

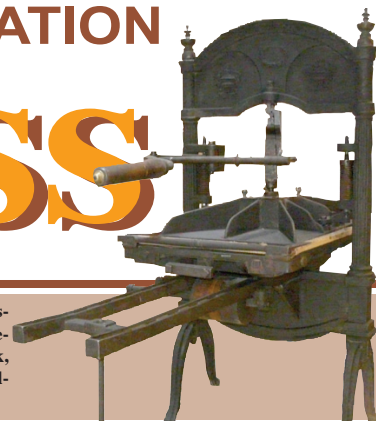
THE MONTANA NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION Press Pass

SINCE
1885

Our 125th year serving Montana and its newspapers

**April 29,
2010**

This Civil War Washington Hand Press came up the Missouri River by steamboat, and once printed the Columbia Review in Columbia Falls. It later went to the Laurel Outlook, and now sits in the lobby of the MNA's office complex in Helena as a reminder of Montana's rich newspaper heritage.



FOI Hotline Attorney Mike Meloy makes a point Saturday doing the MNA news seminar.



Jim Pumarlo, a former newspaper editor from Red Wing, Minnesota, presented the main seminar for the day at Montana City, speaking on "Bad News and Good Judgment." See page 3 for more on the seminar.



825 Great Northern Blvd. Ste. 202
Helena, MT • 800-325-8276
mtnews@mtnewspapers.com

On deadline...

June 17

Quarterly MNA/MNAS board meeting
preceding annual convention. Bozeman
Holiday Inn. Reception for all convention
attendees that night.

June 18-19

125th Annual Montana Newspaper Association Convention - Bozeman Holiday Inn

USPS says postal delays fixed for now

It was like the newspapers going to many out of state destinations by mail were swallowed up in a black hole.

That was the best way to describe a recent development in mailing second class periodicals from Montana newspapers last week.

Melody Martinsen from the Choteau Acantha raised the question why, after three weeks, her early April newspapers had not yet reached many of their destinations.

See DELAYS on page 3

RIGHT TO KNOW QUESTIONS?

Call FOI HOTLINE: (406) 442-8670

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Off the Cuff

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

John M. Barrows, Executive Director



Reporter access to legislative floor back on front burner

Why, it seems like it was just last week that I sat down in a capitol office building with other reporters and organizations, to talk about reporter access to the floors of the Montana State House and Senate during legislative sessions... and to chat about how reporters could cover the myriad committee hearings scheduled each session.

Actually, that was over two years ago!

And now we're back at it!

A meeting is being planned by the Council for June 2 at the capitol to once again review the regulations for reporters to be allowed floor and hearing access.

This time, there are even more requirements being proposed... including changes for creating press credentials. This time there is also considerable thought being given to the status of bloggers and nontraditional media... how to accredit them, how to regulate them as to granting floor privileges.

Additional questions being proposed are who actually administers the standards and processes, and what changes might be needed to Joint, House and Senate Rules.

Under the current proposal the member of the press wishing to have floor access needs would need to request access to the floor from the Legislative Information Officer, and be briefed on the rules, including a Media Guide.

The reporter would have to sign an agreement to abide by the legislative rules and standards of behavior for reporters.

There are even questions being raised about how to handle reporters who work for media belonging to associations which lobby the legislature, such as MNA or the Montana Broadcasters Association. The suggestion, (and a practical one at that) would be that the reporter could be accredited but the lobbyist could not (as it is now, essentially).

Some of the concern behind the upcoming meeting apparently stems from several incidents during the last legislative session (none of them involving newspaper reporters) that dealt with cell phone use, lobbying and inappropriate attire during floor sessions. Written testimony for the session needs to be submitted to Gayle Shirley, Legislative Information Officer, by May 7.

The Montana Newspaper Association will submit testimony and be at the hearing, as will representatives from the Montana Freedom of Information Hotline and a number of media outlets.

MNA, representing newspapers not able to send their own representatives to the meeting, will be stressing the need for as wide a level of access as possible within space limitations, accreditation procedures, adequate access to electronic hook-ups and the need to accommodate newspaper video requirements..

If you have questions or concerns, please let me know (mtnews@mtnewspapers.com) as soon as possible.

Delay

Continued from page 1

Melody, the Montana Newspaper Association, the National Newspaper Association and the US Postal Service all took an active role in finding the problem, and coming up with an immediate solution.

In a quick survey of papers by MNA, over a dozen newspapers (and there were probably many more) found that after the end of March, the delays for their out of state papers skyrocketed.

Jay Ettleman, periodicals manager of the USPS in Billings, took a proactive role in helping track down the problem and urging USPS to make immediate corrections.

Two National Newspaper Association officials also took an active part in helping solve the dilemma.

Tonda Rush, government af-

fairs, and Max Heath, postal affairs, worked first hand on a national level.

It was soon apparent as to what had happened. The USPS instituted a change in how it handled periodicals and standard letters and flats, changing the distribution center from Billings to Denver.

The need for papers to comply with new mail prep and labeling guidelines was set for June... the change came at the end of March.

The result: chaos.

In a letter from USPS Big Sky District Manager John DiPeri this week, DiPeri said that while the change will make for more efficient delivery, and still keep service levels consistent, the implementation did not go smoothly.

"We have experienced some de-

lays in the delivery of periodicals as we transition to these new distribution and labeling requirements. Until such time as transition distribution opportunities are review and service performance has been stabilized, we have agree to provide improved distribution and transportation to these products."

That means, Ettleman said, that for the time being, the newspapers will be routed out of Billings, instead of Denver, until labeling and distribution issues can be solved.

Special thanks are due to several folks, Executive Director John Barrows noted. They include Melody Martinsen of the Choteau Acantha, Jay Ettleman of the USPS, and Tonda Rush and Max Heath of NNA, for getting the issue resolved quickly.

MNA's 2010 news seminar sparks interest on crime, sensitive issues

It was a busy day Saturday, April 24, as over 20 Montana newspaper men and women gathered in Montana City (just south of Helena) for a day of learning about how to deal with controversial news and the ins and out of Montana's right to know laws.

The session, sponsored by the Montana Newspaper Association, highlighted practical, hands-on learning in a number of often requested areas, including how to handle tough stories and keeping local governments local and accessible.

Jim Pumarlo, a well-known presenter from Red Wing Minnesota, was well received by those attending the session. Pumarlo noted after the seminar concluded that he was impressed by the interest and questions shown during his presentation, noting there was a keen interest in how to deal with situations that ran the gamut from arrests and unfavorable business news,

to deaths, suicides and sexual assaults and incest.

Pumarlo, currently communications director of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, was editor in Red Wing, Minnesota for over 20 years and in recent years has spoken extensively about a wide range of newsroom issues. In 2008, Pumarlo came to Helena and headed a seminar on election coverage for MNA.

The latter part of the afternoon was just as lively, with attendees peppering Helena attorney Mike Meloy with questions concerning right to know, privacy and freedom of information.

Meloy, who is the attorney for the Montana Freedom of Information Hot Line, also represents the Montana Newspaper Association, including a recent suit in which MNA became an intervenor to defend access to documents in a City of Great Falls case.

Meloy has been involved in FOI

issues for nearly 40 years, and was a delegate at the 1972 Constitutional Convention when the right to know became part of our state constitution.

As part of their seminar, each attendee received a copy of Pumarlo's book "Bad News and Good Judgment."

Much of the interest focused on the tendency among some law enforcement agencies of severely redacting information that is open by law to the public.

During the session Jan Anderson, chairman of the MNA Legislative and Governmental Affairs committee, noted the committee is concentrating on that area, and is contemplating legislative efforts next session to help clarify some specific areas in the current law.

The committee is also planning educational materials for MNA newspapers.

Column inspires "5-Points"

Tom Mullen's, publisher of the Phillipsburg Mail and the Silver State Post in Deer Lodge, was inspired by a recent column in the Press Pass by Town News sales manager Gary

about 15 steps to a profitable web site.

Mullen came up with his own five point plan for a successful newspaper web site that provides a little different spin on an important topic.

1. First and most important, do as little as possible. The Newspaper industry is largely responsible for what little credibility that's available on the internet. Newspapers are the most viable and successful advertising media and you cannot improve the effectiveness of your core product (print media) by cannibalizing your true resources (your professional staff and intelligent readers) by migrating them to the least effective advertising media (the internet).

A great web site will attract geometrically superior readership than a printed product but the audience will be geometrically fragmented and hence the advertising effectiveness will be fragmented. Doing nothing is the single best method of improving your newspaper's financial success.

2. If you must have an on-line presence use it only to tease regular paid subscriptions to your print product. Run your best current photo and the first few sentences of the top three or four pieces in your current newspaper and finish each tease with a hot link that reads "want to read the rest of the story?" When a reader hits the hot link he or she is taken to a subscription form.

3. If you must sell web-based subscriptions to your newspapers charge at least six-times your regular subscription rate. Paid

print subscriptions account for less than 20 percent of our industry's revenue which means when new internet readers find you, or when print readers migrate to your electronic newspaper you will be losing most of that 80 percent of your revenue that comes from display advertising. So remember to charge enough for the subscriptions to cover the inevitable collapse of your ad revenue.

4. If you must sell internet advertising don't charge much for it, because it isn't worth much. Any newspaper that has been running a web site for more than a few years knows that selling those ads is easy, the first time. After a while though, the advertiser realizes his electronic ad works fractionally as well because it now competes with every thing else on the internet and that number borders on infinity.

5. Be patient. If you're like me you've tried a dozen models and attended a dozen seminars by dozens of internet experts and the only thing we all agree on is that none of us

knows how to make this work for newspapers. Sooner or later someone will figure it out and as Bear Bryant would say, I might not have the first successful newspaper internet site but I won't have the third.

Tom Mullen has owned and managed more than a dozen community newspapers for close to 20 years. In that time he has helped create nearly



Paper boy
Tom Mullen

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in the Press Pass for free!**

Email mtnews@mtnewspaper.com

Three MNA webinars set for May

There are three more specialized Montana Newspaper Association webinars on tap for May.

The webinars, conducted by Online Media Campus, are held monthly in conjunction with the Southern Newspapers Publishers Association and the Iowa Newspaper Foundation.

The webinars provide comprehensive online training to newspaper staffs at a low, affordable cost, in a convenient time slot.

The sessions are available at noon on the day of the presentation and

last an hour. They are a combination of computer presentations and telephone conference.

The cost is \$35 per session.

To enroll, visit www.onlinemediacampus.com. Complete details about each webinar are included on the site, as well as registration information.

This month's webinars include:

Advertising 201 "THE PITCH"

**Building a Presentation
May 6**

Noon-1 p.m. MDT

Presenters- Steve Fisher • Cindi Gyger

Producing Video for the Web and Monetizing It May 14

Noon-1 p.m. MDT

Presenter - Thomas Ritchie

Using Twitter to Rule in Breaking News May 20

Noon-1 p.m. MDT

Presenter - Steve Buttry

Hutchison, Martinsens to be honored at MNA convention

The Montana Newspaper Association board of directors have elected a veteran Montana newspaperman and a dedicated newspaper couple to receive the Association's top honors.

Irvin (Irv) Hutchison, longtime owner and publisher of the Liberty County Times, was selected to receive the Hall of Fame designation. Melody and Jeff Martinsen of the Choteau Acantha were named to receive the Master Editor/Publisher Award.

Both honors will be presented during the Saturday afternoon luncheon at the 125th annual Montana Newspaper Association convention on June 19 at the Bozeman Holiday Inn.

Hutchison, born in 1923 in Chester, started hauling newspapers and mail to an from the post office and the Great Northern depot.

Soon he started work at the Shelby Promoter and later to the Conrad Independent. In 1946, with a partner, Hutchison purchased the Liberty County Times in his hometown. He later bought out his partner and

for over 40 years was the primary force in this community paper. He also found plenty of time to be an active community leader and dedicate countless hours to the MNA, including serving as president and receiving the Master Editor/Publisher Award in 1993.

He was a major force in getting the County Printing Board established through the Montana State Legislature in the late 1960s. Irv died in 2008.

Jeff and Melody Martinsen will receive the Master Editor/Publisher Award for their continuing service to their community and the newspaper industry over more than 20 years of ownership of the Choteau Acantha.

They purchased the paper on July 1, 1990.

A true working partnership, Melody has been an instrumental champion of Right to Know and Freedom of Information issues.

They have both served as president of the Montana Newspaper Association and Jeff has also been

president of the Montana Newspaper Advertising service. Melody served as MNA president in 1996 and Jeff in 2006.

In fact, Jeff actually served essentially two terms, including 2005, after the then president was transferred out of state.

Both Melody and Jeff have been generous with their time, knowledge and experience when it comes to the Montana Newspaper Association and the University of Montana Journalism School. Melody has also been active board member of the Montana Freedom of Information Hotline.

They were nominated by Brian and LeAnne Kavanagh, publishers of the Shelby Promoter, Cut Bank Pioneer Press, Glacier Reporter and The Valerian.

MNA President Andy Malby noted the board's pleasure in being able to elect both Irv Hutchisons and Melody and Jeff Martinsen to their respective honors.

"They are truly representative of what is best in Montana journalism, in years past and today," he said.

Watch out for increasing liability when editing online comments

By Anna Patrick
Bulletin Correspondent
New England Newspaper
and Press Association

As newspapers put more copy online and increase readership through user-generated content such as comments and reader submissions, questions increasingly arise about Internet liability.

Robert A. Bertsche, a partner with the Prince Lobel Glovsky & Tye LLP law firm in Boston, led a discussion at an "Internet and Media Law" workshop Feb. 6 at the New England Newspaper and Press Association Convention to help resolve Internet-related legal problems.

The majority of the 24 people who attended were reporters who came to learn how to monitor and moderate reader-submitted content on their publications' Web sites. The discussion focused on handling comments that contain potentially defamatory material.

"The (federal) Communications Decency Act says you are not liable for comments on your site. That's the law," Bertsche said.

The act guarantees immunity to online publishers for any content from a third-party that is posted on a publisher's Web site, such as user comments. If publishers edit or remove posts because they do not feel comfortable with offensive content, they are still guaranteed immunity unless the edits alter the meaning of the content.

Bertsche said that under no circumstances should moderators rewrite questionable comments – users' comments should either be left intact, or taken down completely to avoid potentially changing the meaning of a comment, leading to

liability.

"Once you edit it enough, it is no longer the third party's content; it's your content," Bertsche said.

One way to guarantee consistency in online policy is for editors to make their guidelines on moderation clear in the terms of service posted on their Web sites, so users know the rules. Bertsche said terms-of-service agreements are "more enforceable"

if written in simple language rather than legal jargon.

If editors choose to moderate, they need to ensure that offensive content does not slip through, Bertsche said.

"Once you've said you're going to monitor, and you do a lousy job at it, then you should be liable," Bertsche said.

Mark it down!



MNA's 125th annual CONVENTION

Bozeman Holiday Inn June 17-19, 2010

Family fun!

National speakers!

Relevant break-out sessions!

Tour to historic Sacajawea Inn for Friday auction!

**Watch for complete details
in next week's MNA mailing!**