Best Lifestyle Photo
Division 1
2017 Better Newspaper Contest
By Lindsey Erin Kroskob, Big Timber Pioneer

Titled: Testing out the firehose
Judge’s Comment: Great expressions!
**MNA Calendar**

**February**

19 Federal holiday: Presidents' Day


28 U of M School of Journalism RSVP deadline for the Job & Internship Fair

**March**


9 U of M School of Journalism Job & Internship Fair

11-17 National Sunshine Week

11-17 2018 Sunshine Week - Open Government is Good Government - Details at: [http://sun shineweek.org/](http://sunshineweek.org/)

16 Deadline to submit articles for the March Press Pass newsletter

22 U of M School of Journalism High School Journalism Day

23 Nomination deadline, 2018 Montana Newspaper Hall of Fame, Master Editor/Publisher Award and Distinguished Service Awards

**April**

15 Montana Corporation Annual Report filing deadline with the Montana Secretary of State

19 U of M School of Journalism Dean Stone Lecture

20 MNA and MNAS Board of Directors’ meeting - Don Anderson Hall, U of M School of Journalism

20 U of M School of Journalism Dean Stone Banquet

20 Deadline to submit articles for the April Press Pass newsletter

**May**

18 Deadline to submit articles for the May Press Pass newsletter

18 MNA member digital advertising sales training, Great Falls - Details on Page 10

28 Federal holiday: Memorial Day

28 MNA office will be closed for the Memorial Day holiday

**June**

5 Montana primary election

14 MNA and MNAS Board of Directors’ Meeting - Big Horn Resort, Billings

15 Deadline to submit articles for the June Press Pass newsletter

14, 15 MNA office will be closed for the annual convention

15, 16 133rd MNA Annual Convention - Big Horn Resort, Billings

15 Montana Newspaper Foundation fundraising event - Yellowstone Art Museum

15 MNA, MNAS and MNF Annual Meetings - Big Horn Resort - Billings

16 2018 MNA Better Newspaper Contest Award Banquet - Big Horn Resort, Billings
To view all the first-place winners of the 2017 Better Newspaper Contest, please visit the following link:
Dave Ponte is the new publisher & editor of the Roundup Record-Tribune and Winnett Times, replacing Eric and Mary Rasmussen, who published the newspaper for almost 45 years. John and his wife Kathy came out of retirement to publish the newspaper. John says, “My background was in the high-tech industry and Kathy was a secretary. Neither Kathy nor I have expertise in the newspaper field, but our drive, persistence, dreams and support will be our tools.” John goes on to say, “I hope the newspaper will challenge, entertain, inform, provide opportunities and ultimately benefit the community.” We wish Eric and Mary the best in their retirement and thank them for their service to the Montana newspaper industry.

Informed Citizen Initiative makes media literacy experts available around Montana
By Rob Chaney, Missoulian

Like a movie trailer, “Fake News in a Post-Truth Era” panel discussion at Imagine Nation Brewing previewed similar public gatherings throughout Montana in this coming year.

“We hope to encourage people to understand the difference between disagreeing with a position and labeling it ‘fake news,’” Humanities Montana Director Kim Anderson said. “Last week was a trial run, and the response has been great. We had been promoting the event on our Facebook page, and now we’re getting messages from all over the state asking ‘Can we get this in our community?’”

The panel featured University of Montana journalism professor Dennis Swibold, Mansfield Library web services librarian Jaci Wilkinson and Missoulian editor Kathy Best taking questions from both the live audience and online viewers about press ethics, disinformation campaigns, and how to research the validity of controversial claims.

Noting that President Donald Trump had accused news outlets of “fake news” at least 1,700 times in the past year, panel moderator and retired UM Broadcast Media Center director William Marcus said both the public and the press need to hold those in power accountable.

“There seems to be an effort to discredit the news,” Marcus said. “People need to know how to combat those efforts.”

Humanities Montana’s speakers hope to seek out similar nontraditional venues. For the past 45 years, its Montana Conversations program has been sending experts to school classrooms, libraries and museums. Anderson said this year, the program would like to add community centers, coffee shops and similar popular gathering spots to the list.

“There’s uniqueness of being here, so close to each other, to hear about something so important to the country,” Imagine Nation co-owner Fernanda Krum said before the discussion started. The craft brewery alongside the Clark Fork River has a dual mission as a community center.

In addition to the topic of “fake news,” the Informed Citizen Initiative has speakers available to talk about the history of journalism in the United States, journalism in Native American communities, environmental coverage, and the difference between regular and investigative reporting.

Humanities Montana landed enough grant funding to expand its journalism outreach program with an Informed Citizen Initiative that can visit any classroom or public space for a day. The new topics explore the relationship of journalism and democracy.

Anderson said the new offerings came together through a funding partnership including the Andrew Mellon Foundation, Pulitzer Prize Organization and the Federation of State Humanities Councils. Complete details and applications should be released in the first week of February.

For more information on the Informed Citizen Initiative and other topics Humanities Montana can explore, check out its website at HumanitiesMontana.org.

Roundup Record – Tribune and Winnett Times ownership change

Dave Ponte is the new publisher & editor of the Roundup Record-Tribune and Winnett Times, replacing Eric and Mary Rasmussen, who published the newspaper for almost 45 years. John and his wife Kathy came out of retirement to publish the newspaper. John says, “My background was in the high-tech industry and Kathy was a secretary. Neither Kathy nor I have expertise in the newspaper field, but our drive, persistence, dreams and support will be our tools.” John goes on to say, “I hope the newspaper will challenge, entertain, inform, provide opportunities and ultimately benefit the community.”

We wish Eric and Mary the best in their retirement and thank them for their service to the Montana newspaper industry.
The MNA Board of Directors recently approved the new Distinguished Service Award to recognize persons throughout the Montana newspaper industry who have made meaningful contributions to both newspapering and to their particular communities.

MNA President Darla Downs said, “Since 1991, the MNA has recognized editors and publishers who make a difference in the world of journalism and their communities. This new Distinguished Service Award is long overdue and was created by the board of directors to honor all the others whose contributions go into the team effort it takes to publish a quality newspaper issue after issue.”

Dick Crockford, MNA Awards Committee chair at the time the new award was approved, said, “I like the new award because it gives us the chance to acknowledge the value of personnel from the mailroom to the pressroom to the newsroom – and everywhere in between – who make our profession more effective and their communities better places in which to live.”

A DSA recipient can be any member of a newspaper staff, including—but not limited to—editorial, advertising, circulation, distribution, production, accounting and management personnel.

To be eligible for selection, nominees must be employees or former employees of Montana newspapers or must be associated with a university, college or newspaper association having close ties with Montana newspapers.

Selection criteria:
• Nominees shall have contributed in a significant manner to their newspaper and to their community, or to the newspaper industry in general.
• Nominees shall be generally considered to be persons of positive moral character.
• Nominees shall be persons who are held in high regard by their peers.

Other considerations:
• Nominations for the DSA must be made from within newspaper ranks by peers, supervisors or others who are personally knowledgeable about those they nominate.
• While employment longevity may be considered, it is not necessarily a requirement for selection.

Additionally:
• The Board of Directors of the Montana Newspaper Association will make the final selection of DSA recipients.
• Up to five Distinguished Service Awards may be presented annually.
• If, in the judgment of the Directors, there are no candidates eligible to be named as DSA recipients, no such honor will be bestowed.

More information and a nomination form can be found on the MNA website at:

Stimulate public’s interest in open government with an article for 2018 Sunshine Week

The special content will be made available for use that week by participating organizations to promote a dialogue about the importance of open government and freedom of information.

ASNE’s First Amendment Committee leaders, Mindy Marques, executive editor of the Miami Herald, and Peter Bhatia, editor of the Detroit Free Press, are also working with The Associated Press, the Associated Press Media Editors (APME) and other major news organizations to make an ambitious reporting project available free to all participants. More on that will be announced in the coming weeks. Look for more information at sunshineweek.org.

ASNE launched Sunshine Week in 2005 as a national initiative.

Since 2012, ASNE has partnered with the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press to provide support for news organizations, libraries, universities, civic groups, nonprofits and others who want to promote open government and access to information.

Sunshine Week, March 11 – 17, 2018 is made possible by an endowment from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and by a donation from The Gridiron Club and Foundation.

For more information about Sunshine Week, visit sunshineweek.org. Follow Sunshine Week on Twitter and Facebook, and use the hashtag #SunshineWeek.

WELCOME
New Associate Member

Gold Level
WIPFLi CPAs and Consultants

Bronze Level
Cribb Greene & Cope
The “mainstream” media in Montana employ about 2,000 people. Eight hundred of them work for Montana’s 19 television stations and 155 commercial radio stations. A thousand or so more work for 85 newspapers and for online publications like Montana Free Press, the Missoula Current and the Last Best News.

These Montana media employees live in communities as small as Ekalaka and as large as Billings. They own homes and pay property taxes. They send their children to schools in their communities. They donate time and talent to promote community events and economic development. They are at high school basketball games and hospital fundraisers. They cover city council and school board elections. They report critical news on weather and public safety. They photograph Montana’s beautiful scenery and amazing people. They are fierce defenders of Montana’s way of life.

Not all of Montana media employees work on the news/editorial side of the business. Many sell advertising to businesses, helping them reach important customers. Others manage circulation, some run the presses or work in broadcast production. Some are Democrats. Some are Republicans. Some are Independents. Some are men, some are women. Some are native Montanans, some are people who have chosen to make Montana their home. They have a wide array of talents and passions and beliefs.

Given this, it is very difficult for us to imagine what possessed Montana Secretary of State Corey Stapleton Jan. 16 when he sent an e-newsletter from his office out to an estimated 130,000 subscribers, lashing out at “mainstream media.” In his 337-word piece, Stapleton rails against the “mainstream media in America” — criticizing the job performance of some 2,000 Montanans. Don’t get us wrong. Getting criticized is part of running a business. We in the media always need to work to improve. We always need to strive to be unbiased, to be accurate and to be solution-oriented. We need to correct our mistakes swiftly and publicly. We need to respond to valid criticism.

We just don’t know why Corey Stapleton thinks Jeff and Melody Martinsen at the Choteau Acantha or LeAnne and Brian Kavanagh at the Cut Bank Pioneer Press or Nick Ehli at the Bozeman Daily Chronicle, to name a few members of the mainstream media in Montana, are failing our state so badly. We requested an interview with him last week, and as of Monday, his office had not responded to our email. We wanted to ask him how many Montana newspapers he reads and how many Montana TV and radio newscasts he watches and listens to daily. We assume, given his criticisms, that he watches, listens to and reads all of Montana’s media products every week so he can diagnose these deficiencies in Montana media and warn his 130,000 subscribers to “be careful for what gets your attention.”

If our assumption is wrong, and Corey Stapleton does not avidly read, watch and listen to all of Montana’s mainstream media, then his criticism is not fact-based, but a broad smear based on his opinion. Stapleton says mainstream media has “become obsessed with the sideshow of personality and politically incorrect language of today” and “chooses to focus on all the personal follies of people instead of public policies.”

But he cites no specific offenses by any national or state media outlets. If Stapleton were actually paying attention to what Montana journalists are covering, he would see that we are focusing on public policy, we are telling our readers and viewers and listeners what they need to know about government to be responsible citizens and voters. We are chronicling the day-to-day history of our communities, and we are doing it in a challenging economic climate, where small businesses in most of the state’s counties are struggling.

Stapleton says, “We need unbiased coverage of policy proposals, not partisan angles or personal attacks.” We totally agree with that, and we would like Secretary of State Stapleton to take his own advice and not engage in highly biased, partisan-angled, personal attacks against the men and women who make their living in Montana working for the mainstream media.
Daily Inter Lake introduces new digital access model

By Rick Weaver, publisher, Daily Inter Lake

As the publisher of your community newspaper, I am partly in the business of reporting on change, and nothing has changed more than the news business in the past two decades.

Technology has made information a 24/7 business — and competition between internet, cable, satellite and traditional news media has meant that our newspaper has had to change with the times. We look different than we did 20 years ago. We distribute news differently than we did 10 years ago. Our front page is different than it was yesterday.

What hasn’t changed is our commitment to provide readers with valuable local news and advertisers with a quality reach. At Hagadone Montana Publishing, we have the biggest and best news team in northwest Montana. Advertisers are connecting with the largest, most engaged audience in our area. No other print or news website in your local area has our reach.

This is a great newspaper market, but we need your help. Our readers and advertisers combined give us the ability to continue publishing a quality daily newspaper well into the future. We know from talking to you that our content is valuable in your daily life, and it’s something that—far more than 125 years—our print readers have been willing to pay for. That’s important, because, as with any business, providing a quality product requires investment and support. Thousands of our readers have also supported our paper by subscribing to our e-edition, the virtual paper that provides an exact replica of the print edition on your home computer or the electronic device of your choosing.

Just as our loyal print readers have paid for newspapers all these years, our digital users at www.dailyinterlake.com will begin paying as we introduce a new subscription model starting Monday, Jan. 29.

You might ask, what if I’m already a print subscriber? Home delivery customers can receive full digital access, including the e-edition newspaper, as part of their subscription for just 4 cents per day. In order to activate your digital subscription, give us a call at 406-755-7018.

How does this new model work? Readers can view up to 10 articles free every 30 days. For access beyond that threshold, digital-only readers are required to subscribe for just $3.20 per week. That’s access to full news stories with updates, photo galleries, and niche products such as the At Home Flathead and This Week in the Flathead. You’ll also receive the complete replica e-edition.

Locals and newcomers alike have learned that we provide a significant volume and depth of quality local reporting across our family of print and digital products. This investment and service to our community has great value. In fact, no other media organization employs more journalists or employees in northwest Montana than the Hagadone Montana group, led by our flagship newspaper, the Daily Inter Lake. As you know, we’re deep in local news that tackles important issues, keeps people informed, celebrates achievements, brings people together and looks after your tax dollars.

In the past few years, our staff has improved the newspaper’s print and website design, added new features and forged stronger community partnerships while continuing to produce valued investigative journalism.

Print is not dead, regardless of what some might say. Our reach has never been greater when combined with digital. It’s about engagement, which no other mass media vehicle can offer. Newspaper media companies will continue to prosper via a strategy where print and digital coexist through the secure and intimate nature of print and the real-time convenience of digital. Anywhere. Anytime.

On behalf of the entire Hagadone Montana Publishing team, thank you for your business. You’re the reason we’re optimistic about the future.

2018 MNA Master Editor/Publisher Award, Montana Newspaper Hall of Fame Award and our new Distinguished Service Award

Now is your chance to spotlight your fellow newspaper professionals for their accomplishments by nominating them for the 2018 Montana Master Editor/Publisher Award, Distinguished Service Award and induction into the Montana Newspaper Hall of Fame.

- The deadline to submit your nominations is Friday, March 23, 2018.
- Instructions for accessing nomination forms are listed below.
- Return your completed forms by mail to MNA, 825 Great Northern Blvd., Ste. 202, Helena, MT 59601, or email jim@mtnewspapers.com
- Nominations will be voted on by the MNA Board of Directors.
- Awards will be presented during the 133rd annual MNA convention at the Big Horn Resort, Billings, Montana.

The nomination form for the 2018 MNA Master Editor/Publisher Award:

The nomination form for induction into the Montana Newspaper Hall of Fame:

The nomination form for the 2018 Distinguished Service Award:

Past recipients of the Master Editor/Publisher Award:

Past recipients of the Montana Newspaper Hall of Fame Award:

If you have questions, please contact:

Jim Rickman
Executive Director
406-443-2850
jim@mtnewspapers.com
On Jan. 16, Montana Secretary of State Corey Stapleton issued an email containing a perplexing bit of opinion. Titled “Be careful what gets your attention,” Stapleton’s missive is a broad critique of modern media in which he accuses news organizations of being “language cops,” among other things.

“There is one huge problem with mainstream media in America,” his email states. “It has diminished profitability, and as a result has increasingly begun chasing the tabloid headlines and venomous tweets of personal destruction, in an effort to survive financially. Instead of focusing on the policies and impact of leadership decisions across the political spectrum, mainstream media has become obsessed with the sideshows of personality and politically incorrect language of today.”

It’s hard to know where to begin to respond to such a diatribe. What on earth motivated Montana’s secretary of state to write this? More importantly, why did he think that disseminating this message was a good use of public resources?

Let’s start by acknowledging what should be obvious: Stapleton has no idea what he’s talking about.

Take this one meandering paragraph, for instance: “If our media is so consumed with exercising its muscle gained by increased modern surveillance of people—where virtually everything becomes public knowledge, and chooses to focus on all the personal follies of people instead of issues — who is going to have the discipline to cover our deeply important public policies, and convey the importance of those ideas to the populace?”

First of all, far from focusing on “personal follies,” even the briefest glance through the content of most local and national newspapers will reveal story after story about our communities and the workings of our governments, among other timely events and developing trends that directly affect our daily lives.

Stapleton’s screed against the media does not contain a single example to illustrate his point. Ironically enough, given the content of the message, it reads like something better suited for his personal Facebook profile.

We live in an era of increased communication technology, where people — including President Trump — can freely choose to share the minutiae of their lives. However, professional journalists are more challenged than ever before to sift through this sea of information for a drop of real news relevant to their readers. And governments — from local to federal — do not make this job any easier, often burying critical documents or refusing to release them altogether.

Finally, Stapleton’s message has no connection whatsoever to the stated mission of his office: “to help commerce thrive, promote democracy, and record history for future generations.”

“That is one point on which we can agree: Stapleton clearly does not know the difference, and also lacks an understanding of the inappropriate-ness of using his official office to air his own personal “faux outrage” at the media.

You focus on your job, Secretary Stapleton, and let us focus on ours.

changes are coming to the Ravalli Republic

As many of you know, the newspaper industry has been disrupted by the digital revolution. Many readers now prefer to get their information from our website, our Facebook and Twitter accounts and through other social media. And many advertisers prefer spending their advertising dollars online.

As a result of this shift, coupled with a recent increase in the cost of newsprint, the Ravalli Republic no longer can justify the costs of printing and delivering the paper five days a week.

So, beginning March 1, the Ravalli Republic will only be delivered on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. Those issues also will be sold on newsstands.

The newspaper will bring you the best of our work, along with the popular TV and local event listings and the advertising that helps you get the biggest bang for your bucks.

Thank you for reading and supporting the Ravalli Republic. Although the platform on which you receive your daily news may evolve, our mission of telling the stories of the Valley will never change.
How appropriate that Valentine’s Day is the date we publish the obituary of dear friend Dick Crockford. His heart was as big as the Montana sky and his generosity as wide as the state he served so well.

Monitor readers may remember Crockford from time he spent in 2002 helping new owners Jan and David Anderson transition into the new position. Driving daily from Anaconda for about three weeks, he volunteered just because he was always a booster of Montana newspapers. He firmly believed in the value of public conversations carried out in small town weeklies.

It was a tough winter when he made that trip to Boulder, and on one morning trip he hit some ice on the Elk Park flats. He spun out and hit a delineator that bounced up and shattered the rear window of his car. That didn’t stop him. He continued on to Boulder, put in a day’s volunteering, and then drove back to Anaconda, plastic moving wrap covering the hole where his rear window used to be.

In his usual fashion, he was able to laugh about the experience.

He and his wife, Debbie, lived a life of service to their many home towns, their family, and their church. Over the years, he was active in the Knights of Columbus, Kiwanis, the MISTER (Males In Service To Encourage Reading) Reader Program at Head Start and various elementary schools, annual trips to Tijuana, Mexico to build houses, Montana Catholic youth formation, Montana Newspaper Association, United Way, Beaverhead County Museum Board, also he volunteered as assistant cross-country coach in Anaconda, among so many other organizations. The loss of his presence will be deeply felt.

He is survived by his wife, Debbie, and by his three daughters, Heather Boese, of Butte, Montana, Theresa Unbehend, of Taylorsville, Utah, and Rebecca Combs, of Fort Myers, Florida.


Dick Crockford was born in Los Angeles, California, on May 2, 1952, and grew up in Fort Benton.

A respected stalwart of the region’s newspaper industry, Crockford had served as the publisher of the Dillon Tribune since 2007. Active in the Montana Newspaper Association for 35 years, he was elected as its president in 2007 and earned distinction from it as a Master Publisher and Editor in 2009.

Prior to coming to Dillon, Crockford worked for five years as the editor and publisher of the Big Horn County News in Hardin. He lived before that in Anaconda for 13 years, working for seven and a half of those years as editor of the Anaconda Leader. He also served as editor of the Shelby Promoter after acting as farm editor for a pair of Idaho newspapers.

He remained active in the Catholic Church throughout his life, volunteering for the Catholic Youth Coalition and teaching confirmation classes to high school juniors and seniors for Anaconda Catholic Community for a dozen years.

He was a tremendous supporter of the Montana Newspaper Association in so many ways. His expertise came through when he served on the board of directors, something he did for many years. His loving nature came through when he patted old friends on the back and shared stories about mutual trials and tribulations of running a newspaper. His generosity came through when he offered to help any fellow editor or publisher in any way he could.

The world of Montana newspapering lost a great champion last week, and whether they know it or not, all Montanans lost a valued citizen who never missed a chance to be kind and generous.

Rest well, dear friend.

William "Dick" Crockford 1952-2018

Tribute to Dick Crockford

By Jan Anderson, Boulder Monitor

How appropriate that Valentine’s Day is the date we publish the obituary of dear friend Dick Crockford. His heart was as big as the Montana sky and his generosity as wide as the state he served so well.

Monitor readers may remember Crockford from time he spent in 2002 helping new owners Jan and David Anderson transition into the new position. Driving daily from Anaconda for about three weeks, he volunteered just because he was always a booster of Montana newspapers. He firmly believed in the value of public conversations carried out in small town weeklies.

It was a tough winter when he made that trip to Boulder, and on one morning trip he hit some ice on the Elk Park flats. He spun out and hit a delineator that bounced up and shattered the rear window of his car. That didn’t stop him. He continued on to Boulder, put in a day’s volunteering, and then drove back to Anaconda, plastic moving wrap covering the hole where his rear window used to be.

In his usual fashion, he was able to laugh about the experience.

Monitor readers might also remember Crockford for his visits to Boulder for the annual music and art festival. He was that guy with the heavy gray mustache that gave him an appearance reminiscent of a walrus, something he also joked about.

And beneath that mustache, he seemed always to be smiling.

He was a tremendous supporter of the Montana Newspaper Association in so many ways. His expertise came through when he served on the board of directors, something he did for many years. His loving nature came through when he patted old friends on the back and shared stories about mutual trials and tribulations of running a newspaper. His generosity came through when he offered to help any fellow editor or publisher in any way he could. And his big-hearted caring shined when he stood each year at the MNA business meeting, reading aloud tributes to the newspaper men and women who had departed in the past year, often choking back emotion over the friends no longer with us.

The world of Montana newspapering lost a great champion last week, and whether they know it or not, all Montanans lost a valued citizen who never missed a chance to be kind and generous.

Rest well, dear friend.
MNA Members,
The Montana Newspaper Association is excited to notify our members we are expanding our advertising offerings to include a members-only online network. This new program will provide your local advertising clients a more extensive, statewide online audience at a very cost-effective investment.

Just like our statewide, member-sold, display and classified programs, each member has the right to participate in the network. And we will continue to use the same exacting standards we apply to the current programs, so you can trust you’ll have superior quality ads on your website. And just like our other statewide advertising programs, the MNA will manage the administrative work.

Here’s what a member gains from the statewide online advertising program:
• Additional revenue.
• Filling an online need for your clients with the expanded audience.
• Creating additional credibility for your website.
• Supporting your MNA.

Here’s how it works:
• You select 1 run-of-site position on your website.
  - 150 x 150 square
  - 180 x 250 rectangle
  - 300 x 250 rectangle
  - 728 x 90 leaderboard
• Our partner, Missouri Press Association (MPA), will provide you the ad code to place on your website. This one-time step will allow the MPA to directly place and remove the online ad. You do nothing else.
• The MPA offers complete design service and formatting of the online ads you sell.
• The MPA will provide you and your client analytics at the end of ad campaign.

The Montana Newspaper Association is fortunate to have such outstanding members. We trust we can count on you as we launch the new online network, which will only strengthen our association and better serve you.

Take a moment and join the Statewide Online Advertising Program by downloading the signup form at: http://www.mtnewspapers.com/new-mna-member-statewide-online-advertising-program/

This may be returned by emailing Jim Rickman at jim@mtnewspapers.com by March 30, 2018. Please call the MNA office at 443-2850 if you have any questions.

Lone Peak Lookout joins the MNA Statewide Ad Network

The Lone Peak Lookout in Big Sky is our latest member to join the MNA member-owned statewide advertising network. The Lone Peak Lookout adds their distribution of 4,000 copies to our growing statewide network. We currently have 64 member newspapers with total distribution of 160,142 in our display advertising program and 69 member newspapers with total distribution of 169,019 in our classified advertising network.

Thanks Lone Peak Lookout for joining our statewide ad program!

DIGITAL ADVERTISING SALES TRAINING

Friday, May 18, in Great Falls

Improve your online advertising sales skills by joining advertising directors and digital advertising experts Erica Yakawich of the Independent Record, Helena, and Anton Kaufer of the Daily Inter Lake, Kalispell, for this very special advertising sales training opportunity.

Our presenters will cover the following topics:
1) Online advertising - what do the trends tell us?
2) Website design - what makes for a good user experience?
3) Selling your audience - print and online
4) Newspaper audience vs. the competition
5) Getting started
6) Digital display - local and network
7) Search engine marketing and search engine optimization
8) Video in online ads
9) Social media sponsored content
10) How does it all fit together?
11) What needs to be done after the sale - reporting and follow up

MNA Member Educational Opportunity

May 18
Great Falls
10:00 am – 2:30 pm
Includes Lunch

$40 Registration Fee invoiced by the MNA

Register by May 11
email Jim Rickman at jim@mtnewspapers.com

MEETING LOCATION
WILL BE PROVIDED SOON

February 16, 2018
Most reporters can likely relate to this scenario. Someone speaks up at a public meeting to unleash criticism about an individual or organization. Reporters have little difficulty presenting a balanced report – recording all sides of the story – if the accused is at the meeting.

But what happens if the individual is not present? And what if deadlines do not permit time to get the other side of the argument?

It’s the classic case of a “single source” story. These types of stories are no doubt the easiest to write, and they are the most likely to prompt calls of “foul play” from readers – for good reason.

Consider this editor’s note which preaced a story.

Representatives for the alternative position were not available to contest or counter statements made and statistics shared. As such, that perspective is not a component of this report.

Give the newspaper credit for acknowledging the shortcomings in its report, but say what?

The editor’s note – the newspaper’s lack of initiative in pursuing and presenting the other side of the story – is rather remarkable in today’s 24/7 communications landscape. Multiple avenues are available to get the opposing view from picking up the telephone to sending an email to checking out organization websites.

Blind-sided attacks are a common occurrence in reporting the news. Newsrooms, as the clearinghouse of information in your communities, are often in perfect position to anticipate the circumstances and double down your efforts to present all sides of a story.

A simple brainstorming session at a staff meeting can reveal additional opportunities for broader coverage. The more voices in a story, the more balanced a report. Coverage of public affairs affords ample opportunities for including multiple voices.

A school board is prepared to act on a recommendation to switch from half-day to all-day kindergarten; the packet of materials accompanying the agenda details the reasons. A preview of the meeting is a chance to provide “pro” and “con” arguments, including interviews with a variety of individuals. Follow-up reports on a variety of board actions present similar opportunities.

A big-box retailer comes into a town with great fanfare. A sidebar is appropriate to capture the sentiments of those who believe existing local retailers will be helped or hindered.

Most items in police blotters are sufficiently summarized in a few sentences. On occasion, take the time to quiz police on some incidents, and the circumstances can lead to an interesting story.

Tracking down all the voices – all the perspectives – of a story is just the first step, however. Two other points are important in the spirit of fairness.

No. 1, give the opposing voices equal prominence. Court proceedings are a great example. In other words, don’t put the prosecutor’s arguments on page one and bury the defense’s rebuttal on jump page. Readers’ attention is limited on the web, too; present the opposing viewpoints in the first few paragraphs.

No. 2, don’t be afraid to hold a story if it means delivering a more complete – and more fair – report. That’s especially the case with nondaily newspapers where it can be a few days to a week before readers receive the “other side.” In these cases, the web is a great friend. Newspapers can wait a few hours to pursue all the voices and still deliver a timely report.

Seeking and incorporating the many varied – yet pertinent – voices in a story is not always easy. It can take time and hard work – solid journalism that benefits the newspaper and readers alike.