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PRINT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MINNESOTA MAGAZINE & PUBLICATIONS ASSOCIATION
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2005 VOLUME 5, ISSUE 7

FineWeb: MMMPA.net unveils a new look

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

November 3
Excellence Awards Gala
Metropolitan Ballroom, Minneapolis

November 16
Production Roundtable
MMPA Office, St. Paul

December 7
Publishers Roundtable
MMPA Office, St. Paul

December 14
Circulation Roundtable
MMPA Office, St. Paul

January 18
Editors Roundtable
MMPA Office, St. Paul

January 31–February 1
Ad Sales Seminar with Jenaé Rubin
location to be announced

February 15
Production Roundtable
MMPA Office, St. Paul

March 8
Publishers Roundtable
MMPA Office, St. Paul

*By Sherry Collins,
freelance writer/designer*

FinePrint wasn't the only MMPA communication piece to get a facelift.

MMPA.net, the association's Web site, also has a new look thanks to Bruce Rubin and Jim Cordaro, the masterminds behind *FinePrint's* new look.

"The site was devoid of graphics and we wanted more photography. In fact, many of the photos we used on the site represent some of the magazines that are part of the association," says Rubin. "It was a good way to showcase this diverse group."

The design team originally became interested in the project more than a year ago. Rubin and Cordaro, of Rubin Cordaro Design, joined the communications committee looking for a way to use their design skills. When a member survey revealed dissatisfaction with the look of the

newsletter, the pair saw their chance to pitch in and redesign, not one, but both aspects of the member communications.

It was very important to redesign both the Web site and the e-newsletter to "create a family look," says Rubin. Consistency is key, he points out. "Consistency and look of a brand is more critical than people know. If a brand is consistent, it speaks volumes."

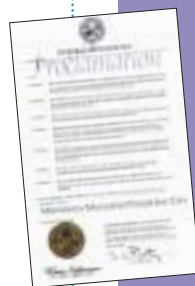
The content will be consistent with the previous version of the site. While the site was ready for an updated more graphic look, Rubin commented that the information the site provided was very func-

continued on page 2



Governor Proclaims November 3 Magazine Publishing Day In Minnesota

In honor of MMPA's 10th anniversary, Gov. Tim Pawlenty issued a proclamation designating November 3—the day of MMPA's annual awards gala — as a day to recognize the significant contribution magazine publishing has made to Minnesota.





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ADVERTISE IN FINEPRINT

MMPA AD RATES

One-ninth page 2.25"w x 3.25"h
 Single issue \$95 3 issues \$258 6 issues \$456

One-sixth page 2.25"w x 4.5"h
 Single issue \$195 3 issues \$528 6 issues \$936

One-third page 2.25"w x 9.75"h
 Single issue \$295 3 issues \$798 6 issues \$1,416

Half page 7.5"w x 4.5"h
 Single issue \$395 3 issues \$1,068 6 issues \$1,896

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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.

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CONTENTS

Upcoming Events	3
MMPA News	3
Industry News	4
Company Profile – CABIN LIFE MAGAZINE	5
Sales Negotiation Seminar	6
An Excellent Evening – AWARDS GALA	7
Head of the Class – BILL MONN	8
Goings On	9
Roundtable – SALARY & CIRCULATION	10

2006 Job Fair Makes Hiring Easy

Looking for a talented intern or a fulltime person to round out your staff? Then you won't want to miss the Minnesota Private College Job & Internship Fair at the Minneapolis Convention Center on February 28, 2006.

Meet 800-plus graduating seniors and more than 600 internship-seeking undergrads from 17 outstanding private liberal arts colleges. Employers have access to highly qualified and motivated candidates who are naturally curious, trained communicators, problem-solvers, creative, flexible, self-starters, life-long learners, and who have a breadth of interests, analytical skills and a global perspective.

For more information and to register online, visit www.smartersource.org. ■

FineWeb continued from page 1

tional. Since much of the information is related to upcoming events, the design team says that users will find familiar sections with a new look.

The site uses MMPA's colors and adds navigational buttons down the side of the site. The idea is to keep the design clean and allow adequate room for information, since the site is jam-packed with details for members.

"In the Web site design, we like to look at the function of the site in an intuitive way — how are people going through the site?" says Rubin. "We're the nuts and bolts people. We design the look, but there's a whole team of people who make the site happen; it's a collaborative effort."

Check out the new Web site at www.mmpa.net. ■

MMPA Offers January Seminar

January 2006 sales educational event

If increased sales for your magazine is one of your New Year's resolutions, you'll want to clear your calendar now for MMPA's newest sales educational event scheduled for the last week of January 2006.

Jenaé Rubin, a 24-year veteran in sales and marketing, will be conducting a three-day seminar on stress-free selling. Her approach has helped publications and other industries not only increase sales in a down market, but to retain those sales over time.

She has a proven track record of increasing sales, revitalizing ailing prod-

ucts, creating new products and adding profit centers to existing products. Among her many achievements for her clients are: reversing a three-year revenue fall in three months; improving revenue per page 22 percent in one month; and taking a product from 17th place to third place in one year.

MMPA Board Member Rick Schumacher, publisher of *LBM Journal*, recently hired Rubin to work with his company and had nothing but glowing comments about her work.

In addition, Rubin has testimonies from publishers and business owners all over the country, including Peter Roos, Publishing in Paradise, who said, "Jenaé presented more great ideas than I had ink in my pen."

Her seminars are geared for both new and seasoned industry professionals, and



will be targeting the Minnesota magazine publishing industry.

Watch your e-mail for more information on this great opportunity to learn from a national sales trainer in your own backyard. ■

MMPA NEWS

Goodbye, Ellie!

Conventional wisdom dictates that if you have a job you need done, ask a busy person. So, in an organization of busy people, it only makes sense to ask the busiest one, right?

That's how Ellington Miller Bandel — Ellie to those who know her — became the editor of *FinePrint* for the past year and a half.

Ironically, she took the job as the head of the communications committee the day she joined MMPA as an individual member.

During the day, Ellie is a script writer for UCit (you see it), an online video home tour company. At night and on Fridays, she's the editor of the bi-monthly *Rochester Women*, a home and healthy living magazine with a circulation of 15,000. She also plays the French horn in several groups and



softball in the summer, and let's not forget the workload of organizing and editing *FinePrint*. Ellie was married not long after she took the volunteer assignment, so add new wife to her list of duties — and we all know how much effort one must put into the first years of marriage, you can't skate until much later.

On a typical day, Ellie works at her day job and then goes home and does her magazine role — assigning stories and

photos, maintaining the editorial budget, layout, design, copy editing, and even delivering magazines — often until 2 or 3 in the morning.

What's she going to do now that she's been relieved — and I think the operative word here for Ellie is relieved — of her *FinePrint* duties? "You'd think stepping out of this MMPA role would afford me tons of free time," she says. "Well ... somehow I'm still filling that space with stuff. The blessing and curse of working on a magazine is that there's always more tweaking, more proofing, more creative thinking I could be doing."

MMPA thanks Ellie for her leadership during *FinePrint*'s transition period. She's made the trek from Rochester numerous times for committee meetings and to ensure *FinePrint* was being filled with interesting, relative stories for its readers.

Just like she's making a difference in her community with *Rochester Women*, Ellie made a difference in *FinePrint*. ■

Journalism's new five "Ws": Write (the) World Wide Web Way

By Joanna Takes, associate editor, *Woodworkers Journal*

Creativity, Ranly says, is one area where magazines have an advantage over publications such as newspapers, with their focus on hard news.

Back to the Basics" isn't necessarily what one would think of as a subhead for an event with the word "Cyberspace" in the title, but it accurately reflected one aspect of Dr. Don Ranly's September editorial seminar.

Billed as "Competing for Readers in a Cyberspace World," the event attracted 41 MMPA members to a full day at Minneapolis Community and Technical College's downtown campus. For some members, it was like being back in school, complete with assignments, as Ranly conducted refresher drills on basic grammar and punctuation rules and AP style. Ranly, head of the magazine program at the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri, Columbia, clearly relishes the role of teacher.

Some aspects of the professor's presentation touched on concepts that were barely on the horizon when some of us were in j-school. Words like "navigability" and "hyperlinks" were two examples.

Ranly thinks magazines can learn from good Web sites, in making their print products more reader friendly. Make them navigable, he says, with page numbers next to cover lines and summary blurbs that tell a reader the benefit of reading an article. "Write for surfers," he says; the readers will read anyway. (Ease of use was the point of the grammar and AP exercises, too, by encouraging clear and consistent communication.)

He suggested publishing "links" — such as book citations and Web sites — that readers could pursue for more information on an article's subject. That way, readers who want more information can get it (possibly on your magazine's own Web site).

He also emphasized not to overwhelm readers with too much information in one block of text. Break it up into chunks, he says, and get the art department involved to design informational graphics using some of the material. This tied into his comparison of magazine readers with Web surfers, who want to quickly find the portion of a Web site, or an article, that is relevant to them.

This related to service journalism. "How can this article treat its subject in a way that is useful to readers?" is a question he might ask. The answer might be a map of a house highlighting home accident danger spots, or it might be a bulleted list of indications medication has gone bad. Readers then could post the list on their refrigerator or in the medicine cabinet. Attendees did exercises on ways to put service journalism principles into practice, too.

Other exercises used writing descriptions of a person or a scene to stretch creative muscles. Creativity, Ranly says, is one area where magazines have an advantage over publications such as newspapers, with their focus on hard news. While he stressed that the tone must be appropriate to a subject, he also said that magazines have the opportunity to have fun. The MMPA members who attended his seminar certainly did. ■

Cabin Life carves a successful niche for itself

By Ron Sorensen

Drive north, east or west from the Twin Cities on a Friday afternoon in the summer and you often find yourself in near gridlock as urbanites escape “to the cabin.” In other parts of the nation, the “cabin” might be called a “cottage,” “lake home” or “camp,” but the situation is the same.

Fladmark Publishing, Duluth, Minn., launched a highly successful publication titled *Cabin Life* to serve the information needs of vacation homeowners across the nation. It’s all about the culture of cabin living.

Cabin Life magazine grew from a rough concept to a publication with a pressrun of 75,000 (including paid subscriptions, newsstand sales and public placements) in just five years. After the first couple of issues published in 2001, terrorists struck the World Trade Center in New York, plunging the advertising market into a steep decline.

Publisher and President Toni Fladmark guided *Cabin Life* through that turmoil to a point where the publication is now expanding frequency and projecting long-term circulation growth. “While 911 hurt

us deeply, we were a stronger, established publication when the ad market came back to life,” Fladmark says.

Fladmark Publishing was founded in 1993. At that time, it published *The Hearing Review*, a controlled circulation publication serving audiologists, otolaryngologists and others. A few years later, it drew an attractive buy-out offer, which was accepted. “That left us with a well-qualified staff, some investment capital and no publication,” Fladmark says.

The company had discussed starting a publication aimed at cabin owners, and decided to move ahead with the launch. Fladmark says the initial research was mostly “gut feel.” “We knew the vacation home market was booming because we live right in the middle of it. Estimates place the number of second homes (including cabins, cottages, lake homes, lodges, condos, snowbird homes, etc.) at 7 million. That number is expected to grow to more than 10 million in a few years,” she says.



Publication frequency was expanded from six to seven issues in 2005. Plans are to add an eighth issue in 2006.

One big challenge the company faced was converting from a controlled to a paid-plus newsstand circulation mentality. To do so required an entire change of thinking.

continued on page 9

Advertising reps win-win with sales negotiation seminar

Members of advertising sales teams are consistently told “no” and it is important to discover the ways in which they have power and confidence.

By Sara Bischoff, Minnesota Women's Press

Bill Hellkamp from Reach Development Systems explored three important aspects to negotiating: power and confidence, intelligence and planning, and tactics at MMPA's sales seminar September 14.

First, Hellkamp defined the goal of win-win negotiation: to reach a deal where both parties are satisfied with the results and the process. This is important for promoting relationships and return business. Hellkamp emphasized that the power and confidence that you feel going into a negotiation will directly affect your ability to bargain successfully. Further, he pointed out, our power and confidence are increased and diminished from a variety of sources and in a variety of ways.

“What drains your power and robs your confidence?” Hellkamp asked. Hands went up: When a client objects to cost; When a client stereotypes the publication; The fear of losing a sale; The objection that advertising doesn't work and the results are too hard to measure. The list went on. It was clear that advertising sales representatives are often pulled in many directions, trying to learn more about the customer and discovering what best fits their needs, while at the same time trying to best represent their publications. Members of advertising sales teams are consistently told “no” and it is important to discover the ways in which they have power and confidence. The forms of power and confidence come in a variety of ways: personal power (charis-

matic power, integrity power, expertise power and commitment power), organizational power (legitimacy power, reward power, compulsion power and situational power), competitive power (product power, support power, power of competitor's weakness) and strategic power (knowledge power, planning power and power of alternatives).

Intelligence and planning is the second major area to develop as an effective negotiator. Hellkamp emphasized that being fully prepared is your best strategy for negotiating the win-win. Intelligence is key in the areas of the buyer's needs, the current suppliers and current business issues. Planning requires a solid strategic plan for the negotiation, including the consideration of the offer, printed materials (contracts, price lists, or policy statements), useful financial information and questions (that you may ask or may be asked by the other party).

The third area covered was how to recognize tactics that are used against you and how to guard against them, including “budget constraints,” “limited authority” or “take-it-or-leave-it” tactics. Hellkamp explained how these and other tactics affect negotiating power and lastly, how to counter these objections.

Overall, “Negotiating the Win-Win” provided advertising sales team members the confidence and knowledge required for effective negotiation. The seminar gave excellent insight on how to develop power and confidence in negotiations and successfully represent both their advertisers and their publications.

Plan for an Excellent Evening

By Andrew Siqueland, Llewellyn Worldwide



As this issue of *FinePrint* went to print, final preparations were being made for the 9th Annual Minnesota Publishing Excellence Awards Gala on November 3, 2005. This event is dedicated to the multitude of meritable publishers based in Minnesota, a state that holds a quantitative and qualitative reputation within the industry. Sponsored by

the MMIPA, this noteworthy night heralds the outstanding accomplishments of state-wide publishers. It is a yearly opportunity

This year there were a total of 680 entries, marking a more than 10 percent growth from last year.

to recognize the diverse range of publications that burgeon from our region, and to highlight the innovative and outstanding methods they use. The Metropolitan Ballroom provides an appropriately classy backdrop for the event. Attendees have the opportunity to mingle, browse through entries and graze the hors d'oeuvres tables before the award presentations begin.

This year there were a total of 680 entries, marking a more than 10 percent growth from last year. The MMIPA recognizes this achievement with new categories, designed to pay tribute to the increasing number of contenders and the increasingly cutting-edge techniques introduced by them. The judging for this year's awards has also gone through considerable development, with an application process that includes a credentials check as well as a freshly designed judging form. As stated by MMIPA Board Secretary Jen Koski, these procedural progressions were instituted to ensure that "each entry is judged com-

pletely, accurately, fairly. We really believe the process to be much improved this year, thanks to a committee that's put a lot of time and effort in."

Excellence Awards organizer Mary Vang has been instrumental to this process, as has the large number of quality submissions. Top categories include Best Feature Article with 140 entries, Best Single Cover with 104 entries, Best Regular Column with 83 entries and Best Use of Visuals with 75 entries. There are an astounding 60 entrants competing for Overall Excellence.

This year's emcee for the event will be KARE 11's Rick Kupchella, whose accomplishments include the presidency of the Minnesota Chapter of Professional Journalists in 1997/1998, "Best of Show" recognition at the New York International Film Festival, numerous "Best of Gannett" honors during his years at KARE and the authorship of two books including a collaboration with U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, Olympic star Jackie Joyner Kersee and Dr. Sally Ride (first woman in space).



Our January/February issue of *FinePrint* will include photos from the gala, along with a full listing of award winners. In the meantime, we encourage you to start thinking about what you'll enter in the 2006 Excellence Awards competition. ■

Head Of THE CLASS

*Bill Monn
teaches
a magazine
publishing course*

By Sherry Collins



Bill Monn, MMPA president, has always loved teaching. He wanted to find a way to give back to MMPA and circumstances finally aligned so that he could teach a class at the University of St. Thomas. It turns out students there were asking for a magazine track in journalism, and Monn had recently moved from a hectic position at General Mills to their “executive on loan” for Ewald, a consulting group that manages many non-profit groups including MMPA.

Monn selected a star-studded guest speaker list from many Minnesota publications to give students a real taste of magazine publishing during the 14-week course. Rusty Grimes, production manager for the Industrial Fabrics Association International, is one of those speakers.

“The benefits of this class are two-fold: By having industry professionals (MMPA members) joined collectively to share their knowledge in specific areas of expertise is an education money can't buy,” says Grimes. “We as an industry will certainly benefit when it comes time to hire these students who have a realistic understanding of the entire process.”

Grimes will be speaking in week five of the class on magazine production and manufacture. Other speakers include Russ Nolan on developing niche publications, Cathy Madison on magazine audience, Cindy Rogers on magazine analysis, Bruce Rubin on design, Kelly O'Hara on editorial development, Shelly Elmore on advertising plans, Hervey Evans on structures and business planning.

Rebecca Sterner, a well-known publishing consultant, was selected to talk to students about circulation plans.

“Many students who fantasize about working for a magazine when they graduate don't always understand all the options they have,” says Sterner. “No one ever seems to aspire to work in the circulation department, for example — not because it wouldn't be a great career, but because they never learned what a great career it could be. So this course will give students a broader view of the magazine business — it's more than writing and designing pages.”

Everyone involved in the class hopes that it will change students' perspectives of the magazine industry. “My hopes are the students will never look at another magazine in the same light as prior to this class,” says Grimes. “The efforts of any publishing group to provide

entertainment or information with each issue and make it a satisfying experience for our readers will clearly be demonstrated by the industry professionals as guest speakers.”

The class will not only spend time hearing from the cream of the crop in Minnesota's magazine world, they'll be getting some hands-on experience as well. The class will take students through the entire magazine process from planning to distribution. By the end of the semester students will create a business plan for their own magazine and provide a media kit, circulation sheet, rate card, editorial calendar and mock-up of a magazine.

“The class is set up to give students a chance to ask questions from people who do this job everyday,” says Monn. “It was a way for us to draw on all the fantastic talent we have in the publishing world and share that with our next generation of staff.”

Monn spent time reviewing texts and eventually selected “Magazine Publishing” by Johnson and Prijatel as the course textbook. He noted that it offered a well-rounded perspective on how magazines are conceptualized from start to finish.

“This class teaches them to think about the magazine from every aspect,” says Monn. “They have to know who their audience is and how they'd sell it. It'll give them a better understanding of how the magazine world works.”

Monn's class is currently running in the fall session at the University of St. Thomas. Email billm@ewald.com for more details. ■



New Moon Publishing is moving.

As of October 3, 2005, the new address will be 2 West 1st Street, No.101, Duluth, MN 55802. Phone numbers and email addresses will not change. ■

Franchise Times news

Stacy Freeborg has joined Franchise Times Corp. as a writer/editor for *Franchise Times* magazine. Although she's a Minnesota native, Stacy relocated here from Denver, where she was a freelance writer. During her stint in Colorado, Stacy wrote for several local pubs, including *Minnesota Business* and *Mpls./St. Paul* magazine.

Earlier this year *Franchise Times* welcomed Paul Olson to its team as director of research for both *Franchise Times* and its sister publication, *The Restaurant Finance Monitor*. Paul, a native Minnesotan with a degree in economics from St. John's University, brings an academic and working background in economics to the magazine. Prior to joining *Franchise Times*, Paul worked as a labor economist for the state of Alaska, where he produced statewide employment projections and authored articles on various labor issues. ■



Cabin Life continued from page 5

Cabin Life's 75,000 circulation is a mix of paid subscribers and newsstand, plus copies placed in the offices of dentists, doctors and other similar locations. The company created an internal system to handle public placements. Fladmark believes distributing no-charge copies to these locations pays off in expanded awareness and new subscription sales. She gets calls from doctors and dentists saying that *Cabin Life* is the most frequently "borrowed" magazine in their waiting rooms.

Subscribers and newsstand buyers are mostly cabin owners, but many are people who aspire to own a cabin someday. Reading about cabins and cabin living helps them in the decision-making process.

"*Cabin Life* is unique because we are

both a lifestyle and a shelter magazine," Fladmark says. "We deliver ideas, inspiration, information and more for a vacation home owners and dreamers. Article topics range from design and décor, sports and recreation, entertaining and recipes to home improvement ideas and solutions."

Editor-in-Chief Diana Faherty directs the editorial content, assisted by Mark Johnson, editor; Shirley Brandt, managing editor; Tanya Nygren, art director; and Christine Strom, administrative assistant. Freelancers provide much of the editorial content.

Go to the *Cabin Life* Web site, www.cabinlife.com, and you'll hear the sounds of loons, gently lapping waves and lakeshore breezes. Web site visitors can go

back to archived issues or check up on cabins for sale or rent. The site also offers ongoing contests and hot topics.

A five-person staff handles sales for the magazine and Web site. "In the beginning our sales staff had the challenge of creating awareness of the importance of the second home market as well as selling publication advertising. Today, most advertisers understand the importance of reaching this target market," Fladmark adds.

Long-term, Fladmark believes *Cabin Life* can expand to 10 issues per year and grow circulation to 250,000. With the vacation home market growing as rapidly as it is, her goals appear within reach. ■

Show me the money! ...and maybe I'll spend it

By Chris Kelsey, editor, *GFR Engineering Solutions*

MMPA member editors (and one graphic designer) gathered recently to discuss the thorny issue of money: how our magazines spend it, save it and distribute it among staff members. Lynn Keillor of Ehlert Publishing Group served as moderator.

Per usual, the opening question warmed minds to the morning's subjects and provided an opportunity for introductions: Are you a cheapskate or a spender? The question pushed roundtable participants into something of a confessional mode — e.g., “I’m Katie, and I’m a spender” — as they juxtaposed personal and professional spending habits. Curiously enough, many attendees seem to live an alternative spending life in the professional world, jealously guarding their magazine’s funds if they are personal spenders; or ridding the coffers of every penny available to them during an office fiscal year while locking down their personal finances on the level of *Angela’s Ashes*.

An informal, anonymous salary survey was conducted, too.

OPENING UP

The subject of money is a tough nut to crack, at least initially. Editors certainly have their opinions, yet have an internalized reflex against the open discussion of financial matters. The journalistic “church and state” rule implores a clean separation of advertising revenue and editorial content, but few editors would say with confidence that a clear divide is ever achieved.

Further, while editors on all levels affect spending, such as for freelanced articles, few have real control over the money. Few editors feel they have discretionary budgets; rather, budgets are pegged to narrow windows of use, which do not feel secure even within that time frame. The group’s shared stories revealed this. While a general freelance budget seems relatively secure, editorial travel budgets seem to be highly volatile. An underperforming quarter or spike in health care costs may nix what the editorial team feels are necessary trips for coverage, promotion and agreements with co-operating organizations.

Midwest* Salary Survey

25th Percentile (25% Earn Less)	50th Percentile (50% Earn Less)	75th Percentile (75% Earn Less)
\$36,000	\$47,500	\$65,000
\$28,000	\$33,000	\$45,000
\$33,660	\$43,000	\$60,714

Magazine: large consumer/national; 64 responding

Magazine: local/regional 66 responding

Magazine: trade magazines/B2B pub.; 110 responding

* Midwest region includes North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio

Source: MediaBistro.com

SHARING STRATEGY

Participants shared a number of interesting strategies to deal with tightening budgets and to employ simply to make operations more efficient. For example, if an editor cannot attend or is ambivalent about traveling to an industry conference, regional freelancers may be secured to provide coverage (and press passes may be negotiated for them). Some conference groups offer show coverage via informational videos.

As discussion of saving money picked up, the topics and suggestions turned rapidly, as did attendant discussion of the influence of more money coming into a magazine (e.g., corporate swag). Some highlights:

- What efficiencies can we learn from or improve within other departments? For example, designers might suggest workflow improvements that will

speed up production times, reduce production costs and improve the magazine's finances. This may be touched off by editorial learning more about the production process and the needs of the design staff.

- If travel budgets feel unstable, be willing to suggest trade-off travel. That is, prioritize as soon as you can: defer one trip to secure the most important.
- Hire interns. Most internships these days are paid and part-time. Journalism schools and English departments offer pools of applicants in need of experience. Many magazines use interns to reduce the "busy" work (such as product/news write ups), thus, freeing an editor to concentrate on the meatier items in the magazine. This may reduce dependence on freelancers for grazing material, while opening more funding for features. (As the group admitted, writer rates are relatively the same now as they were five, 10, even 25 years ago.) Note: be sure to offer a fuller experience for an intern so that she can leave with a more rounded view of our profession.
- Corporate swag policies. While magazine sponsors may have plenty of promotional items to send editorial teams — some attendees even told stories of sponsored trips — it is important to have policies in place that reduce the onus of ethics from the editor and/or advertising representative. A number of MMPA magazines have guiding policies, such as not accepting any item with a value exceeding \$25; and members agreed to share copies of policies to help one another refine their policies or put one in place. In a publishing culture repeatedly influenced by "added value" sales, whether the pressure comes from the sponsor or from the sales approach of the publication, a clear understanding is needed between magazine employees and current and potential sponsors.

SALARIES

Of course, the subject of money ultimately led to a discussion about compensation. Often, when figures are published by mainstream magazine tracking groups, they include a bias towards the largest, most profitable publications (New York glossies). True, a six-digit salary would be welcomed, at least by this trade mag editor, but is it viable in most publishing markets? Unfortunately not. So how does one gauge a competitive compensation level? And how does one work towards acquiring it?

Accurately pegging regional salaries is not easy, in part because so few organizations are willing to talk about them, but a number of comparative resources are available.

Roundtable members suggested the following:

- Bureau of Labor statistics, www.bls.gov. (Additional BLS pages: www.bls.gov/bls/blswage.htm; www.bls.gov/oes/oes_dl.htm.)
- Monster.com, <http://forums.monster.com/forum.asp?forum=107>
- Media Bistro, www.mediabistro.com.

As for acquiring a more competitive salary, group members had two very important pieces of advice:

1. Recognize that job descriptions lag behind the actual necessities of a job, and they rarely reflect the evolution of an experienced professional's responsibilities. Know what you are doing beyond the basic job description, and be ready to enumerate these duties and their value as you near and enter per-

formance reviews. It is important to keep in mind that salary budgets are set with fiscal year budgets, so that seed may need to be sown with management as the fiscal year budget is being discussed, even if performance reviews come later. This brings us to the next point.

2. Communicate with your organization more frequently about magazine performance and goals. This is not necessarily "What I'm doing"; rather, it is sharing the publication's intelligence. Editors must not assume that their full responsibilities and contributions to a magazine are recognized.

Circulation Roundtable

Joe Schick, director of postal affairs for Quad/Graphics Inc., gave an overview on current and future postal rates at the September 20 circulation roundtable.

Schick told the group to expect a 5.4 percent across-the-board increase in postal rates in the first quarter of 2006. One of the few exceptions will be in-county rates for periodicals. A second rate increase will be sought early in 2006, he said, which could mean as much as an additional 10-12 percent increase in postal rates. That rate increase will be implemented in the spring or summer of 2007.

The impact of Hurricane Katrina, loss of mail volume and rising fuel costs all contribute to the need to generate more revenue for the U.S. Postal Service.

Some things companies can do to decrease their costs are:

- Focus on address quality; nondelivered mail is costly.
- Look for opportunities to palletize mail. The post office is charging more for mail in sacks, and there's a rate penalty for minimal quantities in sacks.
- Consider copalletization, where a pallet is shared with another publication going to the same ZIP codes.

Schick also discussed repositionable notes, similar to Post-it notes, which are attached to the outside of the magazine for detachable advertising. The justification for charging more for the notes is that since the publication is able to get a premium for front cover advertising, it only makes sense that the post office should get its share. Belly bands, a strip of advertising wrapped around the outside of the publication, are also looking at some regulation changes in 2006. The good news is that there will not be an additional charge for repositionable notes inside the publication, polywrapped periodicals, envelopes or inside mail pieces.

The next circulation meeting will be on e-mail/Web/electronic marketing/telemarketing on December 14 at the MMPA office. ■



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