

IN 2000
ADU #10

AMONG OURSELVES

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
DOCUMENTS
OCT 4 1976
ST. PAUL, MINN., LIBRARIES

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

Entered as second-class matter December 1, 1922, at the post-office at St. Paul, Minn., under the act of August 24, 1879.

Vol. II

ST. PAUL, MINN., SEPTEMBER, 1924

No. 10

"SPACE ON THE AIR" \$200 FOR 10 MINUTES

Yes sir, that's the advertising rate of WEAf, the New York radio station of the American Telephone and Telegraph company. It costs more to go up in the air advertising than it does to take a flight in an airplane. But, according to Warren Bassett in Editor & Publisher for August 9, authority for the foregoing, "to date more than 250 companies have purchased and used this radio advertising, which differs radically from other recognized forms."

Mr. Bassett's article is illuminating. It shows that the radio stations in not a few ways are paralleling the newspapers. Among other things, Mr. Bassett says:

It is the duty of the radio program manager to fill the immeasurable columns of the ether with information and entertainment which will "hold" listeners just as the news editor fills the news columns.

Discovering "what the public wants" is the problem of program officials just as it is the problem of newspaper editors.

Radio broadcasting stations compete for listeners just as newspapers compete for readers.

An assignment book is kept in which news events of wide importance are listed for broadcasting.

And advertising, the backbone of the newspaper business, is not being neglected. "Space on the air" is being sold at the rate of \$250 for 10 minutes by the American Telephone and Telegraph company. A group of four salesmen is at work interesting firms in this form of advertising.

There you are! What is going to come of it? Is the radio going to become a serious competitor of the newspapers? That's a question. It looks as if the radio would be a competitor. The Associated Press refuses the radio stations its service. Is not that a concession of anxiety on the part of the metropolitan press?

The trouble is, one cannot be selective in taking what he wishes from the radio and letting the rest go. He has to listen to much that he may not care for to get the little that he does care for.

There is one thing sure, however; at least, one thing that seems sure; and that is that it will be a long, long time before the radio will compete with the local weekly, the home town paper. Who knows, though, but that some day pocket radio broadcasting instru-

ments may be invented. If that happens, the town gossips will possess themselves of such instruments, and throw upon the air choice bits of "talk" and then everybody's business, instead of being nobody's business, will indeed be everybody's business. Still, one will not have to listen in.

M. E. A. ANNUAL REPORT IS IN EDITORS' HANDS

The report of the 1924 meeting of the Minnesota Editorial association is now in the hands of the editors of the state. It is an attractive and valuable volume, and ought to find a place in the library of every Minnesota editor. The annual reports of the state association meetings are full of professionally valuable material, and besides should possess a sentimental appeal that would lead to their preservation.

There are too many things in this latest number to be mentioned in detail, but that "Message from the President" is worth reading again and again. It is the kind of message that carries inspiration. It would not be at all a bad idea to issue it as a leaflet, which every local publisher could put into the hands of his people. If not that, why not print it in a two column box in your paper, where the local merchants will read it—the local merchants and all of the towns people?

Suggests Co-operation

W. E. Soderling, editor of The Russell Anchor, Russell, Minn., writes:

"Co-operation seems to be the order of the day. Why wouldn't it be well for the publishers throughout the state to co-operate and publish a newspaper (or pamphlet) to be mailed to all business concerns which might advertise, educating merchants as to the value of the home town paper as an advertising medium? The merchants in small towns are slow to realize the full value of a paper to their town. Especially is this true in the smaller towns."

The subject is open for discussion.

Home Treasures

The family possessions of a community furnish the ground for good feature. The Service Sheet of New York State College of Agriculture recently told of a New York weekly which worked up a series of local stories on the old clocks of its territory. A good idea! In every town there are prized family possessions, rich in associations of some sort or other. Why not write them up? Publish a request that your readers inform you of such possessions, especially those with historical associations.

ADS SHOULD "TALK" TO PAPER'S READERS

The advertising merchant buys space in his local paper. What for? Why, to talk to the persons who read the paper, of course! Yet how many of such merchants actually talk to the people through their ads—actually talk to them as they would talk to a friend over the counter, on the street, or at a chicken dinner at the church?

An impersonal ad, announcing that William Smith sells drygoods, doesn't talk to the people. William, who is possibly known as "Bill" to most people of the community, ought to talk to the people who read the paper in which he advertises as he would talk to his neighbors who know him as "Bill."

Here is something from Editor & Publisher which carries the point made in the foregoing:

"If the proof of an advertisement is the reading of it, then the copy of F. P. Lawrence & Co., of Richland Center, Wis., passes the acid test.

"The first thing I look at when I get my paper each week," said a Richland Center woman recently, 'is the Lawrence company ad. I get more entertainment out of it than anything else in the paper.'

"Every reader or publisher of a country weekly knows that it is the locals which people read most. They want to hear what other folks are doing. Mr. Lawrence, appreciative of this, and also wise to the fact that people like to be jollied, started some time ago a little local department of his own which gives news and amuses the reader while giving it. He heads it 'Store News,' and it is on the front page. He talks about his store—really talks.

"Nearly always there is a surprise of some kind, or some customer's name is brought in, and there are always a few smiles. Once he told in a humorous way about a conversation he had with a woman who wouldn't pay her bill, giving her name. Another time he told of a prominent business concern which had taken away from him the right to sell a certain article of theirs because 'we were naughty boys and cut the price.'

"The paragraphs are friendly, confidential chat, well seasoned with good humor. The Lawrence company has found there is a big pull behind them."

The Radio in Our Town

How about the radio in your town? How many fans has your town? What are they getting out of it? Isn't there something in these questions on which to build a local feature of a good deal of interest. Now that WLAG is not broadcasting, what stations are your fans "getting"?

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AMONG OURSELVES

Published in the interests of the weekly press
of the State of Minnesota

by
The Division of Extension, Department of
Agriculture, University of Minnesota

Edited by W. P. Kirkwood, E. C. Torrey
University Farm, St. Paul, Minn.

Published monthly at University Farm,
St. Paul, Minn.

OUR MAILING CARD

In the August number of *Among Ourselves* was sent to the editor publishers of Minnesota a mailing card, with the request that the recipients use it to send in the news of their offices. The returns have been most gratifying. Some of the results are shown in this issue.

Keep them coming. It will take but a minute or two of your time each month, and that minute or two of your time will help to make *Among Ourselves* what it has aimed to be, a real service sheet in the cause of professional good fellowship. Keep them coming.

A FUNDAMENTAL

"The only sure way to gain circulation, the kind that is valuable to the publisher and the advertiser, is to make your paper bigger and better every day in every way."—W. N. Kant, manager of the New England office of the Western Newspaper Union.

In the foregoing Mr. Kant has stated a fundamental truth of the business. By "bigger," however, he does not mean in size so much as quality and strength.

This idea of Mr. Kant does not conflict with that presented elsewhere in this issue under the heading, "To Get Circulation, Go Right After It." To follow Mr. Kant's suggestion, is to make going after circulation a vastly easier job. Getting circulation is easy when you have something good to sell.

ANOTHER CODE OF ETHICS

The numerous codes of ethics proposed for the profession of journalism or for the publishers of newspapers are interesting for two reasons: They show that publishers are seeking to establish a professional philosophy of life, and that is good. They show, again, a striking similarity, which indicates that the ideals of publishers and editors are to a very marked degree in harmony. In fact, the common elements in all codes as yet proposed, from widely different sources, indicate that there already exists a sort of unwritten law of good among journalists, despite all that may be said to the contrary.

The latest suggested code, by W. M. Clements, managing editor of *The Journal and Tribune*, Knoxville, Tenn., printed in *Editor & Publisher*, covers ground that has been covered in other codes, but it is worth reprinting just for its clear restatement of the principles

actuating many newspaper men today. Here it is:

We recognize that as a newspaper's existence requires capital, justly entitled to a fair and reasonable profit, it must be operated upon sound business principles, which, however, need not and should not come in conflict with the duty it owes to the public, to the country and to the community that supports it.

Since newspapers were founded essentially for the purpose of providing news, a newspaper's first duty is to print that news honestly and fairly to all, unbiased by any other consideration, even including its own editorial opinion.

Its second duty is that of construing honestly and fairly in its editorial columns the happenings of the times at home and abroad, to the end that the people may realize their full benefits under a republic and require of public officials a faithful performance of the duties entrusted to them as servants of the people.

Its third duty is to protect its readers, insofar as may be reasonably possible, from evil influences in public life and from dishonest or misguided persons who through its own advertising columns might seek to mislead or exploit its innocent readers.

Lastly, its duty is to itself, its owners or stockholders—for unless a fair return on their investment is yielded, the publication must cease and, with it, its opportunity to perform any service to the public.

In furtherance of these duties we hold these principles to be compatible with both high editorial and news ideals and sound business conduct of a successful, prosperous and useful newspaper:

1. Fairness to its subscribers, its advertisers, to the public at large and to its competitors. Recognizing that honest differences of opinion exist among all people, intelligent or otherwise, we should not impute dishonest motives or unfair conduct to any person or any competitor until ample proof is available; until that time we may honestly differ and vigorously maintain our own opinions, but should not denounce others as dishonest.

2. Decency should be the guiding star in the printing news, editorials, advertising and all feature articles or illustrations. Even though at time pruriency, morbidity and a desire for sensationalism may seem to be in demand by a considerable element of the reading public, it is a newspaper's duty to keep its own columns decent and thus strive to hold steady the public mind in the path of right, morality and the service of God. "Is fit to print and to be read by my own mother, wife or daughter" should be the test, rather than "will it sell more papers."

3. Consideration for the unfortunate and for the guiltless victims of the faults of others. Though, knowing that publicity is the greatest deterrent of crime, we must expose fearlessly and without favor the name of law-breakers, we should protect the names of the innocent members of their families.

4. Respect and tolerance for those of different religions, races and circumstances of life. Ridicule may bring only pain to them, but its author cannot escape real injury in loss of the respect in which he is held by the public, if not by himself.

5. Honesty in our dealings with our readers, our advertisers, our employees,

our competitors and all with whom we do business; to give a dollar's value for every dollar received and to pay a dollar for every dollar's worth of service. We should do no less and should not be expected to do more.

6. First, last and always, to be truthful to the limit of our ability; to be as accurate as human fallibility on the part of others as well as of ourselves will permit; to willingly mislead none and to be fair to all.

Though temporary prosperity may be achieved by violation of some of these ideals, we conceive it to be our duty to hold steadfast to these principles and we believe permanent success will reward them.

MINNESOTA LEADS
NEW CLUB PROJECT

Minnesota has taken a commanding lead over all other states in the junior club leadership project, which was organized at the national meeting in Chicago less than a year ago. Three hundred of the older club members have enrolled in this project in Minnesota, says T. A. Erickson of University Farm, the state club leader. The ten best will be given a free trip to and from the state fair and from them will be selected one young man and one young woman to represent the state in the international contest at the big club conference in Chicago next December. To help the community by club work is the underlying purpose of this project. Young club leaders taking the work are allowed considerable latitude in choosing their particular projects, for it is recognized that each community has its own peculiar problems.

FARM SPARK PLUGS

University Farm crops men advise against the planting of winter wheat on land that produced winter rye this season. Enough of the winter rye will appear in the fields to lower the grade and price of the wheat, they say.

Available information on the farm storage of potatoes has been summarized in Circular No. 18, issued by the agricultural extension division of the university. Free copies may be obtained by writing the Division of Publications, University Farm, St. Paul.

Seed of timothy and clover which is to be used separately or in combination for developing pasture or hay crops next year should be sown before the middle of September, says Andrew Boss of University Farm. Well disked stubble lands usually make a good seed bed.

Winter wheat in southern Minnesota should not be seeded later than September 15 and preferably the first week of September, say farm crop men of the university. One and one-half bushels of seed to the acre is the rule.

The Second District Editorial association held its summer meeting August 1 at Luverne.

More "truth about the newspapers." Carl C. Dickey, formerly of the staff of the *New York Times*, is to begin in the September number of *The World's Work* a series on the subject.

**CREATING BUSINESS;
KEEPING IT AT HOME**

It will not be very long now until there will appear in many papers editorials urging people to buy from their home town merchants, from the fellow members of their own communities. Such editorials are all right.

They are all right—if the merchants do not depend on them alone to create sentiment in favor of buying at home. The merchant has his own part to perform in creating that kind of sentiment, and that part lies in persistent advertising of the right sort.

The long and short of it is this: If the home town merchant wishes to keep the advertising of out-of-town merchants and mail-order houses from pulling his trade away, he must himself advertise just as effectively and just as persistently.

The home town merchant has the best medium in the world, the home town paper, if he will only make the right use of it and use it regularly.

This thought was presented forcefully at a recent meeting of retail merchants in Minneapolis, by Hans Pauli, an advertising specialist from Des Moines. Mr. Pauli put the case thus:

"Business can be created and kept at home if the retail merchants will be consistent in their advertising. Advertising by retailers will offset other appeals to the family pocketbook. But the retail merchant loses his appeal if he is not consistent, whether times are good or bad. The secret ever is to be alert, recognizing that methods of business enterprises which are taking business away are based on advertising."

Bouquet for Mitchell

J. L. Frazier in The Inland Printer for August has this to say about The Bemidji Sentinel:

"Every day in every way your paper seems to be getting better and better. Indeed, were it not for the slurring on one side of the sheet, which is difficult to control, we'd say, 'Hurrah!' The first page is a crackerjack, but good first pages are more common than good papers throughout. For that reason the effect of 'pep' suggested by the Sentinel strikes us most favorably. Sometimes the borders are too black, when, for instance, twelve-point rules are used, and sometimes they are 'spotty,' like that around the Barker space, but the good points so far outweigh the bad features that we do not hesitate in applying the O.K."

J. Harold Curtis of The St. James Plaindealer landed in New York on July 31 from the Olympic, after a two-months' tour of England, Scotland, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Germany, and France. He attended the world Sunday school convention in Glasgow. During his absence he has made a study of agricultural conditions in various countries and will write special articles for various farm papers, giving his findings.

A "Versatile Crew"

The following from the office of The Le Sueur Center Leader—note that the name is no longer The Leader-Democrat—indicates prosperity and "pep" in the Leader office. It is signed "S."

"The Leader-Democrat, Le Sueur Center, recently changed its name to The Le Sueur Center Leader, as a matter of convenience and to give a more definite location to the paper. A paper without the town name at the head is often hard to locate at a glance. The Leader is now equipped with rather modern machinery, including a casting outfit and a saw. Six separate motors operate the machinery.

"While the crew is small, four, including the two owners, we believe we have the most versatile crew in Minnesota: Four printers, 3 operators, 1 machinist, 3 editors, 4 pressmen, 4 devils, 2 bookkeepers, and a darned good collector. Then we have a strictly paid-in-advance list of 1,500 at \$2 per. Outside of that we don't recommend ourselves very highly."

With four men who can do so many things the Leader ought to forge ahead. Here's hoping and believing it will.

**LEE LEADS WAR ON
THE GRASSHOPPER**

When the grasshoppers invaded Todd county, they made a mistake. Perhaps they thought they might get away with the crops in Todd county without opposition, because Todd county had no county agent. Well, Todd county has no county agent, but it has Rudolph Lee, publisher of the Long Prairie Leader, and Mr. Lee stepped into the breach.

Convinced that the thing to do to stop the advance of the plague was to get the farmers to use poison bran mash, Mr. Lee saw to it that the ingredients of the bait were provided. He bought the needed supplies and placed them at the disposal of the farmers at cost prices. The farmers were thus enabled to fight the hoppers and prevent larger losses.

The entomologists at the University Farm look for another outbreak next spring, and are calling on farmers and others to be prepared to give warning upon the appearance of the pests next year. In counties having agents such arrangements will be easily made, but in counties without agents, the matter of preparing for another season's warfare will not be so easy. Local papers can help by putting on their assignment books for next May and early June a note: "Look out for grasshoppers."

Howard Robinson, linotype operator and shop foreman of The Cass Lake Times, is directing a troop of Boy Scouts in building a log cabin in the Minnesota National Forest. Robinson is a Scout master.

The Cass Lake Times is now settled in its new home, the former Merchants Bank building. The Times now has a main floor space 24x75 feet, with a large basement.

**M. E. A. WANTS 400
MEMBERS; ONLY 30 SHY**

Four hundred members or more in 1924-25. This is the hope and ambition of officers of the Minnesota Editorial association, which now has about 370 members. M. J. McGowan of Appleton, president, is sending out the following "hint" to various editor prospects over the state:

"The officials of the Minnesota Editorial association have an ambition to put the organization in the 400 class this year—speaking of membership. Being one of the 400 has come to hold some magic spell in times past.

"Secretary Casey advises me that we now have about 370 members in good standing, so the desired mark is just 30 good newspaper men away.

"He also advises me that there are a number of eligibles who have not yet attended to that minor detail he considers so important to put one in good standing—that of remitting the necessary fee.

"Would like immensely to have this thing accomplished before the fishing season closes and before the hunting season opens up. Are you with us? If you don't like Casey send the six iron men to me and if you don't like either of us, pick out any name on the top of this letter head that appeals to you and direct it hence.

"The secretary promises to mail to you immediately upon receipt of the dues the current association annual which is just recently off the press."

Passes Birthday

With the issue of July 31, The Ellsworth News completed its nineteenth year under the ownership of Ernest E. and Ada C. Lovrien, who are now the "Nestors" of Nobles county journalism. In their time in Ellsworth Mr. and Mrs. Lovrien have done a lot more than issue a newspaper; they have reared a family of ten children, the last arrivals being twins, a boy and a girl. The eldest daughter, Ruth, is the News linograph operator. Miss Ruth is also news representative for the Sioux City Journal, and recently received high compliments from that paper for her services. The oldest son of the family, Edmund, 16, is an electrician and plumber, with two years of service to his credit.

Four Sons in Game

The four sons of J. P. Mattson, editor and publisher of The Warren Sheaf, are all engaged in the newspaper game, writes Thorval Tunheim, a graduate of the Department of Agriculture of the University of Minnesota, now serving on the Sheaf in an editorial capacity. Alvin and Waldemar Mattson, two of the sons, are proprietors of The Thief River Falls Times. Edgar and Oliver are with their father on the Sheaf. Oliver, who was a student at Gustavus Adolphus college, St. Peter, for the last two years, is planning to enter the University of Minnesota this fall, to take a course in journalism.

Mr. Mattson has been at the helm of the Sheaf for nearly forty years.

TO GET CIRCULATION GO RIGHT AFTER IT

If you would add to your circulation, be your own subscription solicitor. That is the advice given by a successful old-timer to a young man who was inquiring as to the best means of increasing his subscription list, as quoted by G. L. Caswell in the August Inland Printer.

According to Mr. Caswell, the said old-timer then went on to tell how he did the business. He got his paper out Thursday morning. Then he spent the rest of the day getting copy on the hook, to keep his machine busy. The next day, Friday, he started out on a definitely planned route, the list of his subscribers along that route in his pocket; also a list of non-subscribers along the same route. Sometimes he visited as many as thirty farmers in a day. He made these trips chiefly in the spring and fall when roads were good and the farmers had time to chat a bit. He said that he always managed "to double the number of new subscribers lost by removals or deaths." Moreover, he got acquainted with his territory, its people and their condition. He was a better editor for this knowledge.

That business of getting plenty of copy on the hook was a thing which stumped the young man seeking light. The old-timer said it meant work, but it could be done. He scanned the daily papers for dispatches containing material which might have a local application; he went through reports of town board meetings and of the county board for editorial stuff; he read exchanges and selected appropriate stuff. In short, he just went digging for stuff and he got it, and then, satisfied that he had enough "on the hook" to keep his machine busy, he went out after circulation.

There may be a better recipe for building circulation—aside from making a bang-up good newspaper—but it is hard to conceive of one. Contests and premiums do not make a better one. Put that down.

Pyramiding the Ads

According to an article in The Inland Printer for August, Dwight Curfman, manager of the Westerville (Ohio) Public Opinion, said this as to pyramiding advertisements:

"In the very first issue we made up differently. The two-column by five-inch advertisements found themselves submerged beneath a volume of advertising which was made up in pyramid style. Immediately it dawned upon the merchants who were using such space that if their advertisements were to be better seen they must be larger; hold their own against larger space users. Soon it was as easy to get a quarter-page advertisement as it had been to get a ten-inch advertisement before."

F. A. Bennett has just purchased the interest of L. W. Jahnke in The Sauk Center News, and is looking for a partner or a salaried editor and business manager. He is looking for a man of experience and ability.

Sauerkraut Draws

Springfield, Minn., is making ready for its annual "Sauerkraut Day," writes Fremont Schmidt of The Springfield Advance Press. Committees, says Mr. Schmidt, will soon be appointed to outline the program for the day. One of the features will be a display of farm products, for which substantial premiums will be offered. A free sauerkraut dinner will be served. Last year's celebration was attended by more than ten thousand, and it is expected that this year's crowd will exceed that of a year ago.

Say, let's go!

"Going On" Thirty

The Ely Miner has entered upon its thirtieth year, with Pete Schaefer, the founder, still at the helm, and apparently "going strong." Mr. Schaefer has been longer in service than any other editor north of Duluth.

The Miner office boasts, also, a loyal foreman in Jack Scraphine, who has been with the paper for 26 years continuously, "showing that the boss is not hard to get along with."

EAST SIDE JOURNAL MAKES GOOD SHOWING

R. Harry Sherry, editor of The East Side Journal, 888 Payne avenue, St. Paul, takes pardonable pride in his publication, copies of which have just come to the attention of Among Ourselves.

"We believe we have one of the best community papers in the northwest, with a circulation at the present time of 7,500," writes Mr. Sherry. "Our rural circulation is nearly 2,000 and building fast. . . . We expect very shortly to have a system for supplying our rural readers with more local news, such as we are carrying for our city subscribers."

The East Side Journal is a seven-column, eight-page paper full of news of interest to the people of the Arlington Hills, Arcade-Phalen, Dayton's Bluff, Mounds Park, and Hazel Park communities. It carries also a fine line of business-getting advertising.

An editorial page, devoted largely to problems of the district served, is a feature which doubtless commends the paper to the people of the communities and aids in building circulation, which seems to be growing fast. An evidence of the growth of the subscription list is seen in a list of new subscribers each week. The list in the issue of July 31 contained 215 names.

The paper is issued by the East Side Journal Publishing company, C. M. Stearns' name appears in the "flag" as publisher and Mr. Sherry as editor.

W. C. Starr, editor of the Sun, Redwood Falls, with Mrs. Starr, has been taking a vacation in northern Minnesota, where Mr. Starr has been trying to dodge a round of hay fever.

The Williams Northern Light, John R. and G. Robert Norris, editors and publishers, has just installed a new Country Campbell news press.

BUILDS GOOD WILL ON FREE PUBLICITY

Here is a contribution to that very much discussed question of free publicity. It comes from the publisher of a New York country weekly. It is given here because it contains, certainly, a very large grain of truth. A newspaper is built on good will, and the discreet use of free publicity can aid in the creation of good will.

But let the man present his own argument:

"There is only one thing that a country publisher needs to be more afraid of than giving too much free publicity to local enterprises, and that is not giving enough free publicity to these enterprises.

"Now do not think that I am defending the free space grafter. I am not. But what I mean is that a country newspaper stands or falls by the good will it has in its community. Ever since the cavemen first began scratching notices of the coming church social on flat stones there has been more or less of a feud between editor and community over what is advertising and what is news.

"I, for one, have come to the conclusion that my life is too short to try to educate my community, and so I am considering as news almost anything about our churches, schools, societies and the like that comes to me.

"I make just one stipulation: That the item must not mention price of admission. I find that almost every person, no matter how ardent a booster for his organization he may be, can see that when price is mentioned the item is an ad, and not news.

"I look at it something like this: Folks expect something for the \$2 they pay for my paper. Most of them think that items about the churches and the societies and so on, even though they may be entertainments held to make money, are news. I might better take their point of view, and then load my advertising rate sufficiently to cover this, than to be fighting all the time for a 25-cent ad for a church social."

Valuing a Newspaper

One of the questions which came up at the editors' short course at University Farm, St. Paul, last May was as to how to determine the value of a newspaper. Editor & Publisher recently contained an article by Frank R. Elliott on this subject. The article was based on the views of several publishers, and outlined three methods, as follows:

1. Count circulation and good will at \$10,000 per 1,000 of paid circulation and add net current assets and plant replacement value.
2. Value circulation and good will at the total gross receipts for a year, and add net current assets and plant replacement value.
3. Value circulation at the amount of the net earnings, capitalized at 10 per cent, and add net assets and plant replacement value.