Best Feature Photo
Division 2
2017 Better Newspaper Contest
By Chris Peterson, Hungry Horse News

I was on a long hike when I noticed this chipmunk go inside the sign. It was just a matter of time before it peeked back out.

Judge’s Comment: Great patience to capture this cheeky fellow.
MNA Calendar

December
15  Application deadline for the 2018 Internship Grants
22  2018 Internship Grant winners will be announced
22 - 25 MNA office will be closed for the Christmas holiday

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

February
7   2018 Better Newspaper Contest closes for entries at 10:00 pm
16  Deadline to submit articles for the February Press Pass

Best wishes for a Happy Holiday Season
— our sincere thanks for your loyalty and goodwill throughout the year...

Your MNA Team, Jim, Stacy and Ryan

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

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

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

December 15, 2017
December 15, 2017

2017 Better Newspaper Contest Winners

Best Page Layout and Design

2016 Little Bighorn Days Crow Native Days

Tucker Zingg of Glendive competes in the bareback riding event at the PRCA Rodeo held at the Big Horn County Fairgrounds over the weekend. The rodeo was held in conjunction with Little Bighorn Days/Crow Native Days.

Bonne Wood was surprised to find a bra during the suitcase races held Saturday evening at Family Fun Night. The night featured an egg toss, stick horse races and other events.

These kids run for the finish line in the stick horse race at Saturday's Family Fun Night. The event was sponsored by First Interstate Bank.

On Saturday, the Little Bighorn Days Parade ran down Center Avenue. The theme for the parade was "Legends of the West." This is Little Horn State Bank's parade entry.

Teagan Bastien rode in the Crow Native Days Parade in Crow Agency on Friday morning. The Native Days parade is one of the highlights every year.

Custer's Last Run kicked off Little Bighorn Days events Thursday morning with a 5K and 10K run. Morgan Jones won the 10K and David Prather the 5K.

On Dec. 3, the small town of Ovando in the north of Powell County welcomed in the Christmas season with their annual Old West Christmas Fest. The event included both local and national acts with the theme of Christmas with an old west theme.

Christmas comes to Ovando

Christmas with an old west theme

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


Division 1
Weekly newspapers with circulation of 1,250 or less
By Jim Eshleman, Big Horn County News

Division 2
Weekly newspapers with circulation from 1,251 to 2,000
By Michael Stafford, Christina Bledsoe, Silver State Post
NOW IS THE TIME TO PREPARE FOR THE 2018 BETTER NEWSPAPER CONTEST

Our 2018 Better Newspaper Contest is only three weeks away. Now is the time to prepare by collecting and selecting your best work from 2017. The rules and category descriptions for the 2018 MNA Better Newspaper Contest can be found at http://www.mtnewspapers.com/better-newspaper-contest/

2018 Better Newspaper Contest Categories

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<tr>
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Kevin Mowbray, president and chief executive officer of Lee Enterprises, Incorporated announced the winners of the 2017 Lee President’s Awards for outstanding journalism, innovation, and spirit.

“These awards honor our company’s achievements in journalism, innovation, and community leadership,” said Mowbray. “These winners and the many other nominees clearly underline the indispensable role our enterprises serve in the communities.”

**EXCELLENCE IN NEWS**

The news award recognizes outstanding achievement in any aspect of print and online journalism, from reporting and writing to photography, video, graphics and presentation.

Receiving honorable mention was the Missoulian in Missoula, Montana, for coverage of devastating summer fires, which consumed more than a million acres in Montana, much of it in the Missoula area. Online and in print, the newsroom pushed out stories, photos, videos, and galleries to all platforms designed to help readers stay safe in the face of fast-moving fires, stay healthy in the choking smoke, understand why this fire season was so intense, and learn more about the two firefighters who lost their lives battling the blazes.

**INNOVATION IN REVENUE**

The award for innovation in revenue recognizes an individual or team for creating or significantly advancing an idea that drives revenue.

The Billings Gazette won this award for Creative Shapes for the Holidays. This effort provided new and innovative ways to stand out from the competition in both print and digital media while driving results for customers. Due to huge sales success and this unique idea, the concept was rolled out company-wide and became a top initiative for quarter one fiscal year 2017. The program generated more than $450,000 for Lee Enterprises, while Billings generated more than $40,000. Ryan Brosseau, Dave Worstell, Ben Cunningham and Mindy Eastey share the award.

**LEE SPIRIT**

The Lee Spirit Award recognizes outstanding personal commitment to our company and the people we serve.

The award went to Pat Bellinghausen, opinion page editor for the Billings Gazette. During her tenure as a Gazette employee, Bellinghausen has served a number of community positions. In her role as a Court Appointed Special Advocate, she becomes the voice for a foster child’s interest, paying special attention to the care the child is receiving. She ensures that between the parents and guardians and the state, the best interests of the child are given high consideration in the court. In 2013, she was named CASA of the year for the state of Montana.

Bellinghausen has also been a key part of the leadership of St. John’s Lutheran Ministries, which operates the largest retirement nursing facility in Billings. For nearly two decades, Pat has had a very special concern for the care of our elderly residents as well. She has worked firsthand to meet the challenges of an aging population and decreasing Medicare payments. During her service, she’s been on the governance board for eight years, including two as the chairwoman.
Lone Peak Lookout returns
Co-founder reflects on how a mountain turned into a peak

By David Madison editor@lonepeaklookout.com

Kevin Kelleher remembers the eureka moment coming while setting up a shuttle for a whitewater run down the Lower Selway River in Idaho. It was April of 1982, and while traveling along a Forest Service road with his soon-to-be wife Jennifer Iverson, the pair decided it was time to put Kevin’s journalism and history degree from the University of Idaho to work.

Kelleher had been thinking about starting a paper for some time, dating back to his final year in college, when for his senior project he wrote a research paper on what it would take to launch a free weekly newspaper in North Idaho.

“I sat outside grocery stores in little towns like Potlach and Sandpoint and asked people about whether or not they’d read a free, local paper,” recalls Kelleher, who’s a broker at Big Sky’s Triple Creek Realty. The responses were mixed because at the time publishing free papers was a new idea. Still, the experience planted a seed with Kelleher, who along with Iverson put out the first edition of the Lone Peak Lookout on May 27, 1982.

Before the Lookout, there was the Porcupine News, “a mimeographed paper published by Big Sky Resort,” recalls Kelleher, who’s a broker at Big Sky’s Triple Creek Realty. The responses were mixed because at the time publishing free papers was a new idea. Still, the experience planted a seed with Kelleher, who along with Iverson put out the first edition of the Lone Peak Lookout on May 27, 1982.

Before the Lookout, there was the Porcupine News, “a mimeographed paper published by Big Sky Resort,” recalls Kelleher, who bought another local paper, the Big Sky View, and turned it into the Lookout. The need for a rename arose from the poor distribution and broken promises made by Charles Russ, who sold the Big Sky View to Kelleher—even though Russ didn’t actually own the paper.

“He swindled me,” insists Kelleher. “I thought, ‘I can’t keep the name Big Sky View.’ We were good guys. We were trying to really do something for Big Sky. It was difficult for sure.”

Russ would later gain infamy by murdering his wife Pamela Russ, whose art work celebrating “Oly Days” appears on the cover of the last issue of the Big Sky View. Charles Russ disappeared, but was eventually captured thanks to the television show “America’s Most Wanted.”

Kelleher decided to call his paper the Lone Peak Lookout, partially because “Lone Mountain Lookout” took up too much space across the front page. He still owns the 1983 copper colored Toyota Tercel emblazoned with the Lone Peak Lookout logo that he and his now former wife Jennifer used to deliver papers.

For a retrospective profile published in the Lookout in 2012, Kelleher told reporter Jolene Keller (now Palmer), “The early years were tough. In the recession of 1982 I bought the Toyota wagon at 15 percent interest so we could sell ads door-to-door from Bozeman to West Yellowstone.”

Not all businesses were receptive and Kelleher recalls one restaurant owner just outside West Yellowstone throwing coffee at him. “That fired me up to the point that I was not going to fail on this thing,” Kelleher recalled in 2012, noting that eventually he was able to successfully win the disgruntled restaurant owner over and going forward, West Yellowstone businesses became important clients.

“Without the businesses in West Yellowstone, the Lone Peak Lookout wouldn’t have made it past a couple years,” says Kelleher.

Kelleher gradually increased the paper’s newsgathering muscle and scooped publications across the country when the “Mountain Man Murder” story broke in 1984. The media frenzy around this bizarre kidnapping-murder saga was interesting to witness, but Kelleher says he’s always envisioned the Lookout as a hyper-local publication. “That’s something we share with the founder of the Lookout—we are dedicated to local, community journalism,” says current Lookout Publisher Susanne Hill. Hill and her business partner Erin Leonard also own the The Madisonian in Madison County and the West Yellowstone Star.

In 1998, Kelleher sold the Lookout to Pioneer Publishing, the former owners of the Bozeman Daily Chronicle. The paper carried on until 2015, when Pioneer closed the Lookout. Over the last two years, as Hill and Leonard have built up The Madisonian and West Yellowstone Star, they’ve also kept an eye on Big Sky and the opportunity to relaunch the Lookout.

“We believe good local journalism adds value to communities and the businesses that make them run,” says Hill. “It’s an honor to return the Lookout to Big Sky and be part of the exciting growth unfolding here.”

Kelleher, who recently kayaked the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River despite an ongoing battle with leukemia, says, “I’ve been hearing a lot of good things. It sounds like people are excited to see the Lone Peak Lookout come back.”
Mark Dobie named publisher of the Bozeman Daily Chronicle and Belgrade News

The Bozeman Daily Chronicle and Belgrade News announced recently that Mark Dobie of Oregon will be publisher of both newspapers.

Dobie has served as publisher of the Herald and News in Klamath Falls, Oregon, since 2014 and will continue to oversee that newspaper. Prior to Klamath Falls, Dobie was the advertising director at the Skagit Valley Herald in Mt. Vernon, Washington.

Dobie began his career with internet pioneer CompuServe and was a founding member of two successful internet connectivity startups. He holds a bachelor’s degree in economics from Ohio State University.

“I am thrilled to be joining the dynamic, creative team in Bozeman,” Dobie said. “I am looking forward to working alongside the team to help make a positive impact in both the company and the community.”

The Chronicle and Belgrade News are owned by PNG Media, LLC, a division of Adams Publishing Group. PNG Media operates 22 print, digital and production operations in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Utah and Montana.

Dobie will relocate to Bozeman with his wife and children.

“ar Mark’s experience, his leadership style and his forward-leaning attitude toward new revenue sources will bring great benefit to the Chronicle, its staff and the community,” said Eric Johnston, chief operating officer for PNG Media.

Pressly resigns as Chronicle publisher for position at MSU

By Chronicle Staff

Stephanie Pressly, president and publisher of the Bozeman Daily Chronicle and the Belgrade News, recently announced her resignation to accept a position at Montana State University.

“I have been privileged to work with the talented staff at the Chronicle and News for the past 10 years,” said Pressly. “They are a truly remarkable team that has allowed me to end my newspaper career on a high note.”

Pressly’s resignation was effective Dec. 5.

Pressly has been at the Chronicle since June 2007. Prior to that, she held publisher positions in Nampa and Pocatello, Idaho, with Pioneer News Group since 1998. She started her career in newspapers in San Diego in 1984 and also worked in Alabama and Arizona, holding various management positions, prior to joining Pioneer. Pioneer News Group was sold to the Adams Publishing Group earlier this month.

Mark Dobie of Oregon has been named as Pressly’s replacement.

“After 30-plus years in newspapers, I’ve been thinking about a career change for a while,” Pressly said. “MSU is a dynamic, vibrant institution, and I’m thrilled at the opportunity to contribute to MSU’s continued success.”

At MSU, Pressly accepted a contract position as director of strategic HR initiatives and communications and will be tasked with developing a strategy to attract, develop and retain talented staff at the university. She began her new position Dec. 11.

As publisher of the Chronicle, Pressly served on a variety of local boards, including the Bozeman Area Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Yellowstone United Way and the Montana Newspaper Association.

“It’s been a pleasure to represent the Chronicle within the community and the industry,” Pressly said. “I look forward to maintaining the many wonderful relationships I’ve had the opportunity to build.”

Stephanie served as the president of the Montana Newspaper Association in 2011 and her contributions to the Montana newspaper industry were recognized in 2015 with the Master Editor/Publisher award.
The Montana Newspaper Association is pleased to announce an exceptional member service that should help each of you generate more advertising revenue in 2018. The MNA has partnered with Pulse Research to do a comprehensive Montana shopping survey of our members’ audiences. There is no cost to the MNA and our membership.

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

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

If you have questions, please contact Jim Rickman, executive director, at (406) 443-2850 or jim@mtnewspapers.com

ADVICE from the EXPERTS

Proposed newsprint tariffs threaten small-town newspapers

Arlington, VA – Monday, December 4, more than 1,100 newspapers in small and medium-sized communities across the United States signed a letter calling on Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross to heavily scrutinize the anti-dumping and countervailing duty petitions filed in September by Longview, WA-based paper mill, North Pacific Paper Company (NORPAC). NORPAC’s petition asks for steep import duties in excess of 50 percent on imports of uncoated groundwood paper from Canada. Such duties, if implemented, could result in steep increases in the cost of newsprint, which would cause widespread harm to local newspapers.

The NORPAC petitions are based on incorrect assessments of a changing market and appear to be driven by the short-term investment strategies of the mill’s hedge fund owners, One Rock Capital Partners. “This attempt by a Wall Street hedge fund to utilize the trade laws for a short-term return is inconsistent with the views of the broader U.S. paper industry, and is being pursued without any consideration for the significant negative impacts on news publishers serving readers in thousands of small U.S. cities and towns,” stated News Media Alliance President & CEO, David Chavern.

Chavern added, “The recent declines in the newsprint market have nothing at all to do with trade issues, and everything to do with a decade-long trend of readers shifting to digital platforms.” Over the last ten years, there has been a 30 percent decline in print newspaper subscriptions, resulting in a reduction in the demand for newsprint from paper manufacturers.

The Department of Commerce will make a determination on January 8, 2018 regarding the NORPAC petition requesting countervailing duties. The determination on the petition for anti-dumping duties is scheduled for January 16. If the Department of Commerce makes an affirmative preliminary determination in either the countervailing duty or anti-dumping petition, Commerce will instruct U.S. Customs and Border Protection to begin collecting estimated duties on uncoated groundwood paper, at a preliminary rate established by the Commerce Department. Thus, even before there is a final determination in this case, duties will have an immediate impact on importers of newsprint.

“Facing increased newsprint costs, the operations of many small-town papers will be threatened,” stated Chavern. “This would only exacerbate the challenges already facing print newspapers and accelerate the decline of the newsprint industry – hurting all newsprint manufacturers and ultimately, hurting residents of local communities that rely on their local, community newspaper to stay informed.”
There is a debate raging within the media over our favorite subject: the media.

Someone told me recently that Americans are information rich and knowledge poor. One reason for this is that journalism is broken. We just can’t agree on how to fix it.

Consider the contrasting views of former New York Times reporter Linda Greenhouse and Emmy Award-winning former CBS reporter Sharyl Attkisson. Each has written a book detailing her experience as a journalist and offering thoughts on where the profession is headed.

In Greenhouse’s book, “Just A Journalist: On the Press, Life and the Spaces Between,” she writes: “The opposite of objectivity isn’t partisanship, or needn’t be. Rather, it is judgment, the hard work of sorting out the false claims from the true and discarding or at least labeling the false.” As Greenhouse sees it, a journalist doesn’t just have the right to express opinions but the obligation to do so — if it is in the pursuit of truth. And, she insists, journalists have every right to be voters and activists because they don’t stop being citizens when they enter the profession. She also thinks the job’s standards can be too rigid.

Attkisson sees things differently. As she spells out in “The Smear: How Shady Political Operatives and Fake News Control What You See, What You Think, and How You Vote,” she thinks the media is in a mess of its own making. The public doesn’t trust the media anymore, she says, because journalists have violated their own standards. As Attkisson said in a recent video for the digital media organization PragerU: “We in the business of journalism have exempted ourselves from the normal rules that used to govern us, and so the most egregious kinds of reporting errors are becoming more common.” She added that most Americans “want their news straight up,” and they’re not getting it that way.

The secret is out. Organizations used to ask me to speak about stories that the media covers. These days, they ask me to talk about the media itself — and its propensity toward “fake news.” How did the Fourth Estate get this far off course?

Here are 10 mistakes that my colleagues and I have made in just the last year that hurt our credibility:

- We’ve broken our own rules. Reporters are supposed to keep their opinions to themselves. Anchors are supposed to tell you the news, not tell you what to think.
- We’ve divided up into teams. In the age of Twitter, Facebook and other social media sites that encourage direct interaction, journalists who work for different companies are free to snipe at one another.
- We’re surrounded by the likeminded. The industry is not diverse. Many journalists are white, come from the same socioeconomic backgrounds, went to the same schools, and live in cities.
- We take criticism personally. Despite belonging to a profession that thrives on criticizing others — especially elected officials — many journalists have thin skin.
- We’ve become too comfortable with hypocrisy. The recent wave of sexual harassment scandals involving media figures — Charlie Rose, formerly of PBS and CBS News; Mark Halperin, formerly of ABC News and NBC News; and Michael Oreskes, formerly of NPR and The New York Times, etc. — shows that journalists don’t do a good enough job of policing their own backyard.
- We try to be social workers and social engineers. Our job is to constantly try to tell better stories. That’s it. Instead, we’ve gotten sidetracked into the totally different mission of making better people and building a better society.
- We take our cues from Washington and New York. These big cities have been given free rein in shaping the national discussion, while paying too little attention to what matters in small towns and rural areas.
- We let our bias show. Many of us are anti-Trump and pro-Democrat. We don’t even bother to hide it anymore. In fact, many of us seem proud of our activism and partisanship.
- We tell ourselves that the ends justify the means. This is especially true in our battles against “deplorables,” including the one in the White House.
- We haven’t done a good job of telling our own story. Readers don’t know the difference between editorials, columns and news articles. Television viewers confuse reporters, anchors and commentators. We’ve mixed it all together.

New report finds smaller newspapers are doing just fine, thank you

By Tom Grubisich

Big daily newspapers get most of the attention in the local news industry, but they include only 3% of all newspapers, daily and weekly. The other 97% — 6,851 titles — are “small-market newspapers.” Of these, 1,202 are daily and 5,649 are weekly (in their print form).

They are papers like the Herald and News in Klamath Falls, Ore., the Daily Coloradoan in Fort Collins, Colo., the Daily Progress in Charlottesville, Va., and the Calhoun County Journal in Bruce, Mich.

Smaller-market papers, with 50,000 or smaller print circulation, are doing quite well overall compared with their larger counterparts, according to the new report “Local News in a Digital World: Small-Market Newspapers in the Digital Age” by journalism professors Damian Radcliffe and Christopher Ali.

In this Q & A, co-author Ali explains the contrary success of the numerous smaller papers:

We are told by some experts that local newspapers are an industry on the brink — facing “extinction,” according to Washington Post media columnist Margaret Sullivan. But your report finds small-market newspapers to be quite resilient. Why is that?

There are a couple of reasons why small market newspapers have been more resilient than their metro/regional/national counterparts:

1) People still buy them and not only this, but they buy them in the print format. Print remains the key revenue driver for small newspapers, and while this is changing, it is changing very gradually.

2) On that note, small-market newspapers have also been slower and perhaps more deliberate in their transition to digital technologies. They have learned from the successes and failures of the larger newspapers.

Continued on Page 10
3) They are also often the only news voice in the community. This gives them a monopoly of knowledge, so to speak, which means that they have a built-in revenue base in terms of advertisers and readers, and that they don’t have to take as many risks as the major newspapers. This, of course, is changing, and there is now a window of opportunity for these newspapers to experiment with low-risk, high-reward digital tools.

4) Because these newspapers have been around for a while, they are also trusted and respected. This is something that they can capitalize on and have done.

5) Small-market newspapers are often closer to their readers. By this, I mean both physically closer (you tend to see reporters and editors in the grocery store) and figuratively closer. Small-market newspapers recognize that they are part of the communities they serve and have a responsibility to that community.

You say smaller papers avoid “templates” that larger papers often resort to. But can’t templates be best practices that can be applied more broadly?

Of course templates can work and can synchronize best practices, but what we wanted to highlight was the push and pull between autonomy and templates. For instance, some of our interview respondents expressed concern about small newspapers being owned by large chains like Gannett, which may tend to synchronize production practices, copy editing and the “look and feel” of the paper. Some lamented these tactics, while others applauded it because it brought an element of stability to the paper, and gave the paper resources — especially digital resources — that it would not have had access to on its own.

A way that papers have been able to get around this is through associations like the Local Media Consortium, which pools resources and allows independent newspapers to benefit from the experiences of chain-owned newspapers (although both kinds of papers are members of LMC).

Smaller papers emphasize a “positive and intimate reflection of the sense of place” in their communities, you say. Does that strategy require more investment in editorial staffing or are there other ways to achieve it?

Ultimately, it involves feet on the ground, and in our nationwide survey we conducted this came to the fore as a major challenge. Specifically, the retention and recruiting of young talent. Believe it or not, there are newspapers out there that are hiring! But they are having trouble recruiting young talent because they are often in small communities in the middle of the country. These papers expressed concern that young reporters are wary about moving to a small town that may be seen as more conservative. Also, of course, the pay isn’t great either.

Smaller papers are not over-invested in advertising revenue, you say. What alternative sources are they adopting and which show the most promise long term?

It’s been really cool to see all the different revenue generating experiments going on at these papers! Examples include hosting events, paywalls, obituaries (although this one is contentious!), newsletters, website building and digital services and Google surveys, just to name a few.

The importance of metrics is increasingly stressed in how newspapers can succeed digitally. Are smaller papers integrating metrics into their publishing process? Can most of them afford the technological investment that’s required?

In the spring we released the results of a nationwide survey we did of small-market newspaper reporters and editors, and what we found was that there was a high take-up of metrics. This ranged from pageviews to Facebook likes, to sophisticated tools like American Press Institute’s “Metrics for News.” Indeed, 70% of the newspapers in our study used some form of metrics.

What is the “new model journalist” you talk about?

Threefold. The first is the continued recognition that journalism at local papers differs from the national/metro newspapers. By this, I mean that more of these papers are invested in what has come to be known as “solutions journalism.” In other words, reporting and even suggesting solutions to community problems, and not just pointing them out.

The second is that, as we know, local journalists need to be “jacks of all trades” equally proficient in writing, video, photography, and social media distribution. Even the writing has changed, with beat reporters being asked to contribute to newsletters, social media posts, love blogs, etc., all of which require a slightly different style of writing.

In our survey we also found that more time is being spent on digital content than two years ago. This trend is unlikely to abate.

The third factor is that newspapers need to recognize that they can no longer do it all. Based on our interviews, we suggest that newspapers select the “master narratives” that they want to focus on, and then partner to fill in the gaps. This way they can do deep dives on targeted narratives in the community. I love this quote from Jim Brady of Billy Penn in Philadelphia who said to us: “You can do anything, but you cannot do everything.” I think this sums up nicely the new reality for newspapers.

Large papers have a love-hate relationship with Facebook. What’s the relationship of smaller papers to Facebook and other social platforms as well as Google?

The love-hate relationship extends to the small newspapers as well. While we found that many individual journalists use Facebook, and newspapers do as well, there is skepticism about devoting much time to it given that the return on investment is unclear.

While smaller papers may be more resilient, do you and your co-author, Damian Radcliffe, see them facing any risks to their sustainability? If so, how should they revamp their business model?

There are absolutely risks to their sustainability. They face the same pressures of time and resources as the major newspapers do, the only difference is that they’ve been awarded more time to adapt. There is a window of opportunity right now for these papers, and they need to take advantage of it. This includes finding time to experiment with digital tools, all the while understanding that there is no cookie cutter model for revenue enhancement.

It’s about what makes the most sense for their communities and their readers. It also means, as we say in the conclusion of our report, that the entire newspaper industry (or industries, as we say) needs to commit to stop talking down the industry. It’s become a bit of a self-fulfilling prophecy. While they should not make false claims about the health of the industry, they need to do a better job at showcasing and reiterating the great and important work that they are doing. They should also explain the choices they are making to their readers. We’ll all in this together!

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