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President's Corner



Joyce Frericks

Meeting of the Minds- the MFCP Way

My daughter, Rachel, and I were talking before she left for work a few weeks ago. She has a new baby and would have liked to stay home. She asked if I have always enjoyed going to work. The truth...absolutely not.

I've had a few tough jobs and worked with some difficult people. But I've always loved what I was doing. I loved being an accountant, and now, I love being a publisher.

Of course, there are things I don't enjoy, but I don't dread getting up in the morning and going to work. I know that what we do - covering local news, giving businesses an affordable advertising medium and employing hard-working people - is vitally important to our communities.

Even when we love our careers, we need to refresh occasionally and set new goals. A great way to do that is by attending MFCP's Meeting of the Minds Spring Conference in Des Moines, Iowa on March 2-3.

Our conference speakers will help us renew our minds and acquire the latest industry knowledge. Our keynote speaker, Brian Imbus, an internationally recognized mentalist, will be speaking on "Miracles of the Mind" and "Unlocking Your Hidden Potential". Russell Viers, an Adobe and Quark software trainer, will be teaching on "Think Inside the InDesign Box" and "InDesign Styles Stuff...and Stuff."

Not only will we have a chance to learn from others, but we will also be able to give back and share our knowledge with our peers at the publisher roundtable and the 3-minute idea exchange.

Networking and learning from other publishers have been the most important part of conferences for me. Thank you for the tremendous amount of information I learned from all of you.

Please join me in refreshing our minds and spirits at MFCP's Meeting of the Minds Spring Conference. If you haven't already signed up - there is still time to do so at <https://www.mfcp.org/>.

See you in Des Moines!
Joyce Frericks

From the office



GRAPHIC DESIGNER: Part Artist- Part Mind-reader!

Lee Borkowski



I have a lot of respect for graphic designers. Theirs is not an easy task. Part artist...Part mind-reader!

Recently I was in Minnesota to oversee the setup of the ad-judging competition. The judging is handled by a team of industry people that are very familiar with free community papers and how they operate. The judges carefully reviewed all of the entries and selected winners in each category. Theirs was not an easy task! And this year we had more papers participate and more entries than in recent years.

While going through some archives the other day I stumbled across a publication from 1918! Yep, a publication that is well over 100 years old. The content is geared to the farming industry and the thick publication is filled with ads for cattle, draft horses and more. I noted one full page ad that would have surely been a winner if it had been entered in the category for “best ad – black and white – farming”.

You can see a copy of the ad here. It’s a nice-looking ad, well balanced and attention compelling. I wonder what tools the graphic designers had at their fingertips back then. Were there clip art services like METRO or did they have to draw the graphics by hand?

Whatever their method I’m certain the ad layout took significantly more time than it would take using today’s tools, programs and shortcuts.

Speaking of tools and shortcuts –

We have a full day of training and recognition planned for graphic designers at our Spring Conference. There will be two training sessions led by Russell Viers on Friday. He is an internationally recognized trainer; one your graphics team is sure to enjoy.

During lunch on Friday, we will reveal all of the winners of the 2023 Ad Awards Competition

If you haven’t done so already, please register to attend the conference and help us celebrate all who worked tirelessly this past year to put out award winning papers.

[CLICK here to register](#)

Members Helping Members

She Saved the Day!

I have been going to MFCP Conferences since the mid 80's so I've had a lot of time to develop some wonderful relationships with many of you and have learned so much from networking with you over the years! Although this alone is enough to keep me coming back and staying involved with this organization, something happened last week that was above and beyond!

We had been working with our printer on a job, communicated when we needed it shipped, and sent files by the requested day. On Monday of the week we were to receive the job, our customer checked in on the expected date of arrival as this was for an event to start on Thursday of that week. (Our customer had requested that he receive the job by Friday.)

I proceeded to contact the printer to double-check on the progress and expected ship date. I was told we should be receiving it as expected, Tuesday or Wednesday. So, I was excited that I was going to be able to "under promise and over deliver". Little did I know it was just the beginning of a "what can go wrong, will go wrong" kind of week.

My customer checked again on Tuesday. I checked with the printer again. The job had been picked up by the shipping company, but because of a significant snow storm that limited travel they were now promising delivery by Wednesday or Thursday. I reassured my customer again. Unfortunately, it had not arrived by Thursday either so we checked with the shipping company again and found that it was sitting in a truck ready in a terminal to be shipped. We were reassured that it would arrive by Friday.

As you might have figured out, it didn't come, and it still wasn't here by noon on Friday. The printing company did some more checking and asked if we could pick it up instead of having it shipped. They said "No, once it's on a truck they will not take it off".

The printer then called the main office and finally found someone who told us that it was sitting in a terminal 4.5 hours away. After more discussion and some possible solutions, they offered to set the job on the loading dock until 7 pm only. It was already close to 5 pm on Friday. I knew there was no way I would make it...but I remembered one of my fellow MFCP Members, Lisa Miller, lived closer and decided to give her a call to see if there might be a chance she could help.

Although before I called her, I knew things may or may not work out. But Lisa dropped any plans she may have had for that Friday night, drove the hour to the terminal, picked up the job, and drove a few more hours to meet me! Cell service made communication a challenge but we finally connected and, because of her efforts, I was able to deliver the job to the customer at 6 a.m. the following morning.

When I asked her what I owed her, she said "Don't worry about it"! I had to ask a few times to figure out she wasn't going to accept anything, even though I insisted. I finally decided to send a cashier's check and Thank You card just hoping she would accept it and enjoy it on a different Friday night.

This may be a bit of an extreme situation, but there have been numerous other situations over the years that a fellow MFCP Member came through when I was in a pinch. Whether it was something as simple as helping me find a contact, having an answer to my question that moment, helping me with a new idea of how to make or save a thousand dollars, you folks have come through in a big way and I can't THANK YOU enough!

I hope many of you feel the same and I look forward to seeing everyone in March!

Peg Loveless, The Cresco Shopper

Member News

Free Webinars Offered by Metro for MFCP Members

Did you know that METRO allows you access to some really great webinars? And, that you don't have to be a subscriber to view them?

Below is a listing of webinars that are available to you right now.

You can view recently recorded live webinars by clicking a link below. Learn about all of the spec ad resources Metro offers to help you start the conversation with new prospects, reconnect with inactive accounts, upsell existing advertisers, and get clients excited about advertising. We also go over valuable planning, sales and design tools included with your subscription; custom ad creation options; and helpful tips for making the most of Metro's site and services.

[01/19/23 Webinar: Every Benefit You Didn't Know You Had: 30 Minutes to Making the Most of Your Metro Subscription!](#)

[10/20/22 Webinar - Strategic Special Section Program Planning for 2023](#)

[09/22/22 Webinar - Q4 Selling Workshop](#)

[02/17/22 Webinar: "Shop Local" Strategies for Ad Revenue & Reader Engagement](#)

[01/13/22 Webinar: Get Sales Results You'll Love With the Wizard](#)

[10/28/21 Webinar: HOLIDAY SALES WORKSHOP](#)

[10/21/21 Webinar: LET'S TALK ABOUT SPECS](#)

[10/07/21 Webinar: GUARANTEED Q4 \\$ALES BLUEPRINT](#)

[09/23/21 Webinar: DIGITAL SUCCE\\$\\$ TOOLS & TACTICS](#)

[08/25/21 Webinar: Sale After Sale After Sale - How to Open the Door & Close the Sale With Advertisers](#)

[06/24/21 Webinar: SALES CALL \\$TRATEGIES for CLOSING up to 90%](#)

[06/17/21 Webinar: DIGITAL SUCCE\\$\\$ TOOLS & TACTICS](#)

[05/13/21 Webinar: DIGITAL SUCCE\\$\\$ TOOLS & TACTICS](#)

[04/15/21 Webinar: DESIGNING KICK-A\\$\\$ CAMPAIGNS](#)

[03/06/21 Webinar: DESIGNING KICK-A\\$\\$ ADS](#)

Find out how your sales team can instantly create personalized spec ads and increase your close rate to 90%. Then, turn over their sold ads for final production and placement.

[Watch Video](#)

[Quick-tip Video Tutorials](#)

Industry Pioneers

The free-paper industry has a rich history. And, many people from the Midwest played an important role in its development and growth. The caring, sharing and support members offer each other make this an industry like no other. In this section we will share features from people past and present who helped create the unusual dynamic we enjoy today.

If you know of a person or company that should be featured, please contact Lee at director@mfc.org

This month we are featuring Rudy and Gladys Van Drie.



Early Life of the Ames Advertiser Boone County Shopping News Knoxville Reminder

By Gladys Van Drie

Rudy Van Drie published his first issue of the Ames Advertiser in 1958. That same year we were married and I taught school to pay the mortgage on a duplex we had just purchased. In 1959 Rudy had become acquainted with Kay Fox, a Des Moines publisher, and Kay convinced him to attend the National Assn. of Advertising Publishers (NAAP) conference which was being held in Des Moines. After that conference Rudy was sold on the value of attending. The next year we again attended but could not afford the hotel rooms so we slept in the chairs of the lobby. I'm thinking that meeting was in Kansas City but my memory may be faulty. The following year Rudy had T-shirts printed that said, "My Daddy Publishes a Shopper." Those t-shirts paid for our trip. From then on we did not miss the annual meeting and our financial situation had improved. The value gained was new creative ideas, improved management skills, distribution methods, the monetary value of your papers etc. After a few years we purchased the Boone Iowa County Shopping News.

An important side benefit was the friendships we made. We met Dick and Sue Luzadder at a Florida conference. They had two girls the same age as ours and the friendship continues today. Dick and Sue Luzadder have passed away but I still exchange visits with her daughters and grandchildren.

Rudy and Dick decided to purchase the Knoxville Reminder together and the thought was to have board meetings in Florida in the winter and in Iowa during the summer. The paper was purchased late in the season so the first board meeting had to be in Iowa where the paper was located. We drove to Des Moines to pick them up at the airport during one of Iowa's famous terrible, blizzards. Dick was easy to spot as he came off the plane, walking through the snow in his bright yellow pants, silk shirt, and shiny white shoes. We laughed about that for years and immediately gave him a lesson on the subdued winter colors of the Midwest and the importance of proper footwear. Later so many Iowa shopper publishers and publishers from other states became good friends and contributed to our success.

In 1976 tragedy struck when Rudy died of a heart attack on the tennis courts. After teaching in early marriage, I was a stay-at-home Mom after our children were born. Sue Luzadder stayed with me for a week after the funeral and as she was departing to go back home, she looked at me and said, "Gladys Monday morning go to the office and pretend you know what you're doing." She had always been an equal partner in their operation. With two girls to put through college I decided to do as she had suggested. It also gave me a reason to get up and get going. After a month I made a list of my strengths and weaknesses and made the decision to hire strength where I was weak. I also had a meeting with all the employees and said that I planned to keep the paper but I would need their help. Rudy had a philosophy that he frequently shared, hire good people, train them, trust them, and get the heck out of their way. I'm proud to say the paper never skipped a beat. Much of that credit goes to the employees who were salt of the earth hard workers. They did whatever was needed to get the paper out. When a truck tipped over carrying all the papers the sales people, graphic artists, front desk people did what was needed to get the papers to the carriers. Another time we had a fire that started in the wall of our Boone building where all the work was done. The graphic artists drove to a neighboring paper to use their equipment to lay out our paper each week until recovery was completed.

I must add the help I received from the State and National organizations was invaluable. I learned so many things and received mentoring help from so many publishers. I hesitate to name them all because with my aging memory I will forget someone. All I know is I couldn't have done it without the support I received from these organization, publishers, and friends.

My last story is one I want to share about the kind of people that were involved in this business. It was the early years of publishing the Advertiser and we were struggling. Rudy was getting the paper printed at the Clarion Reminder and owed a large printing bill. He was ready to throw in the towel. Gene Allen, the publisher, said," Rudy I think you're so close to being successful I will carry your printing debt for some more time." It was after that the paper became profitable. That kind of helpfulness and cooperation exemplifies our industry.

MVP'S At Work



Be True to Yourself

By Megan Punt

Hello everyone! A cold blustery day here in Rock Rapids, IA and only getting colder!! Anyone else ready for summer already or is it just me?

This last month our group discussion was on a YouTube video one of our members found and it was called “The Most Eye Opening 10 Minutes of Your Life” by Brene Brown. The video immediately started off by saying “Don’t walk through the world looking for evidence that you do not belong, because you will always find it. Don’t walk through the world looking for evidence you are not enough, because you will always find it.”

Our self-worth and our belonging are not negotiable with other people or the things that we might seek to verify it. We carry that inside our own hearts.

We need to remember not to allow others to dictate who we are as human beings. If we allow others to determine what we should be like, we are likely to start to lose track of who we really are. It is not necessary to feel that we need to “measure up” or “fit in” to anyone else’s expectations.

The first time you pull away and stand on your own is a game-changer. From there on in, trying to “fit in” is not an option. We learn to navigate through life according to our own beliefs. We learn there is beauty and strength in being able to stand on our own and be true to ourselves.

This video goes on and is very intense, but in a good way. It talks about standing on your own, belonging, vulnerability, courage, shame, and so much more! I know I found myself hearing some of the things Brene Brown saying and thought “well that hit home for me”. I am sure it will do the same for you as well.

It was intense to sit and listen to her and at the same time think about my own life and what I am guilty of. If you are interested in seeing this video it can be found at the link below. I will warn you that it is very open and does have some cuss words in it.

Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yuOUTak3A7o>

We also spoke about the upcoming Spring Conference! We are getting really excited to head to Des Moines. Also, just to mention the MVP’s will be selling raffle tickets again! The prices will be 1 ticket for \$5, 3 tickets for \$10 or 10 tickets for \$20. We will have Venmo or Cash options for payments.

We look forward to seeing everyone there!

Kevin Slimp



The Secret to Growing Papers

Give the readers what they want

Kevin Slimp
kevin@kevinslimp.com

Earlier this month, I traveled about an hour from my home to conduct focus groups for a weekly newspaper in Tennessee. Focus groups come in all sizes and shapes. This particular focus group was a little different than most. The paper had gathered 15 seniors – the minimum age requirement was 60 – to spend three hours discussing recent issues of the newspaper and making suggestions about ways to improve the content.

We learned a few things that surprised us, and a few things went as expected. I felt this would be one of the “easiest” focus groups I’ve done. The paper is very successful and continually works to improve its product and meet the needs of its readers. I had a feeling I wouldn’t run into too many angry participants.

As the gathering neared the end, the conversation turned to how many focus group members had moved to the area from other parts of the country. One recently relocated from Massachusetts and noted how surprised she was that the quality of the paper was so much better than what she had grown accustomed to in her previous home. Others who had relocated from other parts of the country echoed in with similar opinions.

Focus group members shared stories of papers in other towns that had “dwindled to nothing.” They agreed that their weekly paper’s content and overall quality were much better than the metro paper 45 minutes away.

One of the final statements of a group member promises to stay with me. “Please don’t sell our paper to one of those national groups! We love it and don’t want to see it destroyed.”

Fortunately for her – as well as everyone else in the group – there’s no risk of that.

Most weeks, I meet either in person or online with one or two newspaper staffs to discuss every aspect of the newspaper business. Today, I’m meeting with a group of newspapers in New York to discuss their editorial workflow. A few days ago, I worked with the editors and designers of a paper in another state. A while back, I had a fascinating meeting with co-publishers of a paper in Florida. As I looked through copies of their newspaper, I was impressed with both the content and design. I correctly guessed that they have a large readership among young adults. It was a very impressive publication from both a design and content standpoint.

I was surprised, however, when I learned that the focus on younger readers hadn’t happened on purpose. It was the result of having a young staff.

Imagine their surprise when I mentioned to the publishers the potential growth of their paper by including more content for older readers. Most papers would kill – well, not literally – to have readership among young adults. But as I visited with the publishers, it dawned on me they had flipped the readership issue. They had a lot of young readers but were missing the middle-aged and senior markets.

Frankly, I think the paper in Florida is in a very good place. Gaining older readers is probably easier than attracting younger readers to most newspapers. But the method of gaining readers is the same: provide the stories, photos, and content to meet their needs. I suggested they offer more stories related to health, travel, and human-interest stories. When I visit with most publishers, I suggest they provide more stories related to entertainment, DIY, and other topics of interest to younger readers. Yes, newspapers still grow. I work with growing papers all the time – just about every day.

My New Toy Arrived – The Latest Mac

A few days ago, Apple announced their new line of Macbook Pro and Mac Mini computers. I have been waiting more than a year for the M2Pro version of the Mac Mini to arrive. Rumors were that we would have the new computer in mid-2022. It was a good exercise in patience for me. As you might guess, I immediately ordered the 10/16 Core model, with 16GB memory and a 512GB hard drive (\$1,299 US). The mini arrived two days ago, and I love it.

There are three base models of Mac Minis. I suggest the \$799 (8/10 Core, 512GB storage) for reporters. Designers should stick with the 10/16 Core model for \$1,299. The \$599 model is great for the student or use at home when no serious design work is required.

One final suggestion: don't dare design pages without a minimum of two monitors. I use 32-inch (6X9 ratio) 4k monitors, and the speed with which I get things done more than pays for the hardware in no time.

Kevin Slimp has been a popular consultant and speaker in the newspaper industry since developing the PDF remote printing method in 1994. His upcoming webinars on design, circulation, and software can be found at newspaperacademy.com.

Kevin Slimp is former director of The University of Tennessee Newspaper Institute and founder of NewspaperAcademy.com.

Ad-Libs



Say It and Do It, or Renegotiate

John Foust, Greensboro, NC

Joanne is an ad manager with a common-sense approach to managing her team and their goals. She believes in communication – not micro-management – but real communication on how things are going.

“For years,” she told me, “I often found out at the eleventh hour that something wasn’t going as planned. A crucial email wasn’t sent in time, a proposal was held up by research delays, or an ad deadline wasn’t met. Now, those things can happen to even the best members of an ad team at the best of publications. But it puts everyone in an awkward position and threatens to damage our credibility.

“So, I started relying on a little saying that I heard a long time ago: *‘Say what you’re going to do. Then do it, or renegotiate.’* It has become a catchphrase around the office. Start out with a realistic commitment, by saying what you’re going to do, whether it’s to email certain information to an advertiser by the end of the week, submit a proposal by next Tuesday, or have an ad ready to run by this afternoon. Then do what you committed to do – on time. It sounds simple, but some salespeople get so excited about a sale that they have a tendency to overpromise. That’s where they can get into trouble by thinking they can double their effort and get things done on schedule. The result is often a missed deadline or sloppy proofreading.

“That’s why renegotiating is so important,” Joanne said. “As soon as they know things aren’t going as promised, it’s best to go back to the other person and say something like, *‘I’m sorry the proposal I promised by next Tuesday has been delayed. I wanted to tell you as soon as I found out, because you have a right to know exactly what’s going on. Let’s talk about some alternatives. Could later next week possibly work for you? That will allow us to gather more complete demographic information and give you a better view of your target audience.’* Notice how the statement ends with a benefit to the other person.

“As a manager,” Joanne explained, “this approach helps me stay up to speed with what is happening with our advertising department. Plus, it shows the team that this kind of situation does not mean failure. It’s just a speedbump along the way. This is much better than waiting until the last minute to tell me, their advertiser or their coworkers.”

There's a big lesson in Joanne's philosophy. Transparency is a key principle of business communication. The word itself indicates "seeing through," such as a window allows us to see what's on the other side. When we are transparent with other people, we eliminate the window shades of pride and embarrassment which tempt us to wait "one more day" before sharing what we fear could be interpreted as bad news.

While bad news is not happy news, this technique can help keep the lines of communication – and customer relations – open.

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John Foust has conducted training programs for thousands of newspaper advertising professionals. Many ad departments are using his training videos to save time and get quick results from in-house training. E-mail for information: john@johnfoust.com

Ryan Dohrn



Be Willing to Change

This week's video topic is: "We've got to be willing to change as the landscape changes. Remember, always be looking for repeatable patterns of success. When things stop working, make a change." - Ryan Dohrn

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrNDeWHwOvs>

Listen to Ryan's ad sales podcast, [Ad Sales Nation](#), on [iTunes](#) or on [Soundcloud](#). Keep up to date with Ryan's ad sales training advice on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/RyanDohrnLIVE>

Ryan Dohrn is an award-winning [ad sales training coach](#), a nationally recognized [internet sales consultant](#), and an international [motivational speaker](#). He is the author of the best-selling ad sales book, [Selling Backwards](#). Ryan is the President and founder of Brain Swell Media and 360 Ad Sales Training, a boutique [ad sales training](#) and [sales coaching](#) firm with a detailed focus on ad sales training, internet consulting, and media revenue generation. Ryan is also the Publisher of [Sales Training World](#).