

AMONG OURSELVES

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AD-GETTING SECRET GIVEN TO PUBLISHERS

The easiest way to sell advertising space to a local merchant is to find out what the troubles of the merchants are. That was the way in which Carl W. Jones of the Minneapolis Journal let the northern Minnesota editors into the secret of ad-getting, at their annual meeting in Little Falls, January 22-24.

By way of illustration, Mr. Jones told an interesting story of spending a day with a Minneapolis retail merchant who did not believe that newspaper advertising would help his business, yet was not satisfied with the amount of trade he was getting. An intimate study of this merchant's troubles led to the placing of advertising which produced such satisfactory results that more than four times the amount of space contracted for was used by the end of the year. Moreover, the merchant referred to has now become a confirmed user of newspaper display advertising.

Mr. Jones was very frank, however, in saying that, while finding out a merchant's troubles was the easiest way to get advertising, the getting of advertising meant a lot of study and persistent effort. Advertising, he said, could be built up only by continued study of problems and constant solicitation. He deplored solicitation, however, merely on the ground that a merchant ought to support his local paper or papers. The only ground on which advertising should be sold, he said, was that it would produce sales. He made a very clear distinction, however, between "card advertising" and "retail advertising." By "retail advertising" he meant advertising which gave descriptions of goods and prices as against advertising which merely gave the name of the firm and the kind of business in which it was engaged.

Haislet Supports Jones

Sam S. Haislet of the Western Newspaper Union, in a talk on the use of illustrations in advertisements, supported ably Mr. Jones' argument for "retail advertisements," arguing clearly and forcefully for the use of appropriate illustrations.

E. D. Lum, publisher of the Staples World, attacked the problem of advertising from a somewhat different angle, arguing for the advertising of advertising. Mr. Lum said that the best known advertising for advertising was a satisfactory subscription list, and that the merit of such a subscription list did not lie merely in numbers but in numbers in relation to the field. In other words, Mr. Lum said that any paper which covered its trade territory was a good advertising medium.

Mr. Lum insisted that it was well worth while to print frequently stories about advertisements which had produced results.

Mr. Lum, also, argued against the so-

licitation of advertising merely as an obligation on the part of the merchant to support a local enterprise.

How to Get Circulation

Rudolph A. Lee of the Long Prairie Leader said that the best feature for building circulation was a live farm department, such a department as would bring practical help to the farmer. He favored putting in the field a man qualified to gather and write agricultural material; a practical farmer, if possible. He recommended the use of the material distributed by the Department of Agriculture of the University of Minnesota, especially if a paper could not employ a field man of its own.

The development of a farm department in a country weekly, Mr. Lee said, very quickly opened up opportunities for practical contributions to farm prosperity. He cited the case of his own paper which, after developing an interest among the farmers in alfalfa growing, took upon itself the business of importing and distributing among the farmers one and one-half carloads of alfalfa and sweet clover seed which was sold to 495 farmers. These 495 farmers, Mr. Lee believed, had interested a like number in alfalfa and sweet clover. The paper's alfalfa project, therefore, had been the means of convincing practically 1,000 farmers that if they were not reading the Long Prairie Leader they were missing something of very practical value.

The thing to do, said Mr. Lee, is to get the largest possible number of people in your territory to feel that if they don't get your paper they will lose something of actual financial worth to themselves.

Lakes, a Community Asset

Louis Benshoof of the Detroit Record gave an interesting talk on the contribution of tourists to the prosperity of Minnesota communities, particularly in the lake regions. He said that the editors of the state had not generally appreciated the value of the great outdoors of Minnesota. He said that in Becker county with its 192 lakes it was safe to say the people derived as much benefit per acre from their water area as from their best farm land. He estimated Becker county's income from tourists at \$1,250,000 annually. He said, also, that the assessed valuation of summer homes in Becker county amounted to about \$500,000 and that these summer homes made use of land, which, in large part, would otherwise be considered as waste areas. He placed the value of tourist travel in Minnesota at \$40,000,000 annually. Citing these figures, he appealed to the editors to support the conservation of the game and fish resources of the state as a means of maintaining tourist travel as a source of revenue.

C. W. Herbert of the Northern Pacific railroad showed two motion picture films, "Minnesota's Ten Thousand Lakes"

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ATTRACTIVE FEATURES ON M. E. A. PROGRAM

Preliminary announcements sent out by John E. Casey, secretary, indicate that the annual meeting of the Minnesota Editorial Association at the Hotel St. Paul, February 20 and 21, will be one of unusual interest and profit.

It is expected that Gov. Theodore Christianson will be one of the leading speakers at the annual dinner Friday evening, February 20. Another speaker will be Edward F. Flynn of St. Paul, a Rotarian governor. This dinner will be the big social event of the meeting. The St. Paul Association and the St. Paul printers' supply houses will be the hosts. Special social features for the ladies in attendance will be a luncheon given by the St. Paul Supply Men's Association Friday noon and a theater party in the afternoon. The Supply Men's Association announces that autos will be at the service of the ladies throughout the two days of the convention.

Form Exhibit Planned

An exhibit of printed or ruled forms for the recording of business transactions in newspaper offices or printing plants will be a feature of the meeting worthy of study. Martin J. McGowan, president of the association, urges printer-publishers to bring such forms to the convention in order that the exhibit may be made as helpful as possible.

The meeting will open with an address of welcome by Mayor Arthur E. Nelson of St. Paul at 10 o'clock Friday morning. The response will be by H. Z. Mitchell of Bemidji, vice president of the association. This will be followed by the president's address, the secretary's report, the treasurer's report, and the appointment of committees. The rest of the morning will be taken up with a talk on "The Value of Sending Some One From Your Newspaper to Attend the Editors' Short Course at the University," J. P. Coughlin, Wascea; and an address on "Some University Problems," by Dr. Lotus D. Coffman, president of the university.

Field Secretary Possibilities

The afternoon program beginning at 1:30 will open with a discussion of the question "What a Field Secretary Can Do in Minnesota," by Andrew Bromstad of the Milan Standard. This will be followed with a discussion on "Minnesota Farm Bureau Publicity," by C. L. Franks, Inter County Press, St. Charles, and E. M. Lawless, director of publicity, Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation. Wright M. Patterson, Chicago, editor-in-chief of the Western Newspaper Union, will then give an address on "When the Newspaper is a Community Institution." E. W. Decker, Minneapolis, is also on

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ADS AND PRICES

There are still those who believe that advertising adds to the price of goods. These misguided ones do not realize that by increasing the frequency of the turnover the margin per turnover can be reduced to a degree that will allow for sales at a price lower than would otherwise prevail.

Meredith's Merchandising Advertising for January cites a case. It is that of a nationally known brand of grape juice. The manufacturer, according to the Meredith publication, was at first compelled to sell his product to the grocer at \$10 a case, and that was when he was paying only \$10 a ton for grapes. Today he sells a better product at \$5 a case, though he has now to pay from \$50 to \$60 a ton for grapes.

The foregoing statement is interesting. We wish Mr. Meredith's editor would give us further details.

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the program, for a presentation of industrial conditions. This will be followed by reports of standing committees: Legislative, Gunnar Bjornson, Minneota Mascot; state fair activities, Frank A. Day, Fairmont Sentinel; Dowling memorial, J. R. Landy, Olivia Times; radio, J. W. Whitney, Marshall News-Messenger; major in journalism at the University, Herman Roe, Northfield News.

Women in Journalism

Saturday forenoon, "Women in Journalism" will be discussed by Mrs. R. L. H. Lord of the Wells Forum-Advocate, and Mrs. Edith Brown Kirkwood, St. Paul. "Personal Reminiscences of Minnesota Editorial Association" will be given by Mrs. Marilla Stone, Rush City Post. W. H. Oppenheimer, a St. Paul attorney, will discuss "Liability Insurance from the Employer's Standpoint." The rest of the session will be devoted to the reports of committees and the transaction of business.

Reduced Rates, If—?

In order that members of the association may obtain reduced railroad rates, it is suggested, in advance material sent out by Mr. Casey, that on buying their transportation members ask their local station agents for certificates or receipts on account of the Hardware Men's Convention in St. Paul the same week. These certificates or receipts, turned in to the secretary of the M. E. A. at the conference and properly validated, will entitle the purchaser to a considerable reduction on the return fare.

- - An Editor's Views on Editorials - -

Alvah Eastman, editor of the St. Cloud Journal-Press, in a talk on "The Editorial Page," at the annual meeting of the Northern Minnesota Editorial Association, Little Falls, January 22-24, argued vigorously and convincingly for editorials as a feature in the papers of smaller cities and villages. He said:

"The paper that does not have an editorial policy, that does not have well considered and well written opinions, is missing a great opportunity for usefulness.

"This country has many splendidly edited papers, and some few not edited at all. The ideally edited paper should be the weekly, because there is more time for careful judgment, which is too often impossible in the grind and hurry of the smaller daily. I believe the lack of editorials—real editorials—is more a matter of laziness than lack of ability.

"The editor of the paper in the smallest village has a larger audience than the most popular preacher of his town. That should mean both opportunity and responsibility.

"What would be thought of a preacher who would confine his Sunday morning service to the news of his church, the announcements of the women's societies, the laymen's leagues, and the weekly prayer meeting—were one held?

"The country editor has for readers the boys and girls who will a few years hence comprise about 90 per cent of the successful men and women of the United States. What a wonderful field for glorious work for the editors who live up to their obligations and opportunities!

"The editor should be an evangelist, preaching justice, righteousness, not neglecting the material blessings that should be the share of all. Editors should not be too personally serious, but they should take their work seriously. Think what a great force for well being would bless the world if every edition of every paper had an editorial bringing cheer, stimulating hope, inciting thrift and industry, and inspiring appreciation of the blessings of this republic.

"Each issue of the paper should have one strong editorial upon some topic of interest to its readers—and there are so many important events in this age that there is plenty of material.

"Editorials should not be too long—and that is quite a common fault with a lot of brainy writers which is a symptom of too much zeal or pure laziness. It is so much easier to write two or three lengthy articles with an overplus of mere words than to dig up a column or two of short snappy comments. Blessed is the clever paragrapher—but don't overdo that kind of thing.

"There should be fairness, strict regard for facts, clearness of statement, and, above all, fearless conviction.

"Sometimes a little sarcasm at the follies of humanity is excellent, but use it with discretion. It is the salt that savors, but too much salt spells ruin. Much better is kindly humor, and the pleasant smile-producer is the gift of the gods.

"Be fair to the man or woman who does not accept your viewpoint as one having authority, but as a mere scribe.

Have tolerance for ignorance, sympathy for the misguided. Open your columns for criticism. Defend your position as a gentleman, but respect the views of others. It is the fair rule to give and take.

"Don't be namby-pamby. There are crimes to be denounced. Denounce staunchly and straight from the shoulder.

"If you have a good hobby, as you should, ride it for healthy exercise but not to its utter prostration.

"Know what you wish to say and say it.

"Be partisan, but not a bigot. Your party, or the men you boost into office, may make mistakes or worse. Don't try to defend the indefensible. The righteous wrath of the press is the safeguard of the people.

"The liberty of the press is the great blessing of America. But remember, liberty is not license. It is to be used with courage, fairness, and justice.

"In your writing, let kindness sit beside you. Give praise to the living who merit it. Eulogies for the dead come too late to cheer in the great adventure, however much consolation they may be to the friends of the departed.

"Do not be discouraged if all the world seem crazy. Be sure of your position and stick to it. It is said, God hates a coward. He must have greater contempt for the trimmer for policy's sake.

"Put virility into your editorials. Make them the dominant feature of your paper. If you live up to your opportunities, some of your readers will swear by your editorials, and a good sized flock will swear at them. But they will all read them, and if your cause is just you will eventually win. Having opportunity for expression, he is a slacker and a sluggard who does not use it, and rightly.

"The editor of the country paper has a leadership that is denied the editorial writer of the metropolitan press, whose individuality is merged in his paper. Individuality is the greatest gift to humanity. Don't abuse it. Above all, do not get to be foolishly egotistical.

"To summarize, the ideal editorial page puts its case thus:

I sit in judgment on the heroism, the virtue, the service, the wickedness, and the selfishness of humanity.

I applaud goodness; score craft and cruelty.

I preach patriotism and scorn traitors.

I invoke loyalty to my home, my city, and my country.

I am guided by courage, honesty, and unselfish service.

I give encouragement to the toilers, whether rich or poor; judge only by motives; care naught for rank or position.

I am a partisan, but with an open mind, supporting righteousness and denouncing abuse of office—but always first for my country.

I am a builder of good roads, an advocate of efficient schools, a supporter of the church; rejoice in wit seasoned with wisdom.

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ADVERTISE YOUR WANT ADS—IT PAYS

The outline of the system of advertising want ads, used by the Northfield News, published in the January issue of Among Ourselves, has led A. L. La Freniere, publisher of the Grand Rapids Independent, to submit samples of advertising such as he uses with effective results.

Mr. La Freniere's system is really very simple, and it is probably on just that account that it works so well.

In display advertisements he tells the story of want ads which have proved effective. An example of one of these display ads is printed herewith.

Mr. La Freniere informs us that he charges 50 cents per issue for each ad up to 50 words and after that 1 cent a word.

Ads Often Too Indefinite

One reason why want ads are sometimes ineffective is that they are too in-

definite; that is, they do not give enough information. This was emphasized in an article by Ralph W. Eldon and Charles O. Chatterton in a recent issue of Editor and Publisher. In this article two ads were printed by way of contrast. The first ad ran thus:

FOR SALE—Beautiful davenport, mohair covered. Bargain—priced right. Main 7409.

The second ad was more explicit and was as follows:

FOR SALE—Mohair overstuffed davenport, size 54 in. Best quality taupe mohair. Three loose cushions. Frame—white oak, screwed, glued and dowelled. Springs—best double-locked, double jointed, back-action. Bought at (name store) eight months ago. Carefully used and shows no wear. Cost \$200.00; have paid invoice. Sell for \$130.00 to first "early bird." Mrs. D. B. Jenks, 129 Rose St. MA 0422.

This is directly in line with what Among Ourselves has been attempting to emphasize, and that is that advertising of any kind should give definite information about the goods advertised.

FAMILY PARTY FOR NORTHFIELD NEWS

The Northfield News holds an annual family party. (Such a party, Among Ourselves may say editorially, is a mighty good thing for the newspaper individual.) The following is a report of the party published in a recent issue of the News:

When members of The News' family met at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Herman Roe Thursday afternoon for their annual New Year's party, they celebrated what for some years has been an annual event of much interest and pleasure. Because of the danger of mumps, only grown-up members of "the family" were present, but they celebrated in true style and declared that the party was the best one yet held—and that's saying something.

Twenty-six were served a sumptuous dinner of Norse dishes, to which all—Irish, German, and Swede, as well as Norske—did full justice. Clever banquet favors created fun at the table, while after dinner a visit from Santa Claus was the big feature. Names had been exchanged, for presents, and these were augmented by what developed to be rather serious raids on the variety stores. There were gifts for all, from Mickie to the Boss, who turned out to be a very generous Santa Claus, himself.

The third edition of "The Matrimonial Blues," edited by A. Libell Sute, was dedicated to three new diminutive members of the family, who had made their appearance during 1924. While leap year, matrimonially speaking, was not a good one for The News, hints were a plenty that the single members were to reform during 1925. Attendance at the Grand theater ended the festivities of the party.

A RETRACTION

Among Ourselves hereby retracts the statement made in its January issue to the effect that the Hanley Falls Press had suspended publication on account of a lack of advertising support. The Hanley Falls Press has not suspended, and it is not without advertising support. Among Ourselves is convinced of this by the receipt of the issue of January 16 along with a letter from C. B. Seip who is now publisher. It seems that the Press has merely changed hands and has not suspended.

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I listen to reason; act on conscience; but take no orders.

I work for the protection of childhood, the birds, beasts, and fish; the preservation of the forest; healthful and beautiful cities; the well-being of rural communities, and beauty for all.

I take truth, justice, and mercy for my guides.

My creed is: "The fatherhood of God, the leadership of Jesus, the brotherhood of man, salvation by character, the progress of mankind, onward and upward forever."

My spirit communes with the sages of all eras, drinking in the glory and wonder of limitless space, adorned by countless suns and planets, but always I keep my feet on the Earth.

I am the Ideal Editorial Page.

The Want Ads Do Great Work

The little want ads surely return wonderful results. Every week we have occasion to notice the work done by these little ads, and it is mighty gratifying to note that the advertisers get their money's worth and accomplish what they set out to do through their advertising.

Last week the paper carried the following ad:

WANTED—Two wood choppers. Have a good place for married man to live. Address by letter: C. B. Jennings, Grand Rapids, Minnesota, or inquire at the Independent.

12-1tp

A dozen men applied at the Independent office to find out about this work, and we don't know how many went to Mr. Jennings direct.

The ad below ran for some time:

FOR SALE—Five-room house, with bath, paved street, good location. A neat little home. Answer by letter to J. Care Box C, Grand Rapids, Minn.

44-ff

The replies were forwarded to the Independent, and in spite of the fact that real estate is not moving readily these days, the letters in reply came at the rate of about two a week, and if the owner of the house did not sell, it was not because the ad did not bring him plenty of prospects.

Other ads are bringing like or better results every week and they regularly prove the motto this paper has adopted—"If it is something that will move, an Independent 'Wants, For Sale, etc.' ad will do the business."

TRY ONE NEXT WEEK FOR THAT USED FURNITURE OR OTHER ARTICLES YOU WISH TO SELL

A Chapter On The "Lead" - - How To Begin

The facts which are to go into a news story need to be studied before the writing of the story begins. The writer should ask himself which is the most interesting fact or what is the most interesting thing about any given group of facts. His answer will indicate what is to go into the story "lead," and, in some measure, how it is to be introduced.

In other words, the writer of a news story is confronted with a dual decision. He must determine the fact on which he will place the emphasis and the way in which he will make his approach.

The formula for the writing of a lead and the developing of a news story is widely known. It calls for the answering of five questions: What? Who? Where? When? Why? We like the order given better than any other, though writers of textbooks seem to differ; either that or else they do not regard the order as important. Some place the answer to the question, Who?, first. Others give the time element higher rank than the place element. We believe, however, that the order given is the most logical. What happened or what the story is about seems obviously the most important thing in a majority of cases. Who is concerned, however, may easily be a matter of very great interest. In such a case, though, the who and the what are usually so closely linked that they may be brought together in one short sentence. The place element comes before the time element, for the simple reason that what happens on Main street is usually of more interest than a similar happening over in the next county or in an adjoining state.

A news lead, however, should answer in whatever order seems most appropriate the five questions mentioned. Then the facts may be developed in more detail in the same general order.

Two reasons underlie this formula. Following it, a writer is not likely to omit essential facts. Then, having written his story according to the formula, if when the paper is made up there is a shortage of space, he can cut off the less important paragraphs—even cutting off all but the lead—without sacrificing real news in his tale.

Having decided what question to answer first, the writer is confronted with the problem of method—how to begin. There are seven common forms: The direct statement, beginning with the subject of the sentence; the prepositional phrase; the participial phrase; the infinitive; the dependent clause; the substantive clause, and the direct quotation. Willard G. Bleyer gives examples of each in his book, "Newspaper Writing and Editing." One example of each is given in the order in which the forms are named:

Three unknown bandits robbed a conductor on the Hartford and North Haven Electric Railroad at the Westlawn siding shortly before midnight, and secured \$25.

By sliding down a rope fire escape John Wilcox, wanted in New York for forgery, eluded City Detectives Dillingham and Bronson last night,

while they were trying to enter his room in the Western House.

Accused of embezzling \$4,700 from the Erie Trust Company, John Fletcher, a bookkeeper employed by the company for three years, was arrested this morning.

To prevent private monopoly of the water powers of the state, Senator H. G. Waters introduced a bill into the senate today, providing for the purchase or control by the state of desirable sites for the development of water power.

Unless the \$150,000 guarantee fund for the democratic national convention is raised before tomorrow night, the executive committee of the Commercial Club will not extend an invitation to the democratic national committee to hold the convention in this city next July.

Why the United States needs an income tax, was explained by Senator William E. Borah in an address before the Progressive Republican Club in the Auditorium last night.

"No cigars sold to minors," is the sign conspicuously posted in all places where tobacco is sold, because the new ordinance recently passed by the board of aldermen went into effect today.

The formula calling for a summary of the facts in the first sentence or paragraph, with emphasis on the outstanding facts, however, is by no means always followed. In "The Best News Stories of 1923," recently published by Small, Maynard & Co., are found many news stories which ignore the formula. Here, for example, is the lead of the Chicago Tribune's story of the Chinese bandits' hold-up of a train near Tsao Chuang, which attracted world-wide attention:

Sunday, May 6, at 3:30 a.m., I was awakened by rifle fire. The train slowed down to about ten miles an hour and then stopped with a sharp lurch.

It is probable, however, that this story by a correspondent was preceded by a press association dispatch giving a news summary. In any case, though, one would hardly regard the lead as very good.

In the section of the book referred to, giving examples of straight reporting, the writers get to the facts at once. Here, for example, is the lead of the story about the wreck of the Twentieth Century Limited:

Nine were killed and nearly forty were injured at 1:30 this morning when a section of the Twentieth Century Limited leaped out of a dripping fog and crushed the rear sleeping cars of another section like eggshells.

Variety, no doubt, adds to the readability of a newspaper, but as a rule the formula in common use is a good one. It offers latitude for variety in itself, and what the newspaper reader wishes most is the "nub of the news." He is not much interested in how the details are served up.

The formula works well, also, when

applied to other kinds of newspaper material. It fits admirably the special articles and even the human interest story. It is a good rule always to make the first sentence grip the attention. The first sentence, in other words, should tell something that will interest the reader. Any kind of newspaper stuff that follows the general outline indicated in the formula and is written clearly, concisely, and with some originality, needs no apologies on account of style at least.

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and "Battling Small Mouthed Bass."

Other papers which met with the favor of editors present were those of Alvah Eastman, editor of the St. Cloud Journal-Press, Martin J. McGowan, editor of the Appleton Press and president of the Minnesota Editorial association, and Fred J. Landon, Dunwoody Institute. Mr. Eastman's paper on "Editorials" is given practically in full elsewhere in this issue of Among Ourselves. Mr. McGowan's subject was "Service—How Much or How Little Should the Country Newspaper Give to Customers?" Mr. Landon told of doings in printing at Dunwoody.

Cutten Is New President

The election of officers resulted in the choice of H. W. Cutten, Gazette, Red Lake Falls, as president; Grove Wills, Clarion, Eveleth, vice-president; A. G. Rutledge, Red Wing, secretary-treasurer; E. M. Lafond, Transcript, Little Falls, chairman of executive committee, and Mr. Benshoof, Record, Detroit, member of the executive committee to fill the vacancy caused by Mr. Will's advancement to the vice presidency.

Resolutions passed by the association approved Gov. Theodore Christianson's economy program; recommended the passage of a two-cent gasoline tax, the proceeds of which should be used for road building; favored the maintenance of motor vehicle license fees at their present level, and commended a proposal by Charles C. Babcock, state highway commissioner, for the refunding of county road bond issues as they mature at a lower rate of interest.

Little Falls, Generous Host

Little Falls proved a most liberal host to the visiting editors. Thursday evening the editors were the guests of the American Legion at a smoker, Friday noon they were entertained at luncheon by the Lions' Club in the new Elks' Club building, and Friday evening they were banqueted at the Buckman Hotel by the Little Falls Board of Commerce, after which they attended a presentation of "So Big" at the Lowell Theater.

Next year's meeting will be held at Sauk Centre, and Asa Wallace of the Sauk Centre Herald promises the "boys" royal entertainment.

The summer outing of the association will be held at Detroit, probably about mid-June. The editors of North Dakota and of the rest of Minnesota have been invited to share in the outing, and North Dakota has already promised to send a large delegation.