullen said.

He was able to talk to both of Idaho’s senators, Republicans Jim Risch and Mike Crapo, and Rep. Raul Labrador, a Boise Republican.

“Senator Risch and Congressman Labrador were confounded by the idea of monkeying with advertising as an expensable item but Senator Crapo, who is a member of the Senate Finance Committee, told me that while he expects the advertising bill to go nowhere, tax reform has got to happen and everything will be on the table within a couple of years,” Mullen reported.

Senator Crapo is one of the “Gang of Six” which proposes bi-partisan compromise to reduce the U.S. deficit.

On the United States Postal Front, the NNA has backed most of California Congressman Darrell Issa’s plan over that of Oklahoma Senator Tom Coburn.

“Our recently appointed Montana Senator John Walsh, a Democrat from Butte, is still learning the ropes in Washington but he seemed genuinely interested in our attitudes toward both the postal and advertising bills.

He raised no objections to our positions,” Mullen said. “Everyone is in agreement that the U.S. Postal Service needs reform but the NNA is still fighting for Saturday delivery and that’s the only thing we don’t like about Congressman Issa’s bill. We’re also fighting hard for continuation of congressional oversight of USPS, which the Postmaster would like to eliminate, giving themselves the ability to raise rates and make many other operations decisions at will. NNA Director Tonda Rush argues that the Post Office was designed to provide universal service to the citizens and we believe the current postmaster is more interested in delivering packages and advertising - which FedEx and UPS are already doing,” Mullen said.

MNA prepares for 2015 legislative session

One of the most important functions your Montana Newspaper Association performs is lobbying on behalf of its member newspapers. Your MNA Legal Affairs Committee is chaired by Jan Anderson, Boulder Monitor. Committee members include Tom Eggensperger, Sanders County Ledger, Thompson Falls; Dick Crockford, Dillon Tribune; Matt Bunk, The Western News, Libby and Jim Rickman, MNA Executive Director.

To prepare for the 2015 Montana legislative session, the Legal Affairs Committee has taken proactive measures to hire a lobbyist and begin developing its legislative strategy. The committee had a very impressive group of candidates for the lobbyist position and ultimately selected John MacDonald.

MacDonald is a well-known, experienced and highly respected lobbyist. He is very familiar with the newspaper industry, having served 16 years as general assignment newsmen and correspondent with The Associated Press. John also has a background in media relations and provides counsel on public affairs and strategic communications.

Your Legal Affairs Committee will focus on key issues of accountability and transparency by our elected officials; public notices, open meetings, and other business issues related to the newspaper industry.

A key aspect of our success in Helena continues to be the open communications and working relationships our members maintain with their elected officials, especially state senators and representatives. As in the past, we will ask you to help support our legislative initiatives by reaching out and discussing our positions with your locally-elected officials.

We welcome John MacDonald to the Montana Newspaper Association and welcome your feedback and suggestions as we plan for the 2015 legislative session.

MNA Calendar

April
25 MNA and MNAS Board of Directors meetings, Great Falls
25 U of M School of Journalism Dean Stone Awards
30 Board of County Printing Public Hearing. 9:00 a.m., Room 105, 1310 East Lockey Ave., Helena

May
1 Launch date for the new MNA public notice website
1 Launch date for Montana News Tracker, MNA’s new reading service
8 Homeland: Building Real Estate Ad Revenue - Webinar at 11am (Eastern Time) www.regonline.com/HomelandMay2014
16 Deadline to submit articles for the May Press Pass

June
3 Montana primary election
12 MNA and MNAS joint Board of Directors meeting, Butte
13-14 129th Annual Convention opens, Best Western Butte Plaza Inn
13 Montana Newspaper Foundation Annual Banquet and Auction, Campus of MT Tech, Butte
14 MNA and MNAS annual meeting and election of officers, Best Western Butte Plaza Inn
14 Montana Newspaper Foundation annual meeting, Best Western Butte Plaza Inn
14 MNA & MT PBS hosted debates, Campus of MT Tech, Butte
14 Presentation of the 2014 MNA Better Newspaper Contest Awards, Mining City Center, Butte
27 Deadline to submit articles for the June Press Pass

July
1 Deadline to submit a sworn statement of distribution to the county clerk and recorder
18 Deadline to submit articles for the July Press Pass
JAN ANDERSON: Editor & Publisher, Boulder Monitor

PERSONAL Stats

Born: May 1951 in Kansas City, Missouri

First Newspaper Job: Columnist for Whitehall Ledger

Family: My husband of almost 41 years, David, and I have two grown sons and two grandchildren (and a third due any day now) who are the joy of our lives.

Education: BA in English from Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota

Community involvement and diversions:

I have served on the local school boards and have been actively involved in the Boulder Area Chamber of Commerce and many other civic organizations, but right now my time is filled with work, plus visiting grandchildren in California and Oregon, plus a 94-year-old father in Kansas City.

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

When serving on a local school board just over 30 years ago, I wrote a series of articles about the need for a major school construction project. (By the way, that $1.9 million project is the most recent successful building bond issue at that school.) A publisher of the Whitehall Ledger read the series and contacted me to write for them. Shortly after, I began writing as a correspondent for the Great Falls Tribune, Montana Standard, Independent Record and Boulder Monitor. In 1997, David and I established the Jefferson County Courier to cover an underserved portion of the county, and in 2002 purchased the Boulder Monitor. Three years ago, we merged the two papers.

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

Advice from people who have “been there/done that” is invaluable. Also, determination to get the job done, no matter how difficult, is critical. And listen, listen, listen.

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

At this point in my career, I am really enjoying the opportunities I have to foster young writers. I have been fortunate to have some wonderful interns over the years. I also work with the high school newspaper staff and with other students on other writing projects. It is rewarding watching them learn to research, write and make strides as they begin their own careers.

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

Oh, for an unlimited budget! There are so many things I would like to do that I simply cannot afford.

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

We have developed a reputation for unflinching reporting and for standing up for the public’s right to know and participate. Although we demand a lot from our government officials, we have earned the respect and trust of most of them.

What is your digital strategy right now?

We are running as fast as we can to keep up. We have a website updated every week that includes video and some material not in the print product, plus a Facebook page updated when there is breaking news. We have sometimes had five times our print product circulation on those digital products, but we could be doing so much more. We also added a paid e-edition this year that is doing well. And we sell subscriptions to both the print product and the e-edition online.

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What is your print strategy right now?

We know we have a quality print product and work hard to maintain that, but frankly right now we are devoting more attention to digital work and ways of integrating the two. Enabling customers to purchase/renew and pay for their print subscriptions via our website is one recent example.

How does the MNA serve you and your newspaper?

MNA has been invaluable. Most of what I know about this profession I have learned either from the school of hard knocks or with help from MNA training sessions and advice from members. The backup and support, whether from the FOI Hotline or over drinks at convention, gives me strength to get through the tough times. And I treasure the friends I have made through the MNA. The advertising arm of the MNA has also been helpful. Now, about that unlimited budget...

The Montana Newspaper Association is pleased to introduce Montana News Tracker as our new, improved and expanded reading service.

For the past 30 plus years, MNA has been providing clients of our reading service with clipped newsprint copies that were assembled and mailed about two weeks after we received the newspapers. The manual process included a dedicated staff of readers who would scour Montana newspapers in search of key words provided by our clients.

On May 1, MT News Tracker will begin providing our clients with digital files of news articles, images and advertising from MNA member newspapers. The entire newspaper will not be available to clients.

This major advancement in service is made possible because our member newspapers are now uploading their newspaper to the ArcaSearch digital archiving ftp site, allowing us the ability to electronically search for content relevant to our clients.

MT News Tracker clients can look forward to digital clips the same week the newspapers were published. In addition to our newspaper articles, we will also be offering our clients the option of a broadcast and internet monitoring service provided through our business partner, the Wisconsin Newspaper Association.

We look forward to providing our clients with the next generation in service with MT News Tracker.
As we near the May 1 launch date of montanapublicnotices.com, our new public notice website, and MT News Tracker, our new reading service, it's very important that all newspapers are following the coding and page uploading instructions that have been sent to you.

_A few common questions regarding the process:_

**QUESTION:**
Do I need to be adding the MNAXLP code to all Public/Legal Notices?

**ANSWER:**
Yes. When in doubt, code the Public/Legal Notice. And, please be sure to code those Public/Legal Notices that are published as a display ad.

**QUESTION:**
How will my Public/Legal Notices be transferred to the new website?

**ANSWER:**
As you upload your newspaper pages, ArcaSearch will use an optical character reader to identify the Public/Legal Notices you have coded and will transfer them to the new montanapublicnotices.com website. All Public/Legal Notices will remain on the website for three months.

**QUESTION:**
Do I need to continue using the old process of posting Public/Legal Notices?

**ANSWER:**
No. You can discontinue the old process now and focus on the new coding and page uploading process.

**QUESTION:**
Do we need to upload all of our newspaper pages to the ArcaSearch FTP site?

**ANSWER:**
Yes. All pages are required to make sure we capture all Public/Legal Notices. All pages are used to support MT News Tracker, our new reading service. And, all pages will be used to create your own in-house digital morgue. As a reminder, we encourage you to take advantage of the opportunity to populate your in-house digital morgue by uploading the past 52 weeks of your newspaper.

**QUESTION:**
Will the public have access to all our pages? We sell subscriptions to our e-edition.

**ANSWER:**
No. The public will not have access to your pages. Only you and our reading service will have access.

We appreciate the very positive progress newspapers are making with the new coding and uploading process. If you have questions, please contact Jim Rickman, MNA executive director, at 443-2850 or jim@mtnewspapers.com.
Bill Moyers described journalism as “the conversation of democracy.” For the last 40 years, I’ve been fortunate to participate in that conversation as a reporter, producer, broadcaster and columnist. I will continue to have a voice in that conversation, but in different ways following my resignation from The Billings Gazette on March 21.

New undefined adventures await, but leaving one of the best news teams in my career is bittersweet and merits some reflections.

I got hooked on journalism on Aug. 9, 1974, witnessing a bulletin on a noisy, paper-fed AP teletype machine. Ten commanding bells sonorously announced a breaking news story of worldwide importance: Richard Milhous Nixon has resigned the presidency of the United States.

My decision to study journalism at the University of Minnesota and to become a part of that conversation was sealed that day.

News was the challenging, stimulating and, at times terrifying, path that beckoned: a chance for a then-shy North Dakota kid to see more of the world.

I spent a decade as a reporter covering the State Capitol in St. Paul for Minnesota Public Radio and then for WCCO Radio, learning something about the chess game of life. Even small town dailies sent a reporter to St. Paul to cover the sessions and the press corps swelled to about 40 reporters. We competed like mad but remained friends. Back then, politicians of both parties generally got along, too.

Reporters never know what the day will bring. One of my most surprising was the day I broke the story, after months of rumors, that the Minneapolis Tribune, the morning paper, was merging with the Minneapolis Star, the evening newspaper.

That morning a Tribune reporter and friend called me, saying the merger had just been announced to the staff. “Hustle over here and I’ll let you through security at the back door,” he told me.

Running through the pressroom, the big presses whirling away, my radio gear bouncing against my thigh, I grabbed an elevator to the top floor, searching for the editor’s office.

It would be a short visit, I thought, bracing myself to be unceremoniously thrown out.

Instead the editor greeted me, offered me a cup of coffee and confirmed the merger.

We went live using a rotary telephone, breaking the news via radio to the Twin Cities.

As a second unexpected zinger, the editor said he had just resigned, after being kept in the dark by his bosses. Just an hour before the merger became reality, he had unknowingly reassured his staff that the talk was just rumors.

My complimentary “Death of a Star 1982” T-shirt remains a prize possession.

Covering three national political conventions in New York City, San Francisco and Dallas was another highlight of my political reporting days.

In 1985, my former husband and I moved to Billings to be closer to my parents and to the outdoors.

I freelanced for a decade, working in television, radio and print.

National projects included co-producing three TV documentaries: one of three hours in the Emmy-award winning Bill Moyers’ God & Politics series; a FRONTLINE on Yellowstone National Park; and a feature for ABC Turning Point. My brother, Mark Falstad of Minneapolis, won an Emmy for his filming on the Yellowstone documentary.

In 1996, I joined The Billings Gazette and have been covering business since then.

The city has grown substantially in the past 18 years, providing lots of material for about 840 “Have You Heard” Sunday columns. The “Scams du jour” section still draws the most reader response.

In addition to all the local copy, this beat has produced some national, even international, stories, including the demise of Montana Power Co., the sale of majority control of Stillwater Mining Co. to the Russian company Norilsk Nickel and the Bakken boom surrounding and changing my hometown of Williston, N.D.

There are so many adventures with my Gazette colleagues, experiences I never could have foreseen that day I decided to become a journalist.

For example:

Flying “Air Larry” in chief photographer Larry Mayer’s Cessna 180 to Missoula in 2000 for a Lee Enterprises wildfire series. The smoke was so thick that neither of us peering intently through the windshield could spot the runway strobe lights until seconds before Larry would have pulled up, aborting the landing.

Trudging through snow in bitter cold witnessing starving horses, some crippled by plastic leg bands.

Reporting a routine feature for Valentine’s Day about...
90-year-old lovebirds Agnes and J.R. Slaughter and becoming friends with those remarkable people.

And the thrill one morning when Ed Kemmick came over and started thumping my shoulders, saying, “Congratulations!” My analysis of NorthWestern Energy's troubled finances as it was trying to buy Montana Power had won a Best of the West award.

Reflecting back on my career, newsrooms have changed. They used to be noisier centers of lively discussions. It’s quieter now with fewer reporters and editors, 24/7 online deadlines and less time to discuss stories.

And during Sunshine Week, celebrating the U.S. Freedom of Information Act, we learned from AP that President Obama’s administration has censored or fully denied access to official documents 36 percent of the time.

This is not the first time journalism has faced challenges and The Gazette’s new reporters are bringing energy, fresh ideas and talent to town.

As I reinvent my life, my journalistic skills will follow: how to follow the money, read people, and search for the truth.

I will keenly miss the wit of a newsroom, the storm-chasing thrills of breaking news and the camaraderie of smart, hard-working, ethical professionals. And I’ll miss the readers, who constantly shared story ideas with me and let me know when I met (or didn’t meet) their expectations.

Journalism has been as grand an adventure as I had hoped back in my college days.

Now there will be time to resume my passions for French, fly fishing, books, travel, friends and horses. But I will never stop being a journalist and will continue to participate in the “conversation of democracy.”

Thanks to you all.

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**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

**Advertising Director**

The Helena Independent Record in Helena, MT seeks an innovative, results-focused Advertising Director to join our executive team. Reporting to the Publisher, this role is responsible for the leadership and success of all advertising sales on all platforms. We seek a candidate who will tenaciously identify opportunities, exceed customer expectations, and maximize market potential.

Requirements include a minimum of five years of experience in successful advertising sales and management or equivalent experience, excellent communication and analytical skills, and superior leadership ability. Other requirements include high energy as conveyed through written and verbal communication, and community involvement. Organizational skills should include hiring, coaching, training, budgeting, project management, professional conduct, team contribution, and ability to drive multiple products under tight deadlines.

We offer a competitive salary, performance bonus and excellent benefits package. If you are an experienced, successful, highly-motivated leader, please apply online at [www.helenair.com/workhere](http://www.helenair.com/workhere).

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**In Memorium**

**W. Lois Lonnquist**

W. Lois Lonnquist passed away on March 27, 2014 in Helena. Lois earned a B.A. in English from the University of Wisconsin La Crosse. Her career in writing spanned freelance writing, radio, television and newspapers, including 13 years at the Helena Independent Record. She is the author of “Fifty Cents an Hour,” a history of the builders and boomtowns of the Fort Peck Dam described in "LIFE 75 Years: The Very Best of LIFE" as “authoritative.”

**Stanley Michael Tichenor**

Stanley Michael Tichenor passed away on March 25, 2014 at his home in Surprise, AZ. Mike attended DeVry University in Phoenix, graduating in 1981. He returned to Townsend and joined his parents at the Townsend Star, where he became an accomplished, award-winning photographer. He published the Three Forks Herald and later moved to the Oregon coast. Mike later moved back to Montana and joined his parents at the River Press in Fort Benton. He purchased the River Press in 2000 and continued to publish it until 2007, when he sold it; however he continued to work for the current publisher until 2010. Mike later brokered hot metal printing products of type, cases and other print memorabilia until his death.

- 30 -
Of all the calls an editor gets, few are more common than the desperate DUI. The conversation is usually quick and to the point. Usually the caller asks with a quiver in his or her voice: “Do you print DUIs?”

I reply, “After the conviction.”

Then another question: “Is there any way you could not run mine?”

Unfailingly, I have to say, “I am sorry, I have to run it.”

What follows after that can vary from outrage to weeping.

Contrary to popular belief, I don’t relish putting the names in the newspaper. And contrary to popular belief, I don’t do it to sell more papers. I can’t think of a single instance in which someone has told me—or any member of the staff, “I buy your newspaper for the DUIs.”

Printing any court records means that we’re going to get phone calls.

Marriage licenses come in as a close second for number of calls. Sometimes the reasons are amusing, like, “I don’t want my grandma to know I married him. She hates him.”

We print news of public record, ranging from court cases to police calls to births, because at our most basic, The Billings Gazette is a tangible record of what happened. Part of that story is told through what happens in the court or through public documents, whether that’s birth certificates, who gets married, where crime happens or even the weather report. It all comes together to create a picture of what went on. You can’t just pick and choose.

DUIs and any court conviction usually carry a social stigma. For many, the consequences meted out by the courts pale compared to those outside the courtroom. Many lose their job.

Often, the newspaper, and by extension that creepy editor who insisted on running the DUI convictions, gets blamed for the problems.

In reality, we simply choose to report what happens in the court. We believe part of our value is being a record of court proceedings, including criminal convictions.

And, if we had to get permission from every person in court, we’d never print a word. And most people wouldn’t know what happens in court, even though they pay for the justice system.

Many ask if we have a DUI policy. We don’t have many hard-and-fast policies because as any reporter will tell you: The circumstances from case to case vary widely. Most of the time, we only print DUI convictions. That means a name might appear when a person is arrested for a DUI in our police blotter. The name may not appear again until the person is convicted.

That changes when someone reaches his or her fourth DUI, which is a felony offense.

Again, that’s a general guideline. If a politician or leader gets arrested for DUI, that would be different. Is that a double standard? You bet. But, people who are in the public spotlight, often by their own choice, are held to a different set of standards. Gauging exactly who fits the definition of public figure is a bit more tricky. That’ll have to wait for a different column.

There’s probably plenty of room for discussing whether you think DUI is something worthy of newspaper coverage. However, one other key factor should be kept in mind: DUIs are a serious public health issue. We have covered stories of drunken drivers injuring others, hurting themselves or doing plenty of damage. DUI is an issue in hard-drinking Montana. If you don’t believe it, just take a peek at the number of DUIs the county attorney deals with. Since Jan. 1, 2010, the Yellowstone County Attorney’s Office has had more than 560 cases of DUI —this doesn’t count the number of cases that went through the City of Billings or which were prosecuted for something other than DUI.

As long as we continue to experience these kind of numbers—statistics which indicate a problem that needs addressing in our community—DUIs will continue to be a part of our coverage.
Sunshine Week
Sunshine Week (this past March 16-22) was observed in very high regard by members of the Montana Newspaper Association.

We wanted to highlight three great examples of how newspapers localized this very important topic for their readers.

**SUNSHINE WEEK**

**Our two cents**

By Great Falls Tribune editorial board

More open federal arm would help. During National Sunshine Week for open government across the nation, we decided to focus today on how open the federal government is in Montana. Our conclusion: it’s not very open.

Take the federal courts in Montana. No still photography or video recording is allowed inside federal courtrooms in Montana, or the U.S. Supreme Court, for that matter. Federal courts in other nations have taken that plunge, even if some jurists here believe it’s undignified. We call upon the federal court system to allow cameras and video recording equipment inside all its courtrooms, and in the Supreme Court as well. It’s time the federal courts enter the modern era.

But there are even more important issues to address in terms of federal information and lack of transparency. We urge the federal government to reexamine how stingy its agencies are with information, especially in cases of crimes on American Indian reservations. It should not be necessary to file a federal Freedom of Information Act request merely to find out basic information about serious crimes committed on a reservation. While lack of response from the Federal Bureau of Investigation or the Bureau of Indian Affairs about crime or political controversies on Indian reservations can be frustrating for news media outlets, we have special sympathy for Native Americans living on reservations after a crime has been committed. Whatever the crime—whether the victim was bludgeoned to death, stabbed, shot or was otherwise attacked—the reaction from the FBI predictably is no comment in the immediate days after the crime is committed. We believe reservation residents have a right to know basic details of crime in a timely fashion. If such a crime happened in a city or county in Montana where state or local jurisdiction applies, residents typically would receive more information about crime in their communities and better understand how their level of safety was affected by the incident. It is not fair to tribal members and others that they are often kept in the dark for months about the status of investigations or details of criminal cases handled by federal agencies. By the time the federal court system releases information, it’s often long after rumors have circulated, frustration has increased and a feeling of trust in the system has waned.

Certainly it is high time for the federal government to re-dedicate itself to open government. Montana’s congressional delegation has begun making some noise on protecting civil liberties, and we are glad to see that. During Sunshine Week, press your elected officials to preserve all of our precious freedoms, including those against search and seizure, actions without search warrants and blanket, unjustified surveillance. Knowing we are safe in our homes also is an important concept. We believe a more responsive and open federal government in Montana can help restore trust in the federal system.

**SUNSHINE WEEK**

**Right to open government**

By Matt Christensen, editor Montana Standard

Matt Christensen

Our rights truly take value only when we use them, whether it’s owning a gun, voting in an election or gaining access to public records.
Right to open government continued

and study after government study.

And, yeah, sometimes we’re looking for dirt. When you buy a newspaper or advertise in the Standard, some of that money goes to ensuring your government is working properly. We believe it’s money well spent.

As Montanans, we’re lucky to live in a state where our Constitution and courts allow us to lift up the hood and peek at the engine of government. Most of the time, we can get a pretty good look. We can read the emails of government workers, for example. We can learn how much a high school basketball coach gets paid. We can see who got divorced last month.

But we can’t see everything, and open-records laws are only as good as the people who enforce them. Several local governments have denied the newspaper access to information in the past few months, and you’ve read about some of those denials in these pages. (We feel it’s just as important to share what the government won’t tell you about.)

And we’re not talking about beauty shop gossip here. We believe the public should have access to the mug shots of people being held in our jails. Many area counties won’t release jail mug shots. We believe the public should have more information about public servants accused of wrongdoing. Claiming personal privacy, some governments have refused to tell us about accusations or even discipline against government employees.

Transparency breeds trust, after all, and a government must have the trust of its people in a democracy. When a government hides information from the public to spare itself short-term embarrassment, it does long-lasting damage to the public trust. What else might it be hiding?

So we keep pressing. In just the past week, the Standard has twice sought the help of our lawyers when governments obstructed our efforts to gain access to public information we thought essential to share with readers. We got what we wanted in one case; we’re still fighting it out in the other.

These laws aren’t just for newspaper reporters, although we’re happy to exercise them on your behalf. You are entitled to see all the same information we are, simply by asking for it. It’s your right as a Montanan.

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Here are 10 tips from journalists who routinely deal with public records:

1. **Know what you’re looking for.** Let’s say you want to find out whether your mayor has been emailing anyone about a big development project. Instead of asking to see the mayor’s emails, ask to see those about the project or confine your request to a week or month’s worth of records. Narrowing your search gets speedier results.

2. **Be polite.** It’s best to put in writing exactly what you’re after. Regardless, also talk with the records custodian in person or over the phone, and be polite. Courtesy goes a long way.

3. **Be firm.** Most records custodians understand public records laws and are willing to comply. Some aren’t. Stick to your guns. Even if an entire record isn’t open to the public, often parts of it are. Should you run into trouble, let your local custodian know you’re willing to contact the Justice Department or a private attorney for help.

4. **Don’t pay a lot.** Custodians are allowed to charge small fees to make copies, and in some cases, locate records. You can always ask to look for no cost. Some custodians will waive the fee or lower it—just ask. The law also extends to digital records, so sometimes you can obtain your information on a computer disk at a lower cost.

5. **Look for the posted policy.** Public offices should display a notice explaining their records policy, including a list of hours of availability, official custodians and costs for obtaining records. Not every office does, but it’s a good place to start.

6. **You don’t have to be an expert.** Montana law presumes all government records are open to the public with only a few, narrowly-tailored exceptions. You shouldn’t have to have a law degree to pursue a record. It’s on the custodian to either release the record or give a good reason— in writing—not to.

7. **Establish a deadline.** Be clear with the records custodian about when you need the information.

8. **But be prepared to wait.** In many cases, you’ll get instant access to a simple record such as a police report. But complex requests—such as an itemization of legal fees a city has paid over five years—could take weeks. Records custodians fill requests on top of their normal workload, and often the documents have to be reviewed by a municipality’s lawyer, who will redact sensitive information such as Social Security numbers. It all takes time. That said, the government isn’t allowed to ignore your request or string you along to avoid fulfilling it. Stay in touch with the records custodian about the status of your request.

9. **Know where to find help.** Check out the National Freedom of Information Coalition (nfoic.org) and Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press (www.rcfp.org—http://www.rcfp.org—). Or call Editor Matt Christensen at the Standard, 406-496-5513.

10. **Take advantage.** Montana’s Open Records Law begins with a declaration: “The legislature finds and declares that public boards, commissions, councils, and other public agencies in this state exist to aid in the conduct of the people’s business. It is the intent of this part that actions and deliberations of all public agencies shall be conducted openly. The people of the state do not wish to abdicate their sovereignty to the agencies which serve them. Toward these ends, the provisions of the part shall be liberally construed.”
Next week is Sunshine Week. It does sound like something of an oxymoron for those of us who live here in southwestern Montana, widely known as the sunniest corner of the state, but there's more to it than that.

Sunshine Week is an annual observance to highlight the importance of open government and government agency “transparency.” Since 2005, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Bloomberg LP, the Gridiron Club and Foundation, the American Society of News Editors and the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press have sponsored it.

The combined issue of open meetings-open records-open government is often seen as a matter of importance only to those who cover the news: reporters, editors and photographers. The reality is that transparent government should be important to all citizens.

The Dillon Tribune has a long history of advocating for public meetings and open government records, not for its own sake, but for the sake of the public’s right to be informed. Just as important as the public’s right to know is the public’s right—and obligation—to participate in government, primarily at the ballot box, but also during the public comment portions of public meetings.

Montanans take open government very seriously, and we are fortunate to have a state constitution that expressly protects the right of the people to observe the deliberations of government at all levels. Only the right of individual privacy carries more authority.

Under Montana law, no meeting of a public agency (any entity supported in part or entirely by public funds) may be closed to the public without a deliberate determination by the presiding officer—not the executive director, the CEO, or the superintendent—that the merits of personal privacy outweigh the public’s right to know.

The right of the people to have access to information about government decisions is the reason, too, why the law mandates the publishing in your local newspaper of public notice advertising—more commonly known as “legals”—that are part of the public record. These notices (which this week are on Page B-3) provide information about matters in the courts, at City Hall, at the courthouse and before various public agencies.

Again, these notices are a vital tool for the public to use toward the task of keeping government open; all these things uphold the public’s right and the public’s obligation when it comes to fully involved citizenship. Here are some ways—suggested by the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press at the website, http://sunshineweek.rcfp.org/how-to-get-involved/—for every citizen and any local civic club or organization to help “shed some sunshine” on the workings of government:

* If you are part of a civic group, you can organize local forums, sponsor essay contests or press elected officials to pass proclamations on the importance of open access.
* If you are an educator, you can use Sunshine Week to teach your students about how government transparency improves our lives and makes our communities stronger.
* If you are an elected official, you can pass a resolution supporting openness, introduce legislation improving public access or encourage training of government employees to ensure compliance with existing laws mandating open records and meetings.
* If you are a private citizen, you can write a letter to the editor or spread the word to friends through social media.

We ask all our readers to keep in mind that while Sunshine Week was created by the American Society of News Editors, and is now coordinated in partnership with the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, freedom of information isn’t just a press issue.

As the ASNE and RCFP point out on websites, freedom of information “is a cornerstone of democracy, enlightening and empowering people to play an active role in their government at all levels.” Furthermore, the text continues, “It helps keep public officials honest, makes government more efficient and provides a check against abuse of power.”

We concur, and encourage everyone to support, promote and demand open government at all levels.
Each of my three sons have vacillated, beginning in their toddling years, from "my Dad is the smartest guy in the world" to "my Dad is the dumbest guy in the world."

Somewhere along the line I embraced the notion that the older I get, the smarter my Dad gets, but I fear my kids just keeping bouncing back in forth in their attitude toward me. Maybe it’s because they all got into the family business.

And the biggest debate in the newspaper industry these days is how we will survive in the internet age.

Having worked during my college years for a television station, and shortly thereafter for a statewide radio network, I settled into community newspapers comfortable with the idea that rarely would we break big stories. What I was trained to do was to use that extra time, a week in most places, to do a better job than anyone else. That’s possible because your local newspaper has been the only media devoting all of its resources to covering your community and nothing else, and they’ve been doing it for generations of readers.

Then came the internet.

Almost everybody in this business insisted that we had to embrace it. And so we started putting our product online and, in many cases, at no charge. But playing Santa Claus isn’t such a good business model so most of us started erecting pay walls.

Still, the lure of breaking stories the instant they’re written is hard to resist, especially when it seems there is little cost. But the true cost is that it destroys a centuries old and still viable business model. It consumes the staff’s time, keeping them from the depth and breadth of reporting that made newspapers successful for centuries.

We tried in vain to create a profitable internet newspaper, launching a dozen sites, as whiz-bang as any I’d seen come from a small market. We found that readers will pay for an online subscription, but that forces us to move our advertisers there, forcing them to embrace an inferior product. Most of our revenue comes from advertising, and if we move to an internet product, we do so knowing that we will lose the advertising. Or worse, subjugate our advertising to the likes of social media and search engines that make their money by competing directly with us for advertising dollars.

And still our industry argues that the demise of print is inevitable, mostly because of the immediacy of new media. But if I had the urge to provide news on an instantaneous basis, I would have stayed in radio or television all those years ago.

Years ago I came to doubt, and now I firmly believe, there is no profitable way to provide content online for our readers. And without a profit there is no newspaper. Now I believe the internet should be used as a way to promote your business, and nothing else.

Today my youngest son sent me what was for him the disheartening results of his first job working for me: redesigning a website. In the first six months since then, he reported that about 400 people a day visit the website and that each is a unique visitor. To him, that meant nobody was coming back.

Since he redesigned our webpage, close to 70,000 unique visitors looked at it. About a thousand of those people looked at it more than once. So my son is worried that we’re not getting return customers and he is looking for a way, as I have stopped doing, to capture those visitors and keep them coming back.

But our website is designed to promote our print product, the newspaper, and little else. The webpage was designed as a sort of electronic salesman and in the last six months, from my perspective, it called on 70,000 unique visitors.
Preston Stahley joins Lee digital development team

Preston Stahley of Billings Gazette Communications has been selected for a new position on the Lee digital development team. He will assist with design and product development of a growing portfolio of digital platforms and the Gazette and Lee Enterprises. Stahley has worked as a programmer and lead designer for Billings Gazette Communications since 2007, and also has managed his own digital solutions company.

Nick Balatsos joins The Billings Gazette

Nick Balatsos has joined The Billings Gazette as the night reporter. Balatsos most recently was the editor-in-chief of the Branding Iron, the campus newspaper of the University of Wyoming.

Prior to that, he worked for the Lowell Sun in Lowell, Mass.

Passion for preservation earns Laurel advocate and publisher prestigious achievement award

The Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board (YHPB) recently announced that Gloria Wester of Laurel is the winner of the 2014 Eugene Carroll Historic Preservation Award. Also recognized was High Plains Architects, which won the 2014 Best Practices Achievement Award for the Tracy Lofts Building at 2600 Montana Ave.

The Historic Preservation Awards were presented at the 12th Annual Historic Preservation Roundtable March 18 at the Union Depot.

The 2014 Eugene Carroll Historic Preservation Award was presented to Gloria Wester for her extensive historic preservation efforts on behalf of Pompeys Pillar National Landmark, the site of the 1806 carved signature of William Clark of the Lewis & Clark expedition. Wester is cited for taking a leadership role with the Pompeys Pillar Historical Association, for countless hours of volunteer service, and for donating her talents and time in the publication and printing of newsletters, pamphlets and posters. Wester is the former publisher of the Laurel Outlook and Welcome! Visitors Guide.

The 2014 Best Practices Achievement Award was presented to High Plains Architects of Billings for their outstanding renovation and adaptive re-use of the Tracy Building at 2600 Montana Ave., Billings. The work of High Plains Architects and their restoration of the former George L. Tracy building was cited as contributing to the sustainable economic development and the revitalization of Montana Avenue and the Billings Townsite historic district.

Michelle McConnaha joins Ravalli Republic team as newest reporter

McConnaha has lived in Corvallis for 25 years, and was most recently employed by Marcus Daly Memorial Hospital in Hamilton. She was formerly a grantwriter, PAC manager, and public relations coordinator for the Hamilton School District and has coached the Corvallis High School speech, debate and drama team (with her husband Doug) for 20 years.

Michelle has a bachelor’s degree in film and television from Montana State University and a master's degree in journalism from the University of Montana.

She has worked in news at KECI, Montana PBS, Montana State University, University of Montana and University of Idaho. She’s also been a freelance writer for KPAX online.

“Reporting the valley news has always been on my mind,” she said. “I’ll be looking for story ideas and hope to shine the spotlight on the many great things happening in the valley.”

Montana Freedom of Information Hotline Inc.

http://www.montanafoi.org/
One of the points I share during every AdSeller training session is what I feel are the qualities or traits of the very best salespeople in the universe. In a time when many of the talents from yesterday are not working like they once did, see if these still make sense to you.

In this order:

1. PASSION
   We’ve all seen it. A rep is animated, excited, bubbly and seemingly oozes with passion and enthusiasm. And, guess what? They succeed consistently.
   Whether the passion is contagious or their enthusiasm is persuasive, the advertiser just buys. For all we know, the account might find such good spirited reps annoying, so they say yes just to get rid of them.
   However, I believe a rep who consistently displays emotion, passion and conviction in the value of the products and services she is selling will do awfully well. The advertiser will buy because they are impressed with how committed the rep is to the product and/or service and essentially say to themselves, “...if she believes so strongly in the power of newspaper, then I’ll give it a try.”
   Most of the good salespeople I know are a pretty passionate group.

2. PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE
   Unfortunately, this one is a moving target. Not only am I talking about knowing what you are selling, but also how that will serve (or not) the advertiser.
   One didn’t need a lot of “product knowledge” when all we had to sell with was rate and circulation information and there was far less competition.
   Nowadys, the products and services we sell require an ever growing and, unfortunately, ever more confusing set of metrics, so it is absolutely inevitable (and OK!) that some of the talent we once eagerly hired simply don't possess the right skills to succeed.
   And, as challenging as finding and keeping the right salespeople is today, it will get harder tomorrow. Get over it.
   Despite that cheery thought, there are two reasons that TODAY can be a great time to be selling newspapers and all they are becoming ...
   ... First of all, the mom and pop, local small and mid-sized businesses are more confused than ever. They are desperate for a trusted salesperson to help them navigate all the myriad new channels and digital-thats and social-thats. When armed with the proper tools and understanding, newspapers can kick ass.
   ... Plus, there are a LOT of them!
   A small market newspaper might have a business relationship with, what, five percent to eight percent of the businesses in their community, yet a major metro will be an absolute rock star if it penetrates two percent. In either scenario, there are a TON of prospects we should be pursuing. By no means am I suggesting EVERY local business is an ideal candidate, but humans are humans and even organizations develop similar routines, comfort zones and, yes, ruts. There are oodles of categories and niches to chase and with the new tools and products so many of us have, the time is RIGHT.
   So, add product knowledge to that passionate salesperson and you’ll have a World Class colleague.

3. PERSISTENCE
   Certainly unheralded, but every bit as important, is persistence.
   Every sales rep gets told no in dozens of different ways and thousands of times. In some cases, the no is well reasoned and appropriate and the prospect would not be a good, long-term customer. However, in most cases, it is an excuse or simply means, “I’m not convinced!”
   The good reps figure out the difference and the really good ones know that by being persistent and systematically bringing ideas and new business solutions to the advertiser, while respecting their time and dollars, a strong partnership is possible.
   Or, said another way, the best reps are pleasantly persistent.
   That’s all there is to it—combine enthusiasm and love with impeccable product knowledge and a dash of pleasant persistence and you’ll have an intergalactically-renowned salesperson. How many do you have?
ADVICE from the EXPERTS

Hard to read? Yes... and no

MANY YEARS AGO, Someone One told Someone Two that italics are hard to read. Someone Two believed that and told Someone Three. Someone Three then told Someone Four...and on and on, until now it has become accepted as a design truth.

I heard it again recently: “Well, everyone knows italics are hard to read.”

That’s right: Italics are hard to read—when they are used as text. No one looks forward to reading line after line after line of italic type.

But...and this is an important “but”...italics are not hard to read in a headline.

A headline uses relatively few words. Reading 5-10 words (in the 7-word example at right) in an italic headline is not difficult.

Italic headlines offer you another design option. Don’t deny yourself that option just because you heard Someone say: “Italics are hard to read.”

See more at: http://henningerconsulting.com/helpful-hints/#sthash.acgtUhrB.dpuf

honoring the winners
of the
Better Newspaper Contest

Saturday, June 14, 2014
Cocktails & Dinner start at 6:00 p.m.
Awards at 8:00 p.m.

$100/newspaper + $65/person [through May 16]
$125/newspaper + 65/person [May 17-June 2]

RSVP to Linda Fromm, 443-2850
mtomgr@mtnewspapers.com

DON’T GET LEFT in the dark

FIND OUT IF the restaurant in your neighborhood applied for a liquor license OR government agencies are buying the products your company makes OR the assets of your late aunt’s estate are being distributed AND MORE

READ PUBLIC NOTICES www.MontanaPublicNotices.com
June 13-14, 2014
Butte Plaza Inn
Butte, Montana

**Speakers**

**Cindy Sease**
is the advertising director with the Bozeman Daily Chronicle. Cindy is known for her inspiring and practical advertising sales training sessions, and will present Survival of the Fittest: Consultative Advertising Sales in a Consumer Facing Culture.

**Courtney Cowgill**
Writer, editor, teacher and currently the managing editor of the PBS MediaShift, Courtney will discuss Personal Narrative and Column Writing.

**Darrell Ehrlick**
is the editor of Billings Gazette Communications and has served in newsroom leadership positions in WY, WI, ND and MN and taught journalism at Winona State University. Darrell presents Fight for Your Right: Obtaining Public Records in Montana.

**Dennis Swibold**
Professor Swibold is chair of the U of M School of Journalism Print and Photo Department. Dennis was a reporter and editor in MT and AZ, and will present Interviewing Best Practices and Tips.

**Joe Eaton**
is an assistant professor at the U of M School of Journalism. Joe has taught courses in public affairs reporting and editing, and will discuss Reporting with Documents and Data State of Mind.

**John Cribb**
Owner of Cribb, Greene & Associates, the oldest newspaper publication brokerage firm in the United States, John will discuss Newspaper Value and Sales Structure in the Current Market.

**Rick Farrell**
from Tangent Knowledge Systems will take us through The Advertising Sales Landscape and How To Adapt.

**Kyle Rickhoff**
is the digital media director of Billings Gazette Communications. Back by popular demand, Kyle will discuss Publisher Digital Goals and Key Conversations.

**Craig McCormack**
Craig is the strategic media manager at the Bozeman Daily Chronicle, where he is responsible for digital sales and marketing management, along with digital campaign fulfillment. Craig has over 17 years of technology sales and marketing experience, and will present Selling Digital Marketing Solutions That Work for Small Business: Successful Digital Sales Strategies to Win and Retain Customers.

**Brian Kahn**
Host of Yellowstone Public Radio’s Home Ground, Brian Kahn has a diverse background, including work as a collegiate boxing coach, attorney, president of the California Fish and Game Commission, director of the Montana Nature Conservancy, author, journalist and documentary filmmaker. Brian will serve as moderator of the Montana Newspaper Publisher Panel.

**Peter D. Fox**
is western region sales manager for ArcaSearch, a Minnesota-based digital archiving firm serving state newspaper associations and their individual members. Fox spent 24 years in weekly and daily newspapers in Wisconsin and Montana, including a stint at the Billings Gazette. He is adviser to The Exponent, the student newspaper of Montana State University-Bozeman, and will present a detailed program on the MNA/ArcaSearch Digital Archiving project.

**Tia Metzger**
is an account executive and media buyer for the Montana Marketing Group (MMG) and has worked on both local and national accounts including clients in the tourism, nonprofit, retail and healthcare sectors. Her comprehensive understanding of marketing strategies and her experience in the newspaper industry make her an excellent candidate to lead the MNA political sales effort. Tia will present an MMG Update on Political Advertising Sales.
Newspapers: The Original Social Media

Agenda
129th Annual Convention
Montana Newspaper Association
Butte Plaza Inn – Butte, Montana

Thursday, June 12

2:00 p.m. MNA & MNAS Joint Board of Directors’ Meeting – Metals Sports Bar

Friday, June 13

8:00 a.m. Registration Opens – Butte Plaza Inn Lobby
9:00 a.m. Survival of the Fittest: Consultative Advertising Sales in a Consumer Facing Culture – Lobby Room
Presented by Cindy Sease
9:00 a.m. Interviewing Best Practices & Tips – Hops Room
Presented by Dennis Swibold
10:00 a.m. Selling Digital Marketing Solutions That Work for Small Business: Successful Digital Sales Strategies to Win & Retain Customers – Lobby Room
Presented by Craig McCormack
10:00 a.m. Reporting with Documents & Data State of Mind – Hops Room
Presented by Joe Eaton
11:00 a.m. Personal Narrative & Column Writing – Hops Room
Presented by Courtney Cowgill
11:00 a.m. Newspaper Value & Sales Structure in the Current Market – Lobby Room
Presented by John Cribb
12:00 noon Past Presidents’ Luncheon & Introductions – Perkins Restaurant
1:00 p.m. Master Editor/Publisher & Montana Newspaper Hall of Fame Awards – Perkins Restaurant
2:30 p.m. Montana Newspaper Foundation Social Hour, Dinner and Auction – Copper Lounge at Montana Tech

Saturday, June 14

8:00 a.m. Registration Opens – Butte Plaza Inn Lobby
8:00 a.m. The MNA/ArcaSearch Digital Archiving Project – Hops Room
Presented by Peter Fox
9:00 a.m. Fight for Your Right: Obtaining Public Records in Montana – Hops Room
Presented by Darrell Ehrlick
9:00 a.m. Montana Newspaper Annual Meetings & Election of Officers – Lobby Room
10:00 a.m. Montana Newspaper Foundation Annual Meeting – Hops Room
10:00 a.m. The Advertising Sales Landscape & How to Adapt – Lobby Room
Presented by Richard Farrell
11:00 a.m. Publisher Digital Goals & Key Conversations – Hops Room
Presented by Kyle Rickhoff
11:00 a.m. MMG Update on Political Advertising Sales – Lobby Room
Presented by Tia Metzger
12:00 noon Awards Luncheon – Perkins Restaurant
12:30 p.m. Montana High School Journalist of the Year Award – Perkins Restaurant
1:30 p.m. MNA/PBS hosted U. S. Senate Candidate Debate – Library Auditorium at Montana Tech
3:30 p.m. MNA/PBS hosted U. S. House Candidate Debate – Library Auditorium at Montana Tech
6:00 p.m. President’s Reception – Mining City Center
6:45 p.m. MNA Awards Banquet, President’s Award & 2014 Better Newspaper Contest Awards – Mining City Center
Chris Fisk, Emcee
8:45 p.m. Passing of the Gavel to Cindy Sease, Incoming MNA President – Mining City Center
# 129th Annual Convention
## Montana Newspaper Association
### June 13-14, 2014
#### Park Plaza Inn – Butte, Montana

## Newspaper/Associate Member

### Registrant Names

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Registrant Names as they will appear on name badges (PLEASE PRINT)</th>
<th>Friday Master Editor/Publisher, Hall of Fame, Past Presidents’ Lunch $25 (LIMITED SEATING)</th>
<th>Friday Montana Newspaper Foundation Dinner &amp; Auction Montana Tech $65</th>
<th>Saturday President’s Awards Lunch $25 (LIMITED SEATING)</th>
<th>Saturday Better Newspaper Contest Awards Banquet Montana Mining Center $65</th>
<th>Total Cost This Person</th>
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One-time EARLY REGISTRATION DISCOUNT rate (Register BY May 16)....................................................... $100
One-time FULL REGISTRATION rate (After May 16)......................................................................................... $125

Total registration (add Total Cost all persons + appropriate registration rate)................................. $____

## Guest Room Reservations

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Best Western Butte Plaza Inn, 2900 Harrison Avenue.

Room rate is $99/night + accommodations tax, single or double occupancy.

**Deadline to reserve rooms:** Sunday, June 1, 2014.

To reserve your room, call 1-800-543-5814 OR 1-406-494-0345. Be sure to identify yourself as being with the Montana Newspaper Association in order to receive the group rate.

## Convention registration deadline: June 2, 2014

Return this form to MNA, 825 Great Northern Blvd., Ste. 202, Helena, MT 59601; fax to (406)443-2860 or email Linda Fromm: mtomgr@mtnewspapers.com. For questions, contact Linda at 800-325-8276 or (406)443-2850.

Payment enclosed ____ Please bill me ____ Credit Card #: ____________________________ Exp. _______
Newspapers: The Original Social Media

Plan now to join us at Montana Tech in Butte on Friday, June 13, for the Montana Newspaper Foundation Auction!

The annual auction is a great way to have fun while ...

- helping to foster and assist in the development of educational programs in the State of Montana
- helping to sponsor seminars, workshops, research projects and programs on subjects pertaining to the advancement of Montana newspapers
- helping to provide financial assistance for continuing professional education of people involved in Montana newspapers
- helping to provide scholarships and internship grants for students of journalism, advertising and related fields of study

At least 25 items are needed to make this annual fundraiser a success!
All proceeds go to the Montana Newspaper Foundation.

Count me in! I will donate the following item(s):

___________________________________________________________________     Value $______
___________________________________________________________________     Value $______
___________________________________________________________________     Value $______

Contributing newspaper/Associate Member: ____________________________

I will bring auction item(s) to convention _____ I will mail item(s) to the MNA office _____
I would like a receipt for the value of my tax-deductible donation(s) _____

Please return this form by Friday, May 2, 2014.
Fax to: (406)443-2860; email to: mtomgr@mtnewspapers.com or mail to MNA, 825 Great Northern Blvd., Ste. 202, Helena, MT 59601
Call Linda Fromm at (406)443-2850 or (800)325-8276 (in MT) with questions.