

The background is a light blue, textured surface with faint, scattered letters and symbols, including 'O', 'b', '\$', 'C', 'E', 'T', 'B', 'U', 'A', 'T', 'O', 'B', 'E', 'C', 'A', 'T'. A faint clock face is also visible in the background.

Implementing the Impact Study:

What small newspapers are doing

The Small Newspapers committee thanks Mary Nesbitt and staff at the Readership Institute, Northwestern University, for help in organizing this project and producing the report. Thanks also to Kevin Wilcox, communications director at ASNE.

Cause for optimism... and dismay

It is hard to imagine a newspaper editor who would ignore a major fire in the heart of downtown.

The editor would send reporters and photographers. The front page would be redesigned to display the best pictures. The reporters would be encouraged to include detail and drama in their writing.

Ignore it? No way. Readers expect us to cover this kind of news.

Even the smallest papers would go after the story with all the resources they could muster.

Something just as important to our newspapers and their readers — something clear as a fire — was presented to newspapers three years ago. The Impact study from the Readership Institute at Northwestern University outlined a series of specific steps newspapers could take to gain and retain readers.

“Content emphasis, service excellence and brand relevance have great potential, separately, to build readership. Together, as part of a newspaper’s readership strategy they have tremendous potential,” John Lavine, director of the institute, told the ASNE convention.

The report, based on research with 37,000 consumers and 100 daily newspapers of all sizes, was greeted with enthusiasm by editors and publishers. Some said it was the best roadmap ever provided to combat the problems of declining circulation and readership.

Three years later, the ASNE Small Newspapers Committee, working with the Institute, sought to determine how well the newsrooms at the nation’s smaller newspapers were using the research results and how-to-do-it guidelines to serve readers.

The bottom line summary of the committee’s work is cause both for optimism and dismay. We found that half of the newspapers assessed are doing little to implement basic practices that are proven to work with readers. Another 30-40% are doing some, while about 10% consistently demonstrate many approaches and techniques that connect with readers.

If they can do it, so can the rest of us.



DAVID B. OFFER

EXECUTIVE EDITOR,
CENTRAL MAINE
NEWSPAPERS

2003-04 CHAIR,
ASNE SMALL
NEWSPAPERS
COMMITTEE

HOW THE ASSESSMENT WAS DONE

The committee asked the Institute to pull a proportionate, random sample of 100 small newspapers with circulation below 25,000 and between 25,000 and 50,000. We wrote to each editor and asked him/her to submit copies from four pre-determined 2003 dates: Monday May 19; Wednesday May 28, Friday June 6, and Sunday June 15 (or Saturday June 14 if the newspaper does not publish on Sundays.)

Six members of the committee met with Mary Nesbitt, managing director of the Institute, for two days at Northwestern to discuss the reader-based criteria for excellence and to review the newspapers.

Those criteria included:

- A mix of content and emphasis on front pages and throughout the paper
- Stories about ordinary people
- In-paper promotion
- Content that was easy to read and papers that were easy to navigate (refers, clear sectioning, etc)
- A variety of writing styles
- Clarity at the individual story level

(A list of the criteria that form the basis of judgment is on page XX. We suggest that editors can use it as a starting point to periodically assess their own newspapers.)

It is important to note what this project was not.

This was not a contest nor was it an effort to find “the best” small papers. We chose a random selection method to get an unbiased representation of newspapers of this size. Rather than ask editors to self-select issues to submit, we stipulated certain dates to gain a realistic picture of what they typically present to readers. The purpose of the whole exercise was to determine if specific research ideas were taking hold in small newspapers; and to find good examples of execution to share with editors.

WHAT WE FOUND

Our first conclusion is alarming and disappointing.

Measured by any scale there are many very bad small newspapers in this country where the fundamentals of clear writing, photography, design and presentation are lacking.

Fully half of the sampled newspapers fell into this disappointing pile.

This finding presents an opportunity for outreach by ASNE.

Once past that gloomy finding, the committee agreed on 11 newspapers that provide examples of how to use some of the techniques the Institute research shows will gain and retain readership.

Committee members then interviewed the editors of several of these papers about their readership efforts.

HERE ARE A FEW EXCERPTS

The Sun (Bremerton WA) involves “ordinary people” with frequent invitations for readers to submit stories and photos and questions about topics such as “where’s your favorite place to bowl?”

The Daily Camera (Boulder, CO) had several articles about “ordinary people,” — enough to make it clear that this was a strategy, not an accident. That was confirmed in an interview with editor Sue Deans.

The Portsmouth Herald (NH) developed a readership-driven content mix, including more short vignettes and an active writing style. Then-editor Mike Connelley described an effort to get active language. “For the copy desk we grew a verb garden,” he said. “One day we threw verbs at a wall. It worked. We came up with dozens and dozens of new and different and exciting verbs that convinced copy editors to think differently about their heads and not use the same old tired headline verbs.”

The Lawrence Journal-World (KS) emphasizes in-paper promotion and connections with readers through interactivity with its web site as well as a style of writing and graphic presentation that reflects the goals of the Institute’s research.

The Chronicle Tribune (Marion OH) focuses on “ordinary people” with stories on community champions, people who do good in the community.

Each of these newspapers has adopted many of the approaches stemming from the research. In interviews, some editors said they were not motivated by the Impact study but rather by the old-fashioned goal of connecting with and serving readers. Whatever the reason, they offer approaches editors of small newspapers may find helpful.

The interviews with these editors, and samples of readership generating techniques from several other newspapers, follow.

THE SUN, BREMERTON, WASH.
 31,500 DAILY; 36,000 SUNDAY
 OWNER: SCRIPPS HOWARD NEWSPAPERS
 EDITOR: SCOTT WARE

BY VICKEY WILLIAMS,
 DIRECTOR, THE LEARNING NEWSROOM

The staff of the Sun packs a lot of utility into each edition. A reader gets the feeling this paper knows interesting and useful things and wants you to know them, too.

The Sun apparently also wants to hear from you. Its pages are peppered liberally with invitations to submit stories and photos, and policy boxes to explain formats for contributions to the various newsroom departments.

These are folks who probably nod in greeting to strangers on the street. Direct address is common in columns by staffers, free-lancers and community correspondents. And feedback from readers is encouraged through footers citing contact information on most every story or column.

The helpful, approachable tone in one issue extended to a front-page box telling readers the paper had scheduled work on its voicemail system that day.

But perhaps the Sun's most alluring quality is its non-traditional front page. With only rare exceptions, 1A is all-local, and reflects a flair for story selection sufficient to make an outsider wonder, "What are those editors thinking in their budget meetings?"

What they're thinking, it seems, is readership.

Editor Scott Ware said the practices in place today represent an evolution at the Sun, an extension of a drive launched in the mid-'90s to make the paper more attuned to readers. It's an effort Ware has tried to further since coming on staff in August 2001.

Both he and Managing Editor Jeff Brody have been to presentations on the Readership Institute's Impact Study findings. But Ware said he can't attribute what seem to be some very reader-focused habits to any inspiration they received there. In fact, they see a long row ahead and were anxious for Publisher Mike Levi's newspaper-wide launch into the Eight Imperatives for Growing Readership in 2004.

"We consider ourselves to be at a good starting point," Ware said.. "We're gearing up to begin to plumb a lot of the best practices" for growing readership.



All-local front pages are the norm at the Sun.

“We’ve been going down this path for several years but I think there are many more steps we can take. Not all of our efforts have been fully developed.”

Bremerton is basically a suburb to Seattle separated by the Puget Sound, Ware says, within a metro area, but a little more isolated than the contiguous neighborhoods. Print competition includes three metros and a string of non-daily newspapers. When the Sun began working to increase interactions with readers seven or eight years ago after feeling pressure from the weeklies for market share, its efforts yielded a portrait of a diverse audience.

“It’s a mix of people intensely interested in local and some more interested in Seattle because of their commutes,” he said. With active and retired military personnel, young professionals, conservatives and hard-core liberals, it is a readership with a high appetite for nation and world news and “a wide range of accessory opinions,” Ware said. “It was too easy for some people to get a metro paper for the breadth and depth and then the weekly for the local-local.”

So the paper upped its emphasis on community-focused content and expanded the editorial board to include three or four readers. Likewise, the reporting staff honed in on story subjects and writing styles intended to make their work more relevant to readers.

A year ago, the editors began building a corps of non-journalist columnists who provide a daily anchor piece for the opinion page. The reader contingent on the editorial board now stands at six, or half the panel.

The changes have paid off.

Ware cited his most recent market survey showing 40 percent of the population in the Sun’s core market considers it the primary source of local news. His closest weekly competitor won that label from 3 percent of respondents, which Ware said is down from 30 percent as recently as seven years ago.

A look at a few editions points up practices that likely led to the improvement. Consider this 1A lineup: Lead story on city official who hears “dangerous dog” appeals leaving her post due to the heavy volume of cases; anchor on a team of volunteer conservationists raising and releasing salmon; story on unity celebration in a community that had seen the distribution of white supremacist literature a few months earlier; story and schedule of summer road projects. The emphasis on “ordinary people” news is striking.

Ware said such pages are the outcome of initiatives that started with the reporting staff.

“You sit in news meetings and talk about why a story is important. Sometimes you know why they’re important - their significance or context - and then it never shows up in the story. We’re putting a lot of emphasis on making sure that



it does. Some days we hit, some we miss. But it's one of our mantras.”

Some reporters have even taken to putting an “impact statement” on the budget lines for their articles. “We’ve said, ‘We can’t make a good decision on your story without it being stated for us,’” Ware said.

Featurized leads and narrative writing are great tools, Ware said, but editors have also seen improvement by simply stressing that reporters explicitly state the significance of the vote, study, debate or other bureaucratic action making news that day.

“Authoritative writing is our bedrock,” he said. “That’s a reason I advocate beat reporting. For a time, people suggested rotating reporters around beats to get voices from a less imbedded perspective. We push for developing an expertise and then worry about working around traps such as writing for sources.”

Other head-turning highlights we saw in the pages of the Sun:

- A free-standing nation/world section daily, complete with a second opinion page for syndicated columnists.

- A robust military page — with its own letters section and “This Date in History” feature — that Ware says acknowledges the area’s large military population but also allows for prominent inside play for wire pieces on the U.S. Navy’s involvement in the war in Iraq.

- Page designs that stress utility, with lots of refers to related stories or additional sources of information, along with infoboxes to help readers who want to take action on the topic. Elements sometimes seen as wallpaper elsewhere — such as sports agate pages and entertainment calendars — shine, thanks to extra attention to organization and display.

- Where appropriate, a light-spirited tone in crisp, catchy headlines; “By the numbers” infoboxes that impart facts in a fun way; weekly questions for readers such as “Where’s your favorite place to bowl?”

- A seven-day listing of national commentary page columnists, so occasional readers won’t miss a favorite.

- Locally produced columns on fitness, nature activities, books, travel and other topics more often left to the wires, thanks to the Sun’s stable corps of free-lancers having knowledge in these areas.



A refer stripped across the bottom of the editorial page points readers to a second opinion page in another section.

SEE PAGE B2 FOR OUR LINEUP OF NATION & WORLD COMMENTARY

MONDAY

Jay Ambrose
Clarence Page

TUESDAY

Ellen Goodman
George Will

WEDNESDAY

Michelle Malkin
Richard Reeves

THURSDAY

Molly Ivins
William F. Buckley Jr.

FRIDAY

David Broder
Jim Hoagland

SATURDAY

Thomas Sowell
Susan Estrich

Another feature more commonly seen in newspapers with larger circulation and greater resources is its three-day-a-week Road Warrior column for commuters.

Just as competition from the weeklies pushed the Sun to increase its focus on its consumers, a space crunch not uncommon for small papers led the paper to re-invent the column in its current reader-friendly format, Ware said.

County government reporter Travis Baker has produced articles aimed at helping readers commute smarter since 1996. "Travis is a fanatic about it," Ware said. "He's old-school; a nitty-gritty type of guy who likes to do dailies." When space was forcing unfortunate cuts on Baker's 20-inch stories, readers won out with three shorter, more timely pieces each week.

The experience level of his reporting staff is mixed, Ware said, with a few veterans of 20-plus years and others joining the staff in the last couple of years.

"It's a staff very hungry to improve its writing," Ware said, "It's not like we're trying to lead a reluctant group."

As in every small paper, his staff would benefit from additional positions, Ware said, "But every newsroom environment is what you make of it. You need to create a newsroom where the feeling is: this is a special place. The way you excel is for people to want to excel."

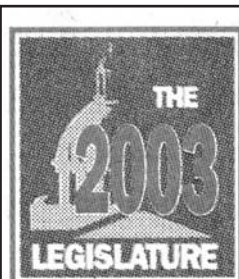
Ware said when he went to a Readership Institute workshop in Portland, he went in with a skeptical viewpoint but left with much greater respect for the Impact Study and its messages.

"Nothing about this involves dumbing down," he said. "Compelling writing has never gone out of vogue."

Vinson back on the job

With a revamped flight deck and fresh off a two-week stay in Guam, USS Carl Vinson got back to being an aircraft carrier Thursday.

The Bremerton-based ship began seven days of flight operations after nearly three weeks of maintenance work. The carrier will have been deployed for 10 months by the time it returns in November. **See Page A9.**



INSIDE: A3

■ Bills to improve watershed planning and solidify municipal water rights appear unlikely to pass.

CORRECTIONS

LEFT OUT: Two prep track athletes were left out of the weekend's listing of state qualifiers at the Class 4A district meet in Tacoma: Daniel Frederick of Olympic (4:21.03, sixth in the boys 1,600) and CK's Joyce Geronimo (11.1

feet, 9 inches, seventh in the javelin). **WRONG DAY:** North Kitsap Little League's 50th anniversary will be 1 p.m. Sunday at Snider Field. The information was incorrectly reported in Neighbors on Tuesday.

BASEBALL B4 • SCOREBOARD B5

Devils take control with Game 5 rout
NHL ■ B3



SPORTS



Funny Cide frenzy hits fever pitch
BELMONT STAKES ■ B7

THE SUN ■ SERVING WEST SOUND ■ FRIDAY, JUNE 6, 2003 ■ SECTION B

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Husky coach admits to gambling

■ UW athletic director Barbara Hedges vows to take the matter 'very seriously,' leading to speculation that Rick Neuheisel's ouster may be imminent.

The Associated Press
SEATTLE — University of Washington officials met Thursday to discuss the future of football coach Rick Neuheisel, a day after he acknowledged breaking NCAA rules by betting on men's bas-

ketball tournaments the past two years.
No decision was immediately announced, and UW Athletic Department spokesman Jim Daves said Thursday evening the school had no comment.
Lee Huntsman, the university's interim president, was in

meetings with athletics officials and did not immediately return a phone call from The Associated Press seeking comment.
The Seattle Times reported Thursday that Neuheisel participated in informal NCAA basketball pools the past two

years. Two NCAA investigators and one from the Pac-10 Conference questioned him Wednesday after receiving a tip that he put up \$5,000 and won about \$20,000 by picking Maryland in 2002, the newspaper reported.
NCAA spokesman Jeff Howard told the AP on Thursday that he could not comment about or confirm the investigation. The NCAA manual specifies that coaches, staff mem-

bers and athletes may not knowingly "solicit or accept a bet on any intercollegiate competition for any item (e.g., cash, shirt, dinner) that has tangible value."
Emerging from a meeting with the investigators, Neuheisel acknowledged to The Times that his college coaching career could be on the line.
See **NEUHEISEL** on B8

MORE INSIDE

■ Is this it for Rick?
■ Chronicaling Neuheisel's brief time at the UW
See **Page B8**

The Sun makes liberal use of guiding devices, including pointers to inside content.

Ware also credits his paper's contributing writers with playing a significant role in re-focusing The Sun's content toward readers.

"When it comes to community columnists, it doesn't matter where interesting writing comes from. There are lots of things we can gripe about — we don't have enough reporters or photographers to do as much as we want to. We could spend a lot of time talking about it. But the question is, How committed are you to writing the kind of stories readers want, with whatever resources you have?"

DAILY CAMERA, BOULDER, COLO.
34,000 DAILY, 40,000 SUNDAY
OWNER: SCRIPPS HOWARD NEWSPAPERS
EDITOR: SUE DEANS

BY BRIAN COOPER
EXECUTIVE EDITOR, DUBUQUE (IOWA) HERALD-TELEGRAPH



The Daily Camera offers a robust mix of topics, writing approaches and entry points on its front page.

The Daily Camera was a quality newspaper long before the Readership Institute research. However, its editors saw the project as a way to focus its efforts and move the paper to a higher level.

Though slowed somewhat during senior executive transition — editor and publisher Colleen C. Conant retired Aug. 31 — the Daily Camera is continuing with content changes and other enhancements to sharpen its reader focus.

The Daily Camera used a team approach. At its peak, roughly half the newspaper's 200 employees were involved.

Scripps editors and Daily Camera editors had long been interested in the Readership Institute findings, but the project gained momentum after Conant returned from the 2003 American Society of Newspaper Editors convention.

Employees in various departments at many levels of the organizational chart reviewed the initial report and then joined more than a half-dozen committees. The groups were divided according to the study's categories, including content, branding and culture. Deputy City Editor Curtis Hubbard admits that "a little arm-twisting" was required to round out committee rosters. "The people who were interested stuck with it," Hubbard said, while some others faded from the process.

The committees developed recommendations for the Daily Camera's directors, who then formulated an imple-

mentation plan in late summer. Conant's retirement shortly afterward was a "wild card," Hubbard said.

Former Daily Camera staffer Sue Deans, previously assistant managing editor of the Rocky Mountain News, was named editor in September. Gregory M. Anderson, advertising director at The Commercial Appeal in Memphis, arrived as publisher in late October.

"The good news for us is that Sue agreed with most of the recommendations," Hubbard said. Some of the recommendations have been implemented. Others were deferred until Anderson gets up to speed and still others were linked to the next budget process.

Before Boulder, Deans was familiar with the Readership Institute through her involvement in ASNE. "I'm a believer in it," she said. "It was interesting to me to arrive in the middle of the process," said Deans, who said she reported to Boulder with her own "list" of things she wanted to implement. An increased emphasis on local news topped the list. However, she found many of those items already being considered. "There is a lot of meat in what they put together," she said. "The only question is how much we can get done and how quickly."

The Daily Camera identified these content directions:

- Shorter stories.
- Brighter headlines.
- Fewer jumps.
- Increased emphasis on local news, including relocation of the local section.
- In-paper promotion. Space on Page 1A tells readers about something coming in the next day's paper. A Page 2A house ad highlights content planned for upcoming issues.

■ More tie-in between the paper's print and online products. The paper increased content promotion and complementary Web content, such as running the full text of a document reported in the print product.

- More "go and do" information in rails and sidebars.
- More stories about "real people." These days, a reader phoning The Daily Camera with a story suggestion is likely to receive better attention and follow-up.
- More localization of wire stories.

One of the Daily Camera's most recent and innovative enhancements is "Newstracker," a feature adapted from those carried in Milwaukee, Albany and Seattle. Designed as a sidebar, though it can be a stand-alone, "Newstracker" gives an at-a-glance summary of an ongoing issue. Information is subdivided into "Last we knew," "Latest" and "Next." Let's say that the local Planning Board doesn't

The image shows a page from a newspaper's "MEMORIES" section, dated Sunday, January 12, 2008. The page is divided into several columns and sections. At the top, it says "COUPLES • BIRTHS • GOOD NEWS" and "MEMORIES" in large letters. Below that, it says "SUNDAY CAMERA". The page is filled with small articles, many with photos. The sections include "ENGAGEMENT", "WEDDINGS", and "GOOD NEWS". Each article is a short notice about a local event, such as a wedding or a birth. The text is small and dense, typical of a newspaper's "local news" or "community" section. The overall layout is clean and organized, with clear headings for each section.

Milestone events and accomplishments fill the back cover of Sunday's Living & Arts.

decide anything on a controversial rezoning for a Wal-Mart. Instead of taking up space and readers' time with a story that is 95 percent background and 5 percent new information, "Newstracker" gives the update concisely.

"I think one of the most powerful of the Readership Institute strategies is the one calling for 'more stories about people like me,'" Deans said. "Increasing our emphasis on those stories seems to be resonating with our readers. We are looking for more stories about life in Boulder. One good example is an occasional series about groups that meet regularly for coffee in the morning. I hear readers say they notice these different stories and they like it."

"We hope to create a beat built around "life" — things that don't happen in a government building or at a meeting. Later we hope to use a similar approach for our University of Colorado coverage, looking at aspects of life on the CU campus from binge drinking to whether students read to fashion trends."

The Daily Camera identified the need to have regular, objective measures of its progress. It conducted a content audit, which will serve as a baseline. Hubbard said ongoing assessment is a must. "It's easy to get back into a rut," he said, adding that the biggest obstacle is "sticking with it."

Deans agrees. "If we look at our readership a year from now we should see a change, but it's all anecdotal right now. My hope is that it translates into increased circulation through increased "buzz" in the community. After all, it just takes one good story every day to get people reading us — and if we have enough good stories, we hope folks will be running to the front door every morning, eager to see what we have to tell them."

PORTSMOUTH (NH) HERALD
15,000 DAILY; 21,000 SUNDAY
OWNER: OTTAWAY NEWSPAPERS
FORMER EXECUTIVE EDITOR: MIKE CONNELLEY

BY DAVE ZWEIFEL
THE CAPITAL TIMES, MADISON, WISC.

Question: When did your paper first learn of the results of the Readership Institute study?

Answer: I was still at Gannett and I saw the survey results right after they were published and put on-line. I also had a friend at Northwestern who told me about it. At first I didn't believe they could have had 37,000 respondents. I decided to take it seriously because the survey demonstrated a real sense to meet the needs of readers and it made you think like a customer and how we as a paper could be more relevant to them. I took it to my publisher and introduced it to the directors (ad, circulation, etc.) at a department head meeting. By using the study we could learn how to market the paper. We wound up all

working together and I had unconditional support from the top.

Question: What would you cite as some of the distinguishing characteristics of your paper and its market?

Answer: We were a typical horizontal-design paper, stories across the top, few entry points, modular design, muscular fonts which gave us limited ability to use words as entry points. In short, it was nothing to make us different, it wasn't an engaging paper. It wasn't unusual for us to get 20 or so complaints from readers about the paper in a single day.

I had gone to API and had looked into the maestro story telling ideas, so I had some ammo and back-ground for change.

Question: How about other readership work in the areas of service, brand and culture? Have you seen success there?

Answer: We developed a brand as the “voice of the Seacoast,” developed in-paper marketing promos, tried to give us more of a face and personality. We not only worked to bring more people to the surface in our stories, along with page one promos for what's inside and what's coming tomorrow, but made sure that other departments in the newspaper were aware of the readership study and what we're all trying to do.

Question: From your perspective, what readership response do you believe was the most innovative or radical? What brought the strongest results and the strongest reader response?

Answer: We turned Page 2 into a stand-alone forum page, opened it for local people to write columns or stories that were beyond the newspaper, made it less formal and more free to give it pure personality. We have a lot of success with those columns, playing off hard news, giving others a forum. In fact, we took the first three pages of the paper — including page one — and gave them personality. Page 3 became almost a second cover of news, typically harder news than page one, but it reinforces to readers that they're getting more. We began getting reader response almost from the beginning. Typically, phone calls from peo-



The Portsmouth Herald treats local celebrations with enthusiasm. Allfinishers in the annual 10K races merit a mention.



ple saying they like the changes, the average Joe obviously noticed them. They would call to say why they liked the changes.

Question: An overall impression from the committee's review was that papers are re-instituting projects from the past in efforts to regain closer ties with readers — community columnists, reader submissions, etc. Have you seen this to be true?

Answer: Definitely. The Page 2 forum just one example. Giving the paper personality. Better event schedules in news and in sports. Readers are getting to know that they're welcome in the paper, that it's for them, not for the newsroom.

Question: Have you tried to re-define what is news, or have you re-defined your approach to news as you went through this process? How did your reporters take to this idea?

Answer: The first thing we did was decide there would be no more two-source stories of 15 to 20 inches, which it seemed every reporter had been trained to do. We weren't going to cover every car accident. We decided to get our stories more into the culture of the community. To consider short vignettes as important as any story. Reporters were asked whether quotes they were using were relevant — did they need them. We worked to get reporters to justify paragraphs and quotes, to start thinking about the reader — would the reader care about that quote or find it useful? Changing the newsroom culture wasn't easy, but reporters, especially the younger ones, would find they could learn to wrap themselves around the concept. We had to slow down the process a bit and convince reporters that we didn't need 15-20 inches from every meeting they covered or that they had to turn in copy whether it was useful to the reader or not. Some got the idea in 2-3 weeks, some of the older hands took months. But we had to break down the barrier of what they had been taught in school or on other jobs. It must have worked OK because we had only one of 68 staff people leave during this time.

We made our TV grids easier to read and added color to them. Frankly, we didn't waste our time on younger readers. We're not going to get them anyhow until they get older, you're wasting your time on them. We decided to treat our older reader well. Pay attention to the existing reader. Make him feel good about getting and staying with the paper.

At the same time we became more edgy with our calendar. Put together goofy captions, tried to act like an alternative paper when we could. So if a younger reader did in fact see us, they'd think these guys are "in."

Question: Are you seeing circulation or readership gains that you can conclusively attribute to these changes?

Answer: We did see gains, in fact circulation shot up about a year ago and has leveled out since. We don't discount at the Herald, so it's true circulation and while other papers lost circulation we at least stayed even.

Question: What type of measurement did you try to apply to your work?

Answer: I pasted up on the wall examples of things we really liked as we got into this, something we called "make the walls talk." We emphasized the positive, rather than dwell on complaining about things that weren't done right. I tried to not wear my title, editor, but to refer to "us" as a group. We asked everyone — circulation, advertising, the newsroom — to make us better and we'd always ask what we could have done better. We'd look at story entry points, how we were helping the reader navigate through the paper, how daily design could be more engaging.

Question: As you tried to change habits and accomplish this work, what lessons did you learn? What degree of effort did it — and does it take — to keep it moving?

Answer: Frankly, it was a lot of work. I talked individually to each member of each department so that everyone got to know how the changes would affect them. I had all 68 people give me a description of what it is they did every day and then I wrote an action plan for all of them. That alone took about three weeks. But the plans told everyone how the changes would apply to each one of them. I made certain everyone knew there was no hidden agenda.

The action plans changed some people's duties and added some. For instance, the sports editor

Why Bush isn't popular on campus

If one were to visit a college campus, it wouldn't be uncommon to see banners hanging in dorm windows saying: "No war in Iraq," or "Bush cares little about the average American."

But if you were to ask an American 35 or older what he or she thinks about the president, chances are the words "heroic" and "integrity" would be used to describe the country's 43rd commander in chief.

Why does just under half the American population (48 percent) between the ages of 18 and 24, who are either college graduates or are currently enrolled, look at the president as an uncompassionate individual, who fails to see the world in anything besides black and white, while a majority of our elders positively view the president as a military juggernaut whose religious beliefs provide our nation with a sense of moral clarity?

For those in Generation Y, it isn't hard to see the resentment for the president's economic, foreign policy and environmental decisions.

Even George H.W. Bush, who was not admired for his handling of the economy, and may have lost his job because of it, still saw a growth of 52,000 jobs per month.

According to two credible publications, USA Today and The Nation, in just the past year alone, the president has already accumulated a national deficit in excess of \$300 billion. What does this mean for the men and women of Generation Y? It means more competition for jobs, the dreaded possibility of having to move back in with mom and dad and having to settle for lower wages if one is lucky enough to even find a job. Other young men and women must also cope with the skyrocketing costs for health care, which contributes to the fact that a quarter of our population is uninsured.

Other men and women my age may also harbor resentment toward the president because of the nature of his unilaterally preemptive foreign policy in

Iraqi people. A majority of those who shared their views with me felt the United States has crossed the line as conquerors of the ravished nation. One acquaintance of mine said the following:

"On TV there are reports of Iraqis without electricity, Iraqis without clean water. If that isn't enough, their historical museums were looted, one Iraqi airport was reportedly nicknamed George W. Bush International, and the administration appears to be playing an influential role in who will lead Iraq in the selection of their new leader. I question our nation's true motives."

Others I talked to said we are quickly tarnishing our relationships with important allies such as France, Russia and our over-emerging trade partner China.

Earth there would be no humanity; is that what we want? Are we too cynical of our government? Is it simply because 18- to 24-year-olds tend to be more liberal than our elders, that slightly less than 50 percent in this age bracket approve of the president? Maybe we are all a little cynical and yes, maybe we are all a little bit liberal, but when I see my father coming home stressed out from work, worrying about his future economic opportunities, or I hear about 23-year-old seniors not being able to find jobs, or I learn of an increasing homeless population who are neglected in favor of tax cuts for the wealthiest 1 or 2 percent of this nation, I have to ask myself, "Why?"

Why do people support this president and his policies? We are a determined group of individuals and to think that one administration could affect our future opportunities upsets me and should upset all the men and women of Generation Y.

In November of 2004, we will arrive at a crossroads which for America's youth could spell



Michael W. Lenz

Military dads miles away on Father's Day

Families anxious for the safe return of their loved ones

SEABROOK — Armed for the coast, fathers serving in the military overseas will be far from home for Father's Day.

Some, such as Lance Marine Sgt. J.J. Thoms, who arrives home in Hampton at the end of the month, will have to be satisfied with a late celebration. Others will be playing beat the clock to get home before the stock arrives.

Marine Sgt. Ian LeJeune and his wife, Vanessa, are expecting the birth of a boy on Oct. 12, according to LeJeune's mom. Bonnie LeJeune of Seabrook.

LeJeune, who is serving as a computer technician in Kuwait, doesn't know if he'll be back to the states in time for the birth.

He was originally told he'd be home in August, but was recently informed to plan to miss Thanksgiving dinner in Kuwait.

Vanessa and the couple's other two boys, Tyler James, 9, and Matthew, 2, are in San Diego, Calif., at Camp Pendleton.

"Vanessa had the boys' pictures done and sent them for Father's Day," LeJeune said. Ian opened the package early.

"(Vanessa) said, 'you were not supposed to open it until Father's Day,'" LeJeune said. "He said, 'I don't even know what day it is.'"

LeJeune and her husband, J. Richard LeJeune, last saw their son in January.

"We believe in miracles," she said. "My plan is to be there for the birth."

Army 1st Class Howard Eaton Jr. and his wife, Angel, are expecting their first baby in August, according to Eaton's mom, Robin Eaton of Seabrook.



Marine Sgt. Ian LeJeune, pictured here on duty, won't be home to celebrate Father's Day this year.

Holiday highlights Bush family ties

On Father's Day George W. will be spending a lot of time with his dad

known as a woman who speaks for said. Bush's dad is regarded as more of a diplomat.

This Father's Day weekend, President Bush is spending lots of time with his diplomatic dad.

They are dining golf balls, trying to outsmart fish and, if history is a guide, taking part in light-hearted ribbing that has been going on for years.

In the summer of 1989, Bush, then the 42-year-old son of a president, drove his father to hang into a small cove off the Atlantic Ocean, which lays against the family's Maine compound at Walker's Point.

The elder Bush straggled to his trousers and plunged head-first into the chilly water, winning the day on a 11 putt.

Bush's four-night stay in Kennebunkport began on his father's 70th birthday.



President Bush holds up a striped bass that he caught while fishing with his father off the coast of Kennebunkport on Saturday.

needed to daily write a clever, fun teaser for the front page as part of the job. Another editor was charged with providing what's coming up tomorrow front-page promo. Responsibilities were passed around.

For the copy desk we grew a verb garden. One day we threw verbs at a wall. It worked. We came up with dozens and dozens of new and different and exciting verbs that convinced copy editors to think differently about their heads and not use the same old tired headline words.

Question: What other tools do you wish had been available or do you believe would still be valuable for helping papers tackle this kind of work?

Answer: What would be nice is a web page that would contain actual good example pages. Something that newspapers could contribute to, showing how their pages look and what they've found works. The whole front page could be posted as a PDF, making it easy to share ideas.

I think the most undervalued work on a newspaper in presentation and it would be so helpful to look at what has worked and not worked for others on a continuing basis. Maybe ASNE could provide such a service.

JOURNAL-WORLD; LAWRENCE,
18,500 DAILY; 19,000 SUNDAY
OWNERSHIP: SIMONS FAMILY
MANAGING EDITOR: RICHARD BRACK

BY T. WAYNE MITCHELL
EDITOR, ANDERSON (SC) INDEPENDENT-MAIL

Lawrence, Kan., is best known for the University of Kansas and its basketball Jayhawks, but in the world of small-market daily newspapers, it increasingly is known as the home of the Lawrence Journal-World.

The Journal-World, although not one of the 100 Impact newspapers studied by the Readership Institute, has immersed itself in the research and recommendations of the institute, not only in the newsroom, but also in other departments.

And beyond that, the family-owned company is a national leader in convergence. It operates online news, sports and entertainment sites, owns the local cable company, provides the only source of local television news through its 6News cable station, and provides both broadband Internet and local telephone service.

Lawrence is a community about 45 miles west of Kansas City on gently rolling terrain, east of the topography that spawned the term "flat as Kansas." Douglas County, in which it sits, has about 100,000 people; Lawrence has about 81,000. It is foremost a university community, but also is home to a Hallmark Cards manufacturing plant and software, testing and assessment firm NCS Pearson.

About 25 percent of adults in the county commute to work, either east to Kansas City or west to Topeka, the state capital. The metro newspapers from both cities are available in Lawrence. Recent census data shows that a majority of residents has lived in Lawrence fewer than five years; the community is heavily wired—about 80 percent have Internet service.

The newspaper, which has been owned by the Simons family since it was founded in 1891, has a circulation nearing 21,000. It is printed in one edition, usually with four daily sections. It typically is between 32 and 48 pages daily, with 60 or more on Sunday.

Richard Brack, managing editor of the Journal-World, said the newspaper's focus on the Readership Institute and its research was a gradual thing, beginning in late 2000:

Front page promotions are never stale. On some days, left, they promote multiple items, on others just one big blow-out feature, right. In another version, below, the above-mast display is minimal but a rail does the promotional heavy-lifting.

“Some of us had been picking up bits and pieces of the research in the trades for awhile, then from the institute’s web site. We got a boost in July 2001, when our news editor attended an American Press Institute seminar that included a session on the survey, presented by Mary Nesbitt. In December 2001, I heard Orage Quarles at a regional AP meeting; he spoke passionately about the importance of readership and the survey, and that stoked the fire a bit more.”

Brack said the research has helped him re-define his approach to news, but the newspaper always had practiced community journalism with a local bent:

“The Journal-World always has emphasized getting ‘real people’ into its stories and telling its readers how ‘news’ will affect them. From that standpoint, our editors have just re-emphasized the need for such reporting.”

Initially, he focused on the research’s low-hanging fruit — adding in-paper promotion, tweaking presentation and improving the obituaries.

“Soon, though, the general manager (Ralph Gage) got turned on to the research, and the focus very quickly was company wide.” Brack said. “At this point, advertising, circulation, customer service, news — all of us are thinking about readership initiatives as we make decisions.”



The Classified opener is classy and attractive, while a large, easy-to-read map locates all garage sales.



Brack sees changes that have occurred in both the service and culture areas. In circulation, home delivery carriers have long been charged with delivering the paper on time, bagged and on the porch, but “the research has helped us to understand the importance of it and to work harder to ensure our service routinely blows away the competition,” he said.

The newspaper also has worked at breaking down walls between departments. A monthly meeting now brings together managers from circulation, advertising, the business office, production, marketing, news and upper management to share news, talk about content issues and ideas, or to discuss problems that may have solutions outside the news department, he said.

The company has used a training program that brings together employees from all departments to spend a week learning what goes on in all the departments.

“Through all of that, we’ve lost a bit of the old defensive culture, I think, and are working much more cooperatively than in the past,” Brack said.

The Journal-World may not have as many walls to pierce as some newspapers

because of the intense focus on convergence. The company's newspaper, television and online journalists operate in the same newsroom and are connected by an intranet budgeting system that allows all to know what stories are being assigned and where they will appear in a newscast, online or in the newspaper.

"We are arguably the most converged operation in the nation," Brack said. "We sit side by side, organized by coverage area rather than medium. We share news plans every day, plan projects in cooperation with each other, and always are looking for ways to move the audience from television to print to online.

"It's not uncommon for TV reporters or online staffers to write for print, to see newspaper reporters presenting stories to the TV audience, or a reporter from one medium doing versions of the story for all three."

Brack said the company is cross-promoting constantly to give the audience news when and where they want it:

"For example, our online sports site pushed quarterly updates of KU football games to cell phones.... We offer a similar product for KU basketball, and will be using the technology to keep political junkies updated on breaking news from the Legislature this session."

Brack said reader response to the kinds of things the company is doing has been positive: "Maybe the strongest reader response comes through our efforts to get interactive."

Guest columns on the op-ed pages, solicitation of e-mail and the operation of online polls all have elicited good response, he said.

Perhaps the best reader response has been a rising circulation.

"Our monthly circulation has topped the previous year for 28 months now," he said. "Obviously we can't attribute it all to the Readership Institute imperatives, but I would say that intense cross-promotion, plus the imperatives, all are part of the mix—along with a growing community, good product, new approaches to multimedia, and a great crew in all departments," Brack said.

What changes based on the Readership Institute research are ahead for the Journal-World?

Brack said the newspaper soon will start doing content promotion for the same day and future days' newspapers within the classified ads. That will be done by the marketing person who is part of the advertising department but actually sits in the newsroom and is in charge of marketing all news products, as well as general image advertising.

The newspaper also is planning to start providing an area roundup of local government actions in a graphic format.

"We think people are really going to like that because we had fallen away from paying as much attention to area local governments as we once did," he said.



The lesson learned from the newspaper’s experience with the Readership Institute research is that “we’ve all just got to keep doing it, talking about it, thinking about it, scratching for new ideas and new ways to connect with readers.”

One area of the Readership Institute’s research that the Journal-World has not put as much focus on is the use and packaging of lifestyle/feature content. The newsroom has a fairly traditional organization with a city editor, business editor, sports editor and photo editor. But in place of an overall feature or lifestyle editor, the newspaper has an arts editor and an entertainment editor, both of whom also are writers.

In place of a designated feature/lifestyle section, the Journal-World has five themed sections during the week: 18 & Under, Food, Scene, Faith, and Arts & Living. The Monday and Thursday newspapers have no designated sections.

“We try to do a lot of lifestyle content and entertainment in the news sections,” he said, but some syndicated features and the comics float between sections.

The focus on convergence and the future takes resources, and the Journal-World appears to have more than many in its size category.

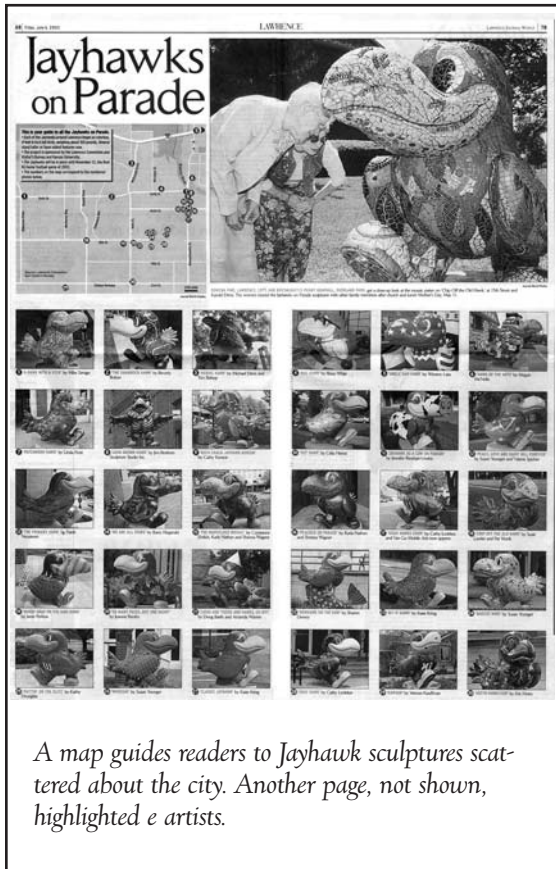
The newsroom has about 55 people in it—41 for the newspaper, 12 for 6News television and two for online content, Brack said.

Tom Eblen, retired general manager and news adviser to the Kansas University Daily Kansan and a former managing editor of the Kansas City Star, said the key to the Journal-World’s success is family ownership and its president, publisher and editor Dolph C. Simons Jr.

“He spends more on product and takes less in profit,” Eblen said.

Eblen gives much of the credit for the quality in the current Journal-World to Simons’ decision in 1993 to bring in 21-year Washington Post veteran Bill Snead as deputy editor to run the newsroom (Snead is now senior editor) and to general manager Gage.

Eblen said Simons made a commitment to outstanding performance, not only in print, but also on the cable channel and online.



A map guides readers to Jayhawk sculptures scattered about the city. Another page, not shown, highlighted the artists.

“What we have is a newspaper and a newspaper company that are trying new things, that are investing for the future rather than sucking out every last buck this year,” Eblen said.

Brack, who came to the newspaper from the Des Moines Register, said “This is a family that cares deeply about the community it covers. It devotes a lot of resources that would not be committed if it were a publicly owned company.”

COUNTY CRUNCH PART 1

Rainy day savings slips through county's hands

\$4.1 million in unbudgeted expenses drain surplus over 10-year period

THE SERIES: County officials have spent more than \$4.1 million in unbudgeted expenses over the past 10 years, draining the county's surplus. The series will explore how the money was spent and why.

TODAY: The county's surplus has been depleted by \$4.1 million in unbudgeted expenses over the past 10 years. The series will explore how the money was spent and why.

THE SURPLUS: The county's surplus has been depleted by \$4.1 million in unbudgeted expenses over the past 10 years. The series will explore how the money was spent and why.

CHANGES MADE: The county's surplus has been depleted by \$4.1 million in unbudgeted expenses over the past 10 years. The series will explore how the money was spent and why.

SELECT PARTNERS: The county's surplus has been depleted by \$4.1 million in unbudgeted expenses over the past 10 years. The series will explore how the money was spent and why.

APPROPRIATION TREND: The county's surplus has been depleted by \$4.1 million in unbudgeted expenses over the past 10 years. The series will explore how the money was spent and why.

MONDAY: The county's surplus has been depleted by \$4.1 million in unbudgeted expenses over the past 10 years. The series will explore how the money was spent and why.

COUNTY'S CLAIM SYSTEM RUNS ON HONOR SYSTEM: The county's surplus has been depleted by \$4.1 million in unbudgeted expenses over the past 10 years. The series will explore how the money was spent and why.

An investigation of chronic overspending by Grant County shows where the money went and who is responsible. The same day, a hard-hitting editorial demanded ~ fix it or resign.

Viewpoint

MARION CHRONICLE-TRIBUNE | WWW.CHRONICLE-TRIBUNE.COM | SUNDAY, JUNE 13, 2010 | A1

COUNTY CRUNCH PART 1

Fix it or resign

Time for business as usual to change in county government

It's not pretty, and with the start of budget hearings Monday, it's time for a change. No longer can department heads tuck in budgets with a wink and smile, assuming they'll come back for more money later. It's time to get serious about the county's financial future. The county's poor money management over the last 10 years means that the hardworking county employees likely will bear the brunt. Those elected officials in charge of various county departments say they're doing everything they can to avoid reducing or eliminating employees.

Problems in the Tri-County area are other alternatives.

This is what we expect, both during the budget hearings that start Monday and in county government in general.

- Department heads are going to have to be held accountable. Money that is not budgeted will have to be eliminated, too.
- Break the addition of additional appropriations.
- For too long, department heads have operated in an insular bubble, knowing they would get the county's permission to spend more money than they had budgeted. Sometimes, the requests were for legitimate emergency expenses. Frequently, and regrettably, they were for additional appropriations that were not in the county's budget.

It's time elected officials and department heads learn they can't play fast and loose with the public's money and that they have to pay attention to the way things are supposed to be done instead of the way they want them to be done.

As county auditor, Carmichael permitted rampant spending into the county's reserves to fund non-emergency purchases. She did it consistently behind the backs of the elected county government without proper authority. And, it appears, she conspired with others to keep information from some county officials who might have known the whole or all that.

Now, she essentially admits she didn't know what she was doing.

If she were still auditor, we would demand her resignation.

During the last county election, though, voters gave her a substantial victory. The government of the state is to be elected in the Grant County Council, which oversees the county's government.

Voters did so despite emotional news reports that an auditor she had failed to bring the books up to date. The county's financial records and better recognition in public, which started in 1998 at the Franklin Township trustee, paid all Carmichael — along with the rest of council — over a 10-year period in an attempt to manage county government more to take care of the view of the public and all elected officials. The results, even emotional statements have been left in the dark.

July Carmichael, who was county auditor for eight years, admitted to the Chronicle-Tribune editorial board recently that she would not bring matters up to public or put them in writing for fear she would be “held to it.” That's a total accountability, and Carmichael and the rest of the elected officials better get used to it.

CHRONICLE-TRIBUNE; MARION, OHIO
19,000 DAILY; 21,000 SUNDAY
OWNER: GANNETT CO.
FORMER EXECUTIVE EDITOR: JULIE METZGER

BY TERRY GREENBERG
EDITOR, THE PANTAGRAPH; BLOOMINGTON, IL

Juli Metzger became editor of the Daily Advertiser in Lafayette, Louisiana, in September 2003. Before that, she was editor of the Chronicle Tribune in Marion, Indiana – her native state. During her time in Marion, the paper won an APME award for public service for Moment of Truth, a project that addressed problems in the Marion area. Metzger also launched a number of content changes during her tenure.

Question: When did your paper first learn of the Readership Institute survey results?

Answer: The research started filtering through statewide organizations and that's where I heard about it. I was also aware of Bill Nangle at the Times of Northwest Indiana working with Northwestern University and editors were taking some of that back to their newsrooms. At the Chronicle Tribune we'd been applying the same standards because it just made good sense. It's not very complicated – find out what the community is interested in the most and cover that. But the study gave us some validation and is a real tool in making our newspaper better. Small newspapers can't do readership studies and we need to find other ways as an industry to find out what readers want. Sometimes what they want is pretty universal and that's what the study said.

Question: What convinced you to try to respond?

Answer: We have so many bad daily newspapers in this country because editors are not engaged in their profession or community. They're insulated in the office and dealing with the daily grind.

Question: Was there a newspaper-wide focus, or would you say the work has been primarily driven by the newsroom — or even another department?

Answer: Connecting with readers is more than stories in the newspaper ... it's about customer service, on-time delivery, answering phones and solving problems quickly.

Question: Who ended up being the champions for this work?

Answer: A core group of editors understood the big picture. (After Moment of Truth) we created a playbook used in the newsroom of how we're going to improve over the next 12-18 months — a newsroom strategic plan. All editors did MBOs. You take tangible goals and relate them to content. We focused on two areas of the Sunday paper — an eight-page business section called The Bottom Line and a standalone classified section on Sundays. The classified idea came from newsroom because people in the newsroom knew classified drew readers. We had a high number of bankruptcies so the business section had information about credit help. It also had business stats, such as bankruptcies and building permits. Half was local content. We also focused on community champions, people who do good in the community. A local minister wanted to know which ones were from his church and he made a big deal of it at church.

Question: What would you cite as some of the distinguishing characteristics of your paper and its market?

Answer: Blue collar, less educated, less affluent — we've written stories that the average resident eats more, drinks more and smokes more than the average resident in Indiana. Quality of life issues are important.

Question: Define yourself a bit so I can get a picture of where you started.

Answer: I grew up down the road in Muncie and had no intention of getting involved in journalism. My mother had been a bookkeeper for lots of different companies. I thought I'd be a secretary. My mother kicked dad out of the house because he wouldn't get a job. She sold Kirby sweepers door to door to raise four kids. Nobody had gone to college and it didn't occur to me I would. During my junior year of high school I was studying accounting and an English teacher asked me to work on the high school yearbook. They needed a copywriter and had no idea what they were talking about. Then the yearbook adviser said they heard of an opening at the local paper for a copy clerk. I got the job and have been working at a newspaper ever since. I went on to Ball State University in Muncie. I got a master's degree in communication sciences. I became a reporter (at the same paper she worked at as a clerk). But soon I saw lots of thirtysomething white males as editors and could not see a future. I had to leave my hometown if I was going to stay in journalism. I decided to go into management and went to Chillicothe, Ohio, as city editor. That's where I realized how much you could do with a small staff and small town. I was there for Desert Storm and we sent a reporter and photographer to Saudi Arabia. We put out special sections and it meant so much for that community. I learned if you can do this, you can do anything. When I moved to Marion, I realized I wanted this to be a better place to live and thought, "what can I do?"

Question: How about other readership work in the areas of service, brand and culture? Have you seen successes there?

Answer: In Marion we put together a 24-hour hot sheet for responding to customers — trying to get away from transferring someone to circulation. When you get a complaint, whoever picked up call had 24 hours to get problem fixed. Sometimes it's so simple, it's responding to people, being sensitive to what they want — their paper on time, on the doorstep, accurate. If you do those three things, you'll have readers.

Question: An overall impression from the committee's review was that papers are re-instituting projects from the past in efforts to regain closer ties with readers — community columnists, reader submissions, reader contests, editor or publisher columns that directly address readers for example. Have you seen this to be true?

Answer: Readers want to be involved. But I would suggest if it's not going to be useful — reader panels, town meetings — some of those things have been forced. Try something else if it doesn't work. Maybe it's better to meet with readers on issues that will become projects. Before writing a single word on Moment of Truth, we met with leaders. I'd write a column to say we'll have a discussion group at the library to talk about jobs in community. They help tell you what you should be writing about. Many newspapers think they have all the answers already. We got answers from ordinary sources. That's why we have so much process in newspapers — we don't have grassroots reporting.

Question: Have you tried to redefine what is news, or have you re-defined your approach to news as you went through this process? How did your reporters take to this idea?

Answer: You redefine news everyday. It's what you can tell readers that they didn't know the day before. At a deeper level, reporters get interested when

drilling down deeper into a story. I always cringe when see I story that we should have taken deeper. Why was there a shortage of substitute teachers? Because teachers took too many sick days and lots of Fridays and Mondays because they can. Parents could relate.

Question: Are you seeing circulation or readership gains you can conclusively attribute to these changes? Other tangible benefits?

Answer: We saw circulation gains in home delivery Sunday when we rolled out those two sections. Overall circulation was about a wash — but with our economy and people leaving town, what would it have been if we didn't do what we did?

Question: What types of measurement did you try to apply to your work? Did you have specific goals or targets you tried to meet? What meant success?

Answer: Individual quality goals, how many errors, how many local bylines, page flow — things we could measure. Just before I left we started measuring content through a spreadsheet to measure types of stories.

Question: As you tried to change habits and accomplish this work, what lessons did you learn? What degree of effort did it — and does it — take to keep it moving? For example, do you have committees that work on this? How frequently do they meet or report progress?

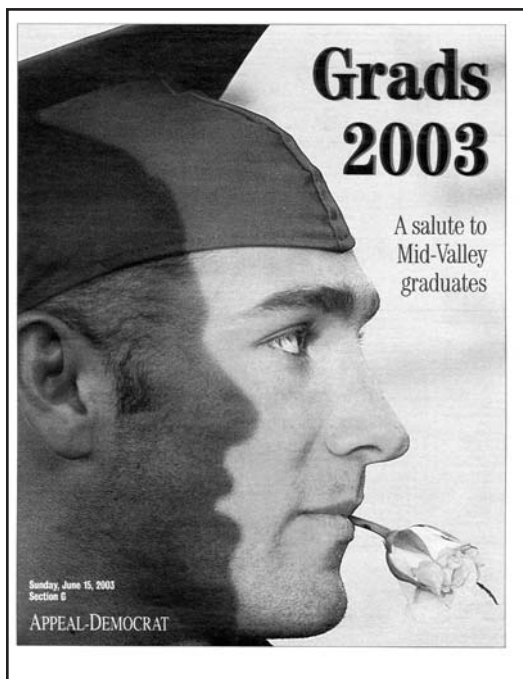
Answer: You take three or four of the best people in the room, draw them around you real tight and cheerlead it. Everybody wants to be involved. But they need you to know what direction.

Question: What other tools do you wish had been available, or do you believe would still be valuable for helping papers tackle this kind of work?

Answer: The Readership Institute research, best practices of how people are using it and road trips they make are the best they can do. Each editor has to make a choice to get involved. We don't have enough editors engaged in ways that will make our profession better. They're not connected in organizations and universities. Many are, but many are not. It's surprising to me how readers will accept mediocrity for a while, but it will lead to a slow decline. We have to move quickly and make monumental changes or we're doomed.

More good ideas from small newspapers

MARYSVILLE/YUBA (CALIF.) CITY APPEAL-DEMOCRAT



Sunday, June 15: Grads 2003

This standalone, special section lists local graduates, uses lots of photos and mug shots, and lists accomplishments of the students. A good example of “ordinary people,” and “sense of community” that connects to the real lives of readers.



Sunday, June 15: Sports

Using a strong feature writing style, the “Ridin’ and Ropin’ ” lead story on the high school rodeo champions connects with younger readers, and draws in non-traditional Sports readers

Monday, May 19: Community

Good use of promo strip at bottom of page to push readers to upcoming content later in the week.




OWENSBORO (KY) MESSENGER-INQUIRER

Region Briefs

From staff and wire reports

News Tip Line 691-7205

Call the Messenger-Inquirer News Tip Line if you have a question about something you've noticed in the community or know of something that needs newspaper coverage. Cingular customers may dial #TIP (#847) to call the tip line for free.



...SC

...PP
...as Cou... pu
...coroner...rent Gaulee.

Reporting an error

To report an error:
Contact Editor Bob Ashley at 691-7292 or fax to 685-3446.

Sunday, June 15: Region

Interaction with readers encouraged with the daily "News Tip Line" and credibility enhanced with the daily "Reporting an error" how-to. Section also used a breakout to push readers to a Web site for additional information on a news story, and included contact information.

HENDERSON (KEN.) GLEANER

Tuesday, May 20: Page One

Strong "ordinary people" feature approach to "how I lived long" tale on 87-year-old Robert Hill. Newspaper also strengthens credibility with readers by explaining what happened to its missing weekly TV books.

UK's Tubby Smith signs twin towers Page B1

Tuesday



May 20, 2003 HENDERSON, KENTUCKY 68000 (Pages: 100, 1000) 10c



No slowing down



Robert Hill and his wife, Nancy, sit in their parlor and play the violin for his 87th birthday. Hill plays his violin as the couple relax. (Hansen photo by Darin Phlegler)

87-year-old keeps young by staying busy

In Henderson, Ky., it's not just the young who are staying busy. Robert Hill, 87, is a testament to that. He's still a vibrant, energetic man who stays young by staying busy. Hill, who has been married to Nancy for 50 years, is still a vibrant, energetic man who stays young by staying busy. Hill, who has been married to Nancy for 50 years, is still a vibrant, energetic man who stays young by staying busy.

Primary election is today

Only those registered Republican, Democrat may vote this time

Local voters will go to the polls today to help decide which major party candidate will appear on the Nov. 4 ballot for the mayor position in Henderson.

Henderson voters will go to the polls today to help decide which major party candidate will appear on the Nov. 4 ballot for the mayor position in Henderson.

More inside

Candidates for Kentucky governor announced in the state capital. Long to secure more possible votes for their primary election.

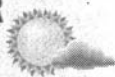
Story on Page B2

Do you know how to get your story heard? Check out the list of Henderson County's primary election.

Page B1

WEATHER

Partly cloudy today.
Mainly clear tonight.
High: 85 Low: 64



+179.97 **STOCKS & BONDS**
S&P 500 +18.26
NASDAQ +46.60
10-year bonds 3.401%



Details 6B-7B

Top 5 INSIDE

Don't miss these stories
inside today's Gazette:

> **City targets buildings**

Property owners protest
demolition plans, **Local 2A.**

> **Coast Guard aid**

Bill would create volunteer
naval militia, **State 3A.**

> **AIDS funding tripled**

Bush signs \$15 billion global
AIDS package, **Nation 4A.**

> **Arafat power play**

Palestinian leader slows plans
for peace summit, **World 5A.**

> **Euro's record high**

Currency soars against dollar to
boost U.S. exports, **Business 5B.**

ON THE LIGHTSIDE

Everyday people
answer calls

BEAUFORT (SC) GAZETTE

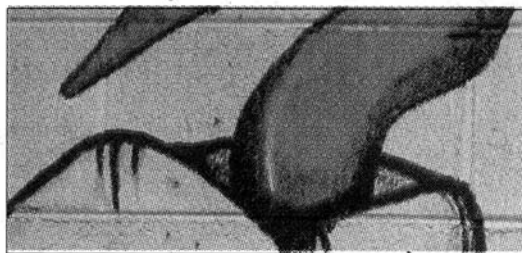
Wednesday, May 28: Page One

Interesting "push" to stories inside the newspaper with use of the daily Page One "Top 5 Inside." Effective promo to "tomorrow content" at bottom of Page one rail. Connects with younger readers and families through strong photo play of local graduation.

Friday, June 6: Scene

Clever reader interaction feature called "Have you seen it," which encourages readers to identify a local photograph. Increases sense of place and community connection, and lets readers interact with the newspaper.

Have you seen it?



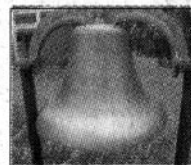
Send your answer to:

The Beaufort Gazette, Attention: Greg Hambrick
P.O. Box 399, Beaufort, SC 29901.

Or e-mail us at ghambrick@beaufortgazette.com and put "Scene picture" in the subject line. The first person with the correct answer will get their name published in next week's Gazette.

You've seen this, but where?
Get a grip because this
one is slippery.

Think you've got a clue?



**Last Week's
SCENE picture.**

Answer: The bell in
front of the Port Royal
Fire Department.

Winners: No winners this week.

CAPE GIRARDEAU SOUTHEAST MISSOURIAN

WWW.SEMISSOURIAN.COM

SPIRIT OF AMERICA
Tell us why you love our country



The Southeast Missourian invites readers to submit 250-word essays on the topic "Why I Love America" to appear in our Spirit of America edition July 1. Send your essays, along with your name and contact information, to: Southeast Missourian, Heidi Hall, P.O. Box 699, Cape Girardeau, Mo. 63702 or hhall@semissourian.com.


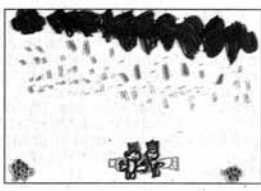

■ Spirit of America Award details and nomination form, **Page 9A**

Friday, June 6: Page One

Good interaction with readers on an "ordinary people" topic by soliciting reader stories on why they "love our country" as part of an upcoming Fourth of July edition.

Friday, June 6: Page One

Page One also effectively uses the basement strip, including a delightful touch with the weather: publishing art work by local children.

	<p>FORECAST</p> <p>Today: Cloudy with a few showers and storms High 75, Low 62 Today's artist: Zach Raines, 7, of Jackson ■ Weather, Page 2A</p>		<p>INDEX</p> <p>Arts & Leisure, 14B Automotive, 1C Classified, 2C Comics, 8B Daily record, 6B Dear Abby, 9B</p>	<p>Movie times, 10B Obituaries, 6B Opinion, 7B Sports, 1B Stocks, 12A TV listings, 12A</p>	<p>ONLINE POLL</p> <p>What do you think of U.S. Sen. Jim Talent's proposal to issue bonds to finance \$50 billion in highway spending? Vote on our Web site 24 hours a day.</p> 	<p>CONTACT US</p> <p>Newsroom (573) 334-8997 Home delivery (573) 334-7115 Classified advertising (573) 334-8822 ■ Directory, Page 2A</p>
<p>VOLUME 99, NUMBER 245 • ©2003 RUST COMMUNICATIONS</p>						

PAGES WERE SELECTED BY LINDA GRIST CUNNINGHAM
 EXECUTIVE EDITOR
 ROCKFORD (ILL.) REGISTER-STAR

Criteria from Readership Institute research for evaluating Excellence in Small Newspapers

CONTENT MIX

The newspaper has a good strong blend of news topics: intensely local, government and politics, lifestyle, education, religion etc.

Consider how well marquee pages, such as the front page, convey this variety

Enterprise, or news the newspaper discovers (i.e. not event-based) is a significant part of the mix

IN-PAPER CONTENT PROMOTION

The newspaper points readers to content inside the newspaper that day (includes rails, strips, boxes, refers)

The newspaper points readers to content in upcoming days

The promos are attention-getting and effective; sell-pieces

VARIETY OF WRITING STYLES

The newspaper uses forms in addition to the inverted pyramid to tell stories and convey information — e.g. feature-style approach; Q&A; break-out boxes; graphics; lists

CLARITY

Stories have a point, get to it quickly, and are clearly-written

GO AND DO INFORMATION

Where to, how-to, how much, who to call; directions, locator maps; where to go for more information on a subject (e.g. web sites, books, TV programs)

Listings, briefs etc, are organized and presented for reader utility i.e., in ways that respond to readers' interests and how they use information

Reporting institutional stories in ways that are relevant to consumers/citizens

Less of what the town council decided and more of how it affects people, what it means to them

LOOKS OUT FOR MY INTERESTS

At a basic level, gives me things to do; is helpful

At a higher level, is a watchdog

SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT

Content that would make me want to share it with a friend or colleague; “hey Martha” stories; things you can imagine the local talk radio show picking up; water cooler fodder

PEOPLE LIKE ME

This newspaper is for and about “average” people in this community

Stories about ordinary people

Photos and content that reflect the life of the community

CONTENT THAT WOULD INTEREST YOUNGER ADULTS (18-24)

Events that appeal to them

Issues that concern them

Stories and photos featuring them

Issues of general interest include their perspective

THE NEWSPAPER EXHIBITS PERSONALITY

It stands for something

It gives people something to talk about

It is more than just a chronicler of news and information

The newspaper conveys that it cares about the community and readers (evidence could include an editor’s column addressing reader concerns; stories focusing on the future health/well-being of the community; ample letters to the editor)

HEADLINES

Stong, crisp and inviting.

Appropriately sized to signal a clear hierarchy of story importance.

ENERGY

The newspaper approaches “routine” stories with enthusiasm and creativity

Headlines are strong, crisp, inviting

ASNE Small Newspapers Committee, 2003-04

David B. Offer, Central Maine Newspapers, Augusta, Maine, *chair*

Kenneth E. Tingley, The Post-Star, Glens Falls, N.Y., *vice chair*

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