



the newsletter  
of the Minnesota  
Magazine &  
Publications  
Association

### Mark Your Calendar

MMPA Member  
Roundtable: Circulation  
Location: Industrial Fabrics  
Association International  
August 11, 2004

MMPA Member  
Roundtable: Production  
Location: Industrial Fabrics  
Association International  
August 18, 2004

MMPA Member  
Roundtable: Publishers  
Location: General Mills  
September 8, 2004

How Does Your Magazine  
Stack Up? Conducted by  
Brady & Paul  
Communications  
University of St. Thomas  
September 23, 2004

A Magazine Celebration  
The Loft at the Open Book,  
Minneapolis, MN  
October 5, 2004

Registration forms and  
information are available at  
[www.mmpa.net](http://www.mmpa.net)



volume 4 | issue 6  
August 2004

## upcoming events

# The Doctor's In: Get a Painless Check-up for Your Magazine

by Nancy Weingartner | managing editor, Franchise Times magazine



John Brady

If your magazine could write you, instead of the other way around, it would probably pen: "I'm feeling tired, stuck in a rut. Sure you're busy—fewer people, more work, heard it—but aren't I the most important thing you have to get out of the door? Shouldn't my

looks, my readability, take precedence over all those other tasks?"

Thank goodness our magazines can't talk. Oh, the tales they could tell. But, just as you should have a yearly check-up from your doctor, so should your publication. We all need to step back, take a deep breath and view our publications with fresh eyes. It's too easy to get stale; to do Band-Aid fixes until we have time to make permanent, well-thought-out changes.

MMPA to the rescue. The board has scheduled a favorite Folio workshop to come to your doorstep. No having to make that expensive, time-intensive trip to New York or Chicago to gain insight into how your magazine stacks up. This workshop is something every magazine's budget can afford.

Nationally renowned "magazine doctors," John Brady and Greg Paul, are bringing their expertise to the Twin Cities for a full-day September 23 at the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis.

In addition, for a small extra fee, the doctors will diagnose your publication. All you have to do is choose one to three issues of each magazine title, then mail your submission to Brady & Paul in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Each issue will be reviewed and returned to you at the seminar, annotated throughout and with sticky notes, along with a two-sided cover sheet containing overall comments. All materials must be received by August 16.

Past attendees to the Brady & Paul workshops have credited the "doctors" with making their magazines "newsier;" "clean, contemporary and appealing;" and "cohesive with a distinctive look." More than one client testimonial mentioned that the reader reaction to the redesigns has been overwhelmingly positive.

Who wouldn't want that?

By this time you should have received several e-mails with the registration forms attached, plus a flier is

included in this issue with the registration and critique submissions forms attached, or you can download the forms at [www.mmpa.net](http://www.mmpa.net). A flier for the seminar is included in this issue.

Space is limited, so sign up today. Editors, graphic designers, art directors, even publishers, will all benefit from a day of tips on crafting a better magazine, and saving money while you do it. The afternoon session will include a series of "mini-critiques" of local magazines, with ideas and suggestions that will apply to your own publications.

There's even a free lunch included in your \$149 fee for the workshop. And you can attend for as little as \$129 if two or more come from your company.

The cost for the magazine critique is \$200 for one issue, \$325 if you'd like two issues reviewed and \$400 for three issues. If you have more than one title to be critiqued, each title requires a separate form.

This is one MMPA seminar you can't afford to miss—OK, so every seminar is one you shouldn't miss. But having nationally recognized speakers with a track record that causes pulses to race really shouldn't be put off for a more convenient time. Register today, before that tired, run-down feeling turns into something serious.



Greg Paul

## At A Glance

How does your magazine stack up?

**Presenters:** Brady & Paul Communications

**Date:** Thursday, Sept. 23, 2004

**Time:** 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Location:**

University of St. Thomas  
Minneapolis Opus Hall  
Room 201

**Who should attend:**

Publishers, editors, designers and  
whoever wants to take their publication  
to the next level

**Deadline for magazine critique:**

August 16



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One-ninth page (2.25" w x 3.25" h): Single issue/\$95	5 issues/\$430	10 issues/\$760
One-sixth page (2.25" w x 4.5" h): Single issue/\$195	5 issues/\$880	10 issues/\$1,560
One-third page (2.25" w x 9.75" h): Single issue/\$295	5 issues/\$1,330	10 issues/\$2,360
Half page (7.5" w x 4.5" h): Single issue/\$395	5 issues/\$1,780	10 issues/\$3,160

### BECOME A MEMBER OF MMPA YOU'LL SEE REWARDS.

- industry insight
- educational events and workshops
- a network of smart professionals

The Minnesota Magazine & Publications Association is dedicated to providing valuable opportunities for industry professionals. Call 651-290-6281 to discover the benefits of becoming a member.

MMPA is professionally managed by Ewald Consulting - [www.ewald.com](http://www.ewald.com).

## upcoming events

# Second Annual Magazine Celebration

## Eat, Drink and Crawl Through Minnesota's Magazines

by Mary Jo Larson | publisher, Franchise Times Corp.

Most days, getting that to-do list checked off is a herculean task. Fires pop up, deadlines change and phone calls come in. But it's all for the cause: You've toiled hard, honed your craft, and hold your head high each time your pub is mailed. Wouldn't it be nice to see your magazine displayed among the other publications Minnesota has to offer?

How does yours compare? What new ideas are other magazine editors and designers using? What topics are writers talking about?

Join MMPA for an evening with other publishing professionals in an informal, relaxing setting: the second annual MMPA Magazine Celebration, unofficially known as the Magazine & Pub Crawl, October 5, 2004, at the Loft in Minneapolis. You'll have a chance to see and browse (or crawl, hence the name) through

Minnesota's publications, as well as network with other editors, designers and writers based in the Twin Cities. And all this with food and wine, too. Who knew this and more could be had for \$12 per person?

Don't you deserve some time to have a glass of wine, some conversation and of course, brag about your publication, too? Come experience it for yourself.

For more information or to register, contact the MMPA office at 651-290-6281.

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>What:</b>  | MMPA Magazine Celebration  |
| <b>Where:</b> | The Loft at the Open Book<br>1011 Washington Avenue<br>Minneapolis   |
| <b>When:</b>  | October 5, 4:30 – 8 p.m.   |
| <b>Who:</b>   | Magazine professionals who want some good food, good conversation and a peek at other publications published in the Land of 10,000 Lakes |
| <b>Why:</b>   | Because we can (and did last year!)  |

## Welcome New Members!

*Augsburg College*  
Betsey Norgard

*Bird Dog & Retriever News*  
Dennis Guldán  
[www.Bird-Dog-News.com](http://www.Bird-Dog-News.com)

*Capstone Marketing Group, Inc.*  
Voncille Meyer

*Game Informer Magazine/Sunrise Publications*  
Rob Borm  
[www.gameinformer.com](http://www.gameinformer.com)

*Minnesota Golf Association*  
Warren Ryan  
[www.mngolf.org](http://www.mngolf.org)

*MN Fire Chief Magazine*  
Ann Warling  
[www.msfc.org](http://www.msfc.org)

*MNBilliards.com*  
Kelly Larson  
[www.mnbilliards.com](http://www.mnbilliards.com)

*Schmidt Printing*  
Marcia Klebel  
[www.schmidt.com](http://www.schmidt.com)

*Sno-X Magazine*  
Mark Larson

*Educator:*  
Michael Vadnie  
St. Cloud State University

## On Assignment and Photo-Ready

by Christopher Kelsey | *editor, GFR magazine*

Late June and finally warming. While hiking, one of the magazine's advertising account reps spotted a series of rock baskets called "gabions." They look very much like gift-wrapped piles of uneven stone, only in lieu of paper they've been wrapped with expanded chain link. My magazine's weird culture covets such products. An office field trip was scheduled. Our first site visit! And, for gabions, no less. Right in our own backyard!

There we were: ad rep, editor and associate editor—photojournalists. We descended a crumbling stairwell into the shady, mosquito-riddled trails of Minnehaha Falls. Earlier I'd acquired a camera from the production manager, and after puzzling over its digital screen for three minutes, I found the power button, the menu, the flash, etc. All was well. Curious, I thought. Must be old, or at least old in that obnoxious way tech-

nology has of hyperannuating itself. The digital window allowed many features, but selecting high resolution was not one of them. Natch. We'll get what we get, I figured.

It's hard for us to find higher-quality digital images for the magazine, but digital submissions have become the norm. I needed to learn more about how the contributors were working. The publication focuses on a fairly obscure leg of the engineering and construction industry, so images often come from site personnel, and they are certainly not professional photographers. Still in my work shoes, tripping on sticks, neither was I. But I was determined to make digital photography work. I might then provide useful advice to my field-based writers.

After 10 minutes of walking the trail, the bug welts appeared on the associate editor's exposed arms. The ad rep muttered things that I imagined were cuss words back in the United Kingdom, where he grew up. Me? the northerner? No, I was cool. I was mighty. Look there! Gabions!

We scrambled up the erosion-control netting on the slope—netting! Bonus. We hadn't expected a two-for-one, but we'd sure take it. Eagerly, we snapped photographs of the gabion formations, swatted mosquitoes, pointed out the latent erosion rills in the soil. I picked at the geotextile underlay, shook the rock cages like a hairless Kong, got my feet tangled in the netting.

Back in the office, iced coffees in hand, we delivered the camera to the production manager. We wanted the images, and fast. He sent us to our Web guru, an untrusting woman from New Jersey who often must handle this sort of upload/download hassle for us. She accepted the camera cautiously, saying, "You know, this is a film camera." She paused delicately, then added, amused, "And there is no film in it."

I ate a scone.

### Get Visibility in Front of Minnesota's Publishing Leaders

**Want your company to be:**

**Recognized by the leaders in Minnesota magazine publishing?**

**Associated with MMPA's premier educational event of the year, with nationally renowned magazine doctors?**

**Recognized as a friend of the publishing community at our Magazine Celebration?**

If so, we have a variety of sponsorship options to help you achieve your marketing goals. Sponsoring MMPA events is a cost-effective way to strengthen your existing relationships and establish the foundation for new ones at a time when almost everyone in publishing is scrutinizing expenses and examining vendor relationships. Sponsors receive a tremendous return for their support of the MMPA by gaining direct access to all attendees at the event and receiving recognition and advertising space in various print and online components.

#### **The Magazine Doctors Come to Minnesota - Sept. 23**

The MMPA has arranged for nationally renowned "magazine doctors" John Brady and Greg Paul, to bring their expertise to the Twin Cities. (See cover story). Sponsorship opportunities range from \$500 to \$1,500.

#### **MMPA Magazine Celebration - Oct. 5**

A Magazine Celebration, Oct. 5, is a celebration of Minnesota magazines and publications and a networking event for publishing professionals. (See article on page 2). Sponsorships range from \$250 to \$1,000.

#### **The MMPA Excellence Awards - Nov. 11**

The MMPA Publishing Excellence Awards, our biggest event of the year, recognize the best Minnesota publishing professionals. This event is attended by nearly 400 publishers, editors, art directors, circulation directors and others who play a critical role in determining where and how they spend their budgets. These are the people who spend millions of dollars on freelance creatives, photographers, illustrators, pre-press, printing and distribution services. You can gain direct access to these people by becoming a 2004 sponsor.

Become an MMPA sponsor today to leverage your company's visibility in the publishing world. Contact Martha ten Sythoff at 651-290-6286 or marthats@ewald.com for more information.

## Who's Got the Look?

### The Importance of Branding and Market Research

by Drew Siqueland | editor, New Worlds of Mind & Spirit

With the way media abounds in today's world, chances are your publication isn't the only one catering to your target audience. While competition tends to set standards, and can therefore be a proponent of editorial anxiety, it also works to inadvertently shape the way your product is presented. With trends continually shifting, it is important to understand the fundamentals of both your publication and those of the evolving market. In order to maintain a grasp on your readership, it's vital to maintain focus on the company's purpose and its current establishment.

#### Who Are Your Readers?

To keep readers satisfied, and hopefully recruit new ones, you must first have an idea of who your core audience is. Is your readership more male or female? What age bracket constitutes the majority of your market? Are there regional demographics that are more dense than others, and if so, what factors constitute the reasons for this? Questions like these define not just where your publication is distributed, but also define its composition. Knowing your readers means knowing what information they're looking to receive — one of the most important aspects of print media.

#### Who Are You?

With an established presence in the market, your organization must have an established value system that is reflected in your product. Sometimes the easiest way to refresh direction is to look at the main components of the organization. The fundamental values, the underlying personality, the visible public symbols your publication has all work to define the way it is perceived in the market. Those must be clearly understood by the creators of a publication if they are to be clearly understood by the readers.

In an industry where competitors are there to pick up the pieces where you leave off, it's especially important to understand the way your periodical differentiates itself from the others. It's likely that the differences are slight, but they're the most important ones to adhere to. After all, they're the reason your readership has chosen your publication

for their source of information. Keeping ahead of developing trends is important, but it's probably more important that you don't lose your identifying niche in the process.

It's easy to think that since you work for a given company, you know the principles that comprise your product. However, with an inside perspective, you have a much different vantage point than the majority of your readers. And it's probable that the way those readers view your company isn't exactly in accordance with how you think they view you. Panel discussions, volunteer reader groups and editorial feedback can go a long way in clarifying the difference between your employees' perceptions of your publication and those of your readers.

#### Who Are Your Competitors?

If you offer a product that no one else offers, you are in a unique position where minor, or even major, changes may not drastically affect your audience. However, for the most part, this is not the case. Looking to competing media outlets can help you understand a number of different factors that help shape your company's success. If you are the leading source for your target audience, what details make it so? Those are ones that are obviously valued by both your company — or you wouldn't provide them in the first place — and your readers, or you wouldn't be the leader. Looking at the competition can give insight into what differentiates them from you. To even compete, there must be aspects they embrace that set them apart from you. And the reason they maintain their base may be just that — they give the public something you do not.

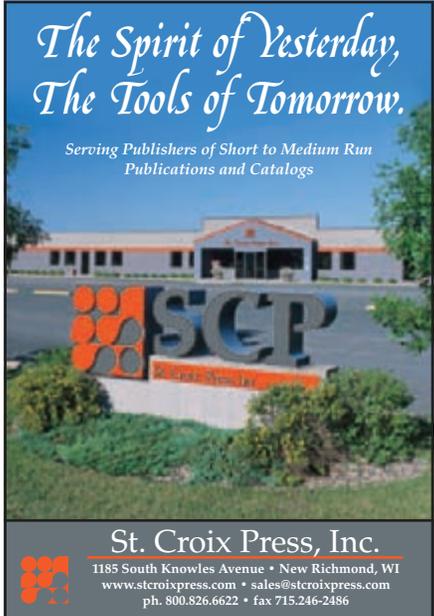
#### If you aren't the leader in your market, then what sets you apart from the leader?

Embracing those differences, and helping to perpetuate them, may give further credence to your success, simply because they're different. Look at Wendy's restaurants. Their late night campaigning has led them to open a number of drive-thru-only facilities. Though not the leading fast-food chain, they are further distinguishing themselves by providing a service they have already come to be known for. Conversely,

making changes that incorporate more of leading standards may help your publication to grow. Keeping with the given examples, look at how McDonald's has expanded its salad line and low cholesterol options in order to keep up with healthy alternatives offered by competitors. And with careful packaging, they've maintained their distinctive flavor as well.

#### Establishing Identity

The first, and most important, step to market campaigning is to have a firm, confident sense of identity. Know your strengths, and promote them well. Know your weaknesses, and realize that every business has some of its own. The ones you have may not be so bad; they may just not be a significant part of your established brand. Keep a close eye on the market, as it will indicate shifts in trends that can help your publication evolve along the same lines. Knowing your competitors can help your own publication, because out of any other business group, they understand more than anyone what successes and frustrations you deal with in your market. A concise knowledge of your identity, and those that surround you in the market, may be the most valuable asset you can have in your aims for success.



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## Five Questions with Doug Solinger of Midwest Litho

by Jennifer Koski | independent consultant

Doug Solinger, owner of Rochester-based Midwest Litho holds an uncommon position in the publishing industry. In addition to his print business, he's also the publisher of seven titles: *Rochester Women*, *Coulee Region Women*, *Rochester Visitor*, *Monroe County Visitor*, *La Crosse Visitor*, *SE Minnesota Bridal Guide* and *Rochester Street Map*.

**Q1:** You're unique in that you're both a printer and a publisher. Which came first?

**A:** For the company, it was publishing. *Rochester Visitor* magazine started in 1940. Then, in 1957 the printing plant was built. For me personally, it started with the printing end—working in the family business. I didn't get into publishing until I bought *La Crosse Visitor* in 1992. I purchased the rest of the business, which then included *Rochester Visitor*, *Rochester Street Map* and the printing equipment, from my dad and his partner in 1994.

**Q2:** Is there a particular aspect of your business you enjoy most?

**A:** Working with new technology.



Advances in the printing industry over the last 15 years have been huge. I have fun adding and implementing new technology, such as computer-to-plate and hybrid screening, based on what is most beneficial for the publications.

**Q3:** What's your biggest challenge?

**A:** As the owner of a printing company, it's running the publishing side of things. As a magazine publisher, it's running a printing company. I may be working on

printing issues one minute, and then have to switch gears the next minute to focus on magazine editorial or distribution. But this is a benefit, too. It's nice to have the variety. I like mechanical things and working with printing technology – aspects of the business I wouldn't get if I were just running a magazine.

**Q4:** What's the most interesting / unusual / strange piece you've ever printed?

**A:** Printing a Kauai (Hawaii) publication in January. It's a little strange to walk out of -10 degree temperatures and snow-lined streets into the office where we're working on a tropical publication.

**Q5:** You're based in Rochester, MN. Have you run into any challenges being an out-state printer?

**A:** No. I think our location is an advantage. Rochester has a small-town atmosphere, but has the talent of a metropolitan area. I have been able to put together a dedicated and talented team of people who take ownership in all of the products that we produce—whether one of our own publications or that of a customer.

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