

January 2023

PAPER CLIPS



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President's Corner



Joyce Frericks

Welcome 2023!

All of us at MFCP would like to wish you a happy, healthy and prosperous new year. My name is Joyce Frericks and I am very honored to be your 2023 Midwest Free Community Paper board president. Thank you to Julia Thompson and all of our previous MFCP presidents for their leadership and commitment.

For those of you who do not know me, I started doing accounts receivable for our local newspaper in Sauk Centre, Minnesota, in 1999. What began as a job very quickly transitioned into a career in the newspaper business. I fell in love with our industry and started doing more – managing our company's sign shop, coordinating our town's yearly women's event, venturing into circulation, sales and sales management and, eventually, ownership.

My involvement with MFCP started less than 10 years ago, but I can tell you that I became a true believer in the organization after attending my first event – a publisher meeting in southern Minnesota. Those attending that meeting were warm and inviting. They were generous in sharing their management strategies and income ideas – one of which has generated over \$150,000 in Star Publications income. Our management and staff have benefitted tremendously from MFCP conferences, and I encourage you to join us in our upcoming events.

Our Spring Conference takes place on March 2-3 at the Holiday Inn in Des Moines, Iowa. We will have great speakers, opportunities to network and learn from our peers. Watch your emails for registration information or you can register at [REGISTRATION INFORMATION](#)

Our executive director, Lee Borkowski, and our office manager, Sue Pilla, are committed to our organization and are leading us into a future where our industry is more important than ever. We provide our communities an affordable, local and trustworthy means of communicating with their customers. After 24 years in the industry, I still take great pride in publishing and MFCP's mission and hope we can start changing the narrative from "Print is dead" to "Print is more important than ever!"

Joyce Frericks

From the office



MFCP To-Do List for 2023

Lee Borkowski

Wow! 2023 arrived and turned into mid-January!

As fast as time is flying by, I wanted to make sure you get these added to your calendars so you don't miss out on some great opportunities.

#1) Ad Award Entries are due by the end of day Friday, January 13th. The entries need to be in the mail (postmarked) on the 13th. If you're sending them by that date, please have tracking so that you be assured they will be delivered no later than Wednesday, the 18th of January. We DO NOT want members to incur the expense of shipping their entries overnight. We work hard enough for our money....no need to give it away to the USPS!

#2) Calendars: We still have a few wall and strip calendars available. Just send me a quick email if you'd like some for your office. Sue and I will get them mailed out ASAP.

#3) Conference: It's going to be a great one! The committee has been working hard to make sure the programming meets your needs. You can expect to be educated and entertained at the Spring Conference. [For a schedule and to register click here.](#)

#4) Training: The board and I continue to focus on providing training to help you better serve your customers. We still offer MCN/MDN training via Zoom. You can train your whole team or an individual. The training takes about 30 minutes and is a great refresher of all that we have to offer. Send an email to director@mfc.org to sign up today.

#5) Industry Pioneers: Last month we started a monthly feature in which we share stories from the free-paper industry's rich history. This month we feature the memories of Cathy Crosby. She and her husband started a shopper in Des Moines in 1967. Cathy is well into her 90s now but has not forgotten a thing. You'll want to read what she has to share. And, if you know someone else that we should feature please let me know. It's important that we capture these stories while we can!

Member News

Attention Periodical Mailers!

Changes to Periodical Critical Entry Times

Effective January 29, 2023, the Postal Service will implement the following changes to Critical Entry Times (CET) for certain categories of Periodicals Mail.

Periodicals Mail (Origin and Destination)	Current CET	CET Effective January 29, 2023
No Bundle Sort Required 5-Digit/Scheme Container	11:00	08:00
No Bundle Sort Required 5-Digit/Scheme Container	14:00	08:00
Bundle Sort Required 3-Digit and Up Container	11:00	08:00

As a result of these CET changes, a uniform CET of 08:00 will be applicable to all Periodicals Mail not palletized as direct 5-Digit Carrier Route pallets.

Mailers are requested to complete, effective January 29, 2023, any needed adjustments to their schedules for tendering the above mail to the Postal Service in compliance with the new CET.

To make FAST appointments, mailers should log in to their Business Customer Gateway (BCG) Account > Mailing Services menu, scroll down to "Schedule a Mailing Appointment (FAST)" and click on "Go to Service."

Available hourly Appointment slots will be displayed, within the appropriate FAST screen, for making appointments from 00:00 through 23:00 daily.

These changes were reviewed by the U.S. Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) in Docket No. N2022-2, and the PRC issued its Advisory Opinion in this matter on November 30, 2022.

Please visit us on the [USPS Industry Outreach/ USPS Corporate Affairs website](#).

Thank you for your support of the United States Postal Service.

Industry Engagement & Outreach/USPS Corporate Affairs

Member News

**Why wait? Get your nominations in now!
DEADLINE IS JANUARY 20, 2023**

Nominations are now being accepted for our incoming MVP class

The MFCP Most Valued Professionals program is designed to honor individuals who are emerging leaders in the free paper industry and 40 years old or younger. This annual program will recognize up to 5 individuals who represent the best of our up-and-coming industry professionals. These individuals exemplify good character, leadership, and professionalism not only at work, but in the communities they serve.

Nominee Qualifications

These individuals should show the promise of and a commitment to impacting their publication and the industry in a positive manner through professional achievement. Nominees must also show they not only perform their jobs to a high standard, but they also have a commitment to furthering their knowledge and abilities. Nominees must actively work in the free paper industry for a member MFCP and are required to have been employed for more than a year.

Recognition Program

The Most Valued Professional award recipients will be recognized in PaperClips, the official newsletter of MFCP, as well as participate in the annual MFCP Conference and Trade Show. MVP award winners receive free registration and hotel accommodations at the Conference as part of their award.

Ongoing Opportunity

MFCP Most Valued Professionals will be asked to assist the various initiatives of the association on an ongoing basis for up to two years. MFCP recognizes that we have much to learn from these talented young people and hopes to use their skills to help us lead the free paper industry. In return for participation in regularly scheduled conference calls and for volunteering some time to assist with various MFCP initiatives, MFCP will provide additional leadership development opportunities and the opportunity to attend future conferences for even more training.

Nominate your MVP today!

Deadline for nominations is January 20th, 2023.

[Click below for the nomination form](#)

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@mfcp.org

This month we are featuring Jim and Cathy Crosby whose dream started in the basement of the family home where the Valley Shopper became a reality.

In 1967 Jim and Cathy Crosby started a shopper in West Des Moines. Shoppers weren't exactly new to the greater Des Moines market. In fact, Jim was familiar with three publications in the area – the South Side, Northwest and Northeast shoppers. Seeing an opportunity, Jim came to Cathy and said he thought they needed to start a shopper. He thought his background in selling quality printing and Cathy's secretarial background would be a good fit. And together with two small children in tow (ages 3 and 2 months), they started a plan to launch a publication.

They were going to need some seed money to get started, so Jim and Cathy conducted a feasibility study. They did this by driving around in Jim's car, making note of the businesses that were there and assigning an expected ad size to each. For example, Jim felt the banker was good for a page and the hardware store a half. He rolled his projections into a proposal and made a presentation to the local banker. It must have been a great proposal because he walked out with a \$2,500 loan which was a huge amount of money back in the day.

The Crosby's named their publication The Valley Shopper. For the first five years the shopper was located in the basement of their home. Cathy and Jim were the only two employees. Zoning laws being what they were they couldn't put the business name on their garage entrance – so they had a sign that just read "The Shopper". People found them and the business grew.

Their first issue they included a welcome message that let the readers know what they could expect from Jim, Cathy, and the Valley Shopper and stated that they hoped all would accept the publication and welcome it into their home.

Jim took to the streets selling and Cathy handled all things clerical. Her slogan was - I'm here night and day.... call anytime! One morning at 5AM the phone rang. She breathlessly answered it: "Valley Shopper" and the voice on the other end asked "am I too late?". She assured the gentleman that he wasn't but went on to say "But, you're a bit too early!" They both had a good laugh over that one. You may wonder what was so urgent that he needed to call at 5AM....he had a sow that he wanted to sell and she was set to farrow.

Remember I said this was a family business....here's proof. One day Cathy was changing her infant and the phone rang. The three year old answered the phone: "Valley Shopper". Apparently the caller indicated they wanted to place an ad. The young child said "just a moment while I get a want ad card". When Cathy finally broke free and took over the call, she let the caller know that the "receptionist" was only 3 years old. The caller was amused to say the least – and complimentary as to what a good job she did handling the call.

The family worked hard and the business prospered. After five years, the Crosby's rented a building and added some staff members. One of the first people they hired was someone to build a carrier system.

Of course family was the cornerstone of the shopper industry and the Crosby's were no different than any others. Everyone had a job to do. Both daughters had routes to deliver. One day the girls had a dance lesson so Cathy decided to start delivering their routes for them. She happened to be driving her Lincoln Continental. While making a delivery a gentleman stopped her and said, "Is that your car?!?".

"Yes, it is" she told him. "And, if you delivered The Shopper you'd have one too!"

Years later a lady called late one day to say she had yet to receive her paper. Jim took the call and said "no problem, we'll drop one off on the way home". When he arrived at her house with the paper she was shocked. She said "you mean to tell me a publisher would make a home delivery?!". Jim responded "this one would!"

Employees were like family. And, they were treated as such. Cathy proudly shared that they never had to fire or lay anyone off. Most interesting to me was a story she shared about the time they achieved their first 100-page paper. This was in the early 1980s. Cathy suggested that they give each employee a crisp \$100 bill to celebrate such an achievement so they did. The staff was stunned at their generosity.

Industry associations and the friendships made through them were an important part of the Crosby's success, too. Both Cathy and Jim enjoyed getting together with other publishers to share ideas and learn new ways to grow their business. The national conventions were especially looked forward to, in large part, because of their locations. Most shopper publishers were from the heart of the Midwest and the east coast. So, meeting locations tended to be in warm locales. The Crosby's made a lot of friends over the years and Cathy still stays in touch with many of them.

Jim served as the president of NAAP (which is now ACP) in 1981-1982. Back in the day, when technology was lacking, if a member had a problem, you flew out to them and helped them solve it. A member in North Dakota was struggling. Even though it was wintertime, and he wasn't feeling the best, Jim boarded a plane and helped them solve their issues. While there and immediately upon getting home he felt even worse. He went straight to the hospital and had major heart surgery.

Cathy shared that Jim was very creative. Good with the written word and very, very particular. He won many honors at state and national for his award-winning ideas. He was one of the first publishers to organize a football contest that encouraged readers to go into every store and complete an entry. Jim did more than just devise the contest. He went to a local bakery and purchased empty bakery boxes, decorated them, and supplied to the stores so they would all have an attractive ballot box. He took the same amount of care with the many ad award entries they submitted over the years.

Another contest that brought up a fond memory for Cathy was when the West Des Moines Chamber had a contest to decorate your door for Christmas. Jim covered the door in red paper and greenery and adorned it with a large Christmas stocking. Cathy took it one step further by adding the words "Sock It to Me Santa!" That saying was a nod to Laugh-In, a very popular TV show at the time. They won the contest.

Cathy shared other interesting memories too. One time a customer told her that he wanted his classified ad in the front of the paper. Cathy handed him a copy of the paper and indicated he should open it up. He turned it so that back was to him and began to thumb through back to front. She pointed that out and said many readers went through the paper the same way. She told him that they didn't classify their ads to ensure people went through the full paper. He ended up agreeing there was no bad position.

Another time a group of school kids came through to tour their facility. One young man (9 to 10 years old) commented that they must have a lot of money. Cathy shared with him that there were a lot of costs associated with putting out a paper. Rent, taxes, wages, supplies, printing, delivery fees, etc. After all of that you are left with “profit”. She asked if he know what “profit” was. And, he said “yes, that’s the man in the Good Book!”

The last cute story I’ll share right now involved a time when Jim had taken the negatives to the Perry Daily Chief to have the paper printed. The job was done, he put the negatives on the front passenger seat and loaded the printed papers into the back of the van he was borrowing from a local businessman. On the way home he threw a cigarette out the window. An ember flew back in and set the paper on fire. Jim was able to extinguish the fire without getting too badly injured but the papers were a loss. So, he headed back to Perry and asked them to reprint. The papers were a little late that week!

In 1981 a businessman from California who previously bought and sold funeral homes to build chains branched into the shopper industry. This person ended up buying all four of the shoppers surrounding Des Moines and Jim and Cathy ran the group. Unfortunately, Jim passed away while on Christmas holiday in Hawaii in 1986. As you can imagine Cathy and the girls miss him very much. Cathy wonders what life would be like had he lived and wonders if they would still be in the publishing business. As she said, you have to change with the times – so she knows the business would look different. I have no doubt the Crosby’s would have changed with the times and continued to be leaders in the industry.

MVP'S At Work



New Year...New Opportunities *3 Steps to improve productivity*

by Amanda Hoeffler

Hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season! It is crazy how fast another year has come and gone, but a new year brings new opportunities. When making that list of New Year's resolutions, don't forget the ways you can improve your work life.

During the MVP call in December, the members discussed ways to stay focused at work during the holiday season but quickly realized these ways can also help to stay focused throughout the year. So, when making your new year's resolutions think of things like not over-committing yourself. Know your limits and set boundaries to lessen your stress in your work and personal life. I once read that doing nothing for an afternoon is not being lazy but is a way to get your body and mind reset and will help you be more productive. This is something I think many people can incorporate into their life.

Another way to stay focused is by writing things down. This could be as simple as making a to-do list every day so you do not feel overwhelmed with what you have to do. Or keep a notepad by your bed at night and with you during the day so when you think of something you can write it down to get it out of your head. This will help prevent your mind from racing when you are trying to sleep or focus on the task at hand.

Lastly, keep work at work. When using your vacation days do not feel guilty about taking time off. If possible, get as much done before you leave and ask your coworkers to fill in while you're off. With technology, it is so easy to be one phone call or email away but being so accessible does not help your brain get the reset it needs. So shut that work phone and/or email off and know that the work will still be there when you return.

So, what steps will you be taking this year to help lessen the stress in your life and help make you more productive?

Kevin Slimp



Kevin Slimp
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Reasons Some Newspapers Grow

It's not luck. There are definite correlations among growing papers.

I'm going to let you in on a little secret. I don't plan these columns in advance. Most months, I receive an email from newspaper industry executive Jack Guza reminding me that my column is due in a day or two. Jack's messages generally prompt me to take a seat in my upstairs writer's lair to pen a few words, typically about 800, concerning the current state of newspapers. After 25 years of writing this column, I've found that my most popular tend to be columns written just before deadline. And like most writers, I'll use any excuse to delay the inevitable.

It's early January, and as I drove home tonight after spending the day with a newspaper staff in Tennessee, it dawned on me that I have a lot to say to my readers as we begin this new year. Possibly inspired by today's group, as well as several interactions I've had with publishers in recent weeks, I'd like to share some thoughts about where I see community newspapers heading as we begin 2023.

I noted a few months back that my schedule has become surprisingly busy. Most everyone in the newspaper consulting work that I know noticed a serious drop in requests for help beginning a few years ago. Several stopped working with newspapers altogether and moved into consulting with other industries. I wasn't immune. Newspapers requesting my help took a serious dip three or four years ago. I used the opportunity to begin a couple of new businesses – using much of the advice I had been giving others for the past 30 years – which have turned out to be quite successful, figuring my days working with newspapers were near an end.

Then came 2022. I can't explain why, but the phone – and inbox – began ringing...a lot. I was busier than ever in 2022 – advising papers, redesigning papers, leading webinars, and fulfilling other requests. I hired additional staff to help with my other businesses to free up time to take advantage of the work offered by newspapers. My calendar in 2023 has just a few free days remaining. I'm busier than ever.

Which begs the question: "What is going on?"

I can only make an educated guess, but I'm sensing undeniable correlations as I hear from and visit publishers these days. I'm learning that many locally owned community papers had an excellent year in 2022, prompting them to reinvest in growing their papers. Unlike in prior years, I hear from papers with increasing readership and advertising revenue.

Luck? Maybe a little. But most of what's happening at these papers can't be attributed to chance. Here are some of the correlations I'm seeing in growing community papers:

Growing papers invest in their communities. Locally owned papers have an undeniable stake in their communities, causing them to invest more heavily in those areas.

Growing papers invest in their staff. In my experience, it's rare to see staff cuts at successful papers. We've all heard the saying, "You can't cut your way to growth." I've certainly found this true in my businesses and the newspapers I've worked with over the years. Growing papers train and reward their staff, creating better newspapers.

Growing newspapers create additional revenue by creating income through related products, not "get rich quick" schemes. Papers I've worked with that experience growth tend to generate niche publications, quality special sections, and other products that fit the work they've been doing for decades.

Growing papers maintain a quality online presence while understanding most of their income will come from print products for the foreseeable future. Planning for the long term doesn't mean giving up on the successes of the past.

Growing papers have management and staff that work together as teams. Reporting to "unknown" voices in far-away cities leads to disjointed staff, often competing against each other instead of working together toward a common goal.

Growing newspapers make their customers feel important. While visiting with circulation staff at newspapers, I often suggest writing personal notes on each resubscription notice that goes out. It's just one of many ways we make readers feel important.

I could go on, but I'm guessing you get the idea. There are a lot of community papers doing well right now. Sometimes I feel a little overwhelmed by the requests but feel very fortunate at the same time. My 2023 calendar includes consultations, redesigns, staff training events, and more. I've had to cut back on my convention speaking to keep up with all the requests. Most of the publishers who call me don't need my help for their papers to be successful. They're already successful. And that may be the ultimate clue to what is happening at these newspapers. Growing papers tend to invest in their communities and staff to succeed long-term, not just produce quick income in the short term.

My work today is done. 811 words.

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



The Power of Being Specific

John Foust, Greensboro, NC

Motivational speaker and author Zig Ziglar used to ask, “Are you a meaningful specific or a wandering generality?” He related his comment to a number of areas: long and short-term goal setting, day-to-day activities, and dealings with family members, coworkers and customers.

On closer examination, it’s easy to see that his words could apply to just about any area of life or profession. Even advertising.

Why should we aim for “good” results for advertisers, when it’s much better to strive for x-percent increase in sales for their businesses? Why should salespeople accept vague answers to key questions, when it’s more useful to structure questions to get specifics? And why should we tell someone they did “nice work,” when it would mean a lot more to them to hear specific reasons why they did well? (Besides making them feel good, that kind of sincere praise encourages them to repeat the same successful behavior.)

It’s easy to be vague. It’s challenging to think – and communicate – in specifics. Yes, specifics are meaningful and generalities wander all over the place, without much significance at all. Generalities have no sticking power.

Let’s take a look at two areas that have a particular need for specificity:

1. Sales presentations. It’s natural to open a sales conversation with a general question like, “How’s business?” The answer is usually a mundane “fine” or “could always be better.” The person asking the questions is in position to steer the dialogue, so it’s up to the salesperson to transition away from vague back-and-forth generalities. Get specifics by asking for specifics.

For example, “It’s great to hear that business is fine. What’s creating those results?” Or, “I understand wanting business to be better. What kinds of things do you think would help?”

See what’s happening? This type of response can move the discussion into areas that give the salesperson something to work with.

2. Ad copy. Every salesperson should have antennae for good and bad copywriting. When an advertiser wants to say “save big” or “large residential lots,” alarms should go off. Neither “save big” nor “large residential lots” says anything of value to readers. Exactly how much can people save when they save big? And just how large is a large lot? We’ll never know unless the ads tell us.

Think of sports. Wouldn’t football fans rather know that their team won 33-32 than by “a narrow margin?” Isn’t a headline like “Jones hits three home runs to set conference record” more descriptive than “Jones has great game?”

Look for the specifics in these product statements: Save up to \$300 on your new refrigerator. Reduce your heating and cooling costs by as much as 20 percent. Each home in Lakeside Village will be built on a one-acre lot. Place your order by this weekend and get free delivery and installation.

Vague generality or meaningful specific? When it comes to advertising, this can make the difference between a marketing campaign that works and one that falls flat.

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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



Best Sales Call Format

Ryan discusses his sales training tip of the month - the best format for hosting sales calls.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tljX67ISBZI>

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](#).