

AMONG OURSELVES

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TEACHING PEOPLE TO READ THE ADS

"One thing we need to do is to teach people to read advertising," suggested Rudolph Lee of the Long Prairie Leader to L. A. Rossman of the Grand Rapids Herald-Review and to the editor of Among Ourselves, as the three were bumped along a logging road in the northern woods three weeks ago.

"How's it to be done?" asked one of the others.

"Through the want ads," was the reply.

There is a lot in Mr. Lee's idea. Newspaper readers can be taught to read advertising, and the want ad can be made to help in that direction.

The editor of Among Ourselves, however, is inclined to think that people will get the ad-reading habit most surely if ads are made newsy. If, therefore, one can educate his advertisers to write newsy advertisements, to put news in to their ads, it will not be long before the paper's readers will be reading ads as well as news matter.

Reference has been made in these columns to a sort of acid test for news, suggested by a former Minneapo's editor, to the effect that "news is what people will talk about at the supper table." If the advertiser, possibly with the help of the publisher, will put into his ads something about his merchandise that will set people at the supper table to talking, he will soon have people reading his ads—and, what is more, coming to his store to buy.

Here is an illustration. The Saturday Evening Post recently contained an advertisement of lemons. The ad was headed: "The world's most useful fruit." Then followed suggestions as to different uses made of lemons in the home, together with appetizing pictures of various dishes garnished with slices or sections of lemon. The declaration that lemons were the world's most useful fruit furnished a subject for conversation at the supper table of one family at least, a day or two after the magazine containing it appeared. It is safe to venture, also, that some of the uses suggested in the ad furnished subjects for conversation among housewives over the country.

The kind of thing done by the lemon advertisers in the Saturday Evening Post can be done by any merchant through his local paper. That is the kind of thing which will make people read the ads.

Incidentally, when an advertiser does produce a newsy ad, why not editorially direct attention to it, as you might to some unusual piece of news in the news columns?

Suggestions from others as to how to teach people to read advertising will be welcomed by Among Ourselves.

The News of Canby has begun its forty-seventh year and is still growing up with the country, it says.

Press Changes in Minnesota

Many changes have been taking place in Minnesota newspaper properties. S. S. Lewis has sold a half interest in the Cannon Falls Beacon to Lionel Erickson of that place. George S. Graham has disposed of his interest in the Hinckley News to W. H. Noble, and James L. Markham has retired from the St. Peter Free Press, having sold his share to the Weisgerber brothers who have been interested in the paper since 1920. The Mirror of Big Lake has passed into the hands of George Howell of Anoka, and the Minnetonka Pilot at Mound is now owned by Homer F. Ehle. As he is kept reasonably busy by his duties with the State Game and Fish Department, Charles W. Henke has leased the Dassel Dispatch to C. A. Smaby, who was until recently with the Saturday Review at Litchfield.

THE EDITOR'S BEATITUDES

Blessed are the merchants who advertise because they believe in it and in their business; for their prosperity shall increase manifold.

Blessed are the country correspondents who send in their well-written items every week; for fame of their friendly neighborhoods shall go abroad in the land.

Blessed is the woman who sends in a written account of a party or wedding; for she shall see the details of the function and the names of her guests correctly reported.

Blessed are all those who do not expect the editor to know everything, but who call up and tell him whenever an interesting event occurs to them; for they shall have a newsy paper in their town.

Blessed are they who get their copy in early; for they shall occupy a warm place in the editor's heart.

Blessed are all those who cooperate with the editor in his efforts in behalf of the community; for their town shall be known far and wide as a good place in which to live.—The Richland Advocate, quoted by The Washington Newspaper.

A Use for Exchanges

Instead of destroying our exchanges when we are through reading them we mark outstanding or large advertisements and mail the papers thus marked to local advertisers engaged in a similar business whom we are trying to educate to the use of large and frequent displays. The propaganda is subtle and indirectly suggestive and therefore effective. Advertisers are human and are willing to follow the leader when afraid to take the initiative themselves.—T. Work, Selma (Cal.) Enterprise, in Editor & Publisher.

THANKSGIVING NEAR; AND CHRISTMAS, TOO

The season when the lid comes off for advertising is approaching rapidly—at the rate of about 1000 miles an hour; that's the speed with which the earth turns on its axis, isn't it?

With the election out of the way, the approach of the open season for advertising ought to result in the burning of some midnight electricity, on the part of country weekly publishers, in the preparation of definite plans for the maximum advertising that the community and the season can produce.

Why not go carefully over your territory—while you sit under that midnight lamp—and make a list of every last possible advertiser and the things he might advertise for Thanksgiving? Then, having made up such a list, why not go or send some one after the advertising?

Thanksgiving offers opportunities chiefly in connection with its feasting. This means that the advertisers will probably be the butcher, the baker, and the grocer. But why not include the candlestick maker as well? By the candlestick maker is meant the man who has table decorations, place cards, flowers, and similar goods. In these days, one of the joys of a family feast is the beauty of the table. Why not cultivate an interest in that kind of thing? Get the teacher of cooking in the high school to suggest table decorations along with menus, and print these right away. If you can't get what you wish from such a source, find some woman in your community who has taste, and get her to give a few suggestions. Watch the News Letter, issued by the Division of Publications of the University Department of Agriculture for hints. The November issues of such publications as the Ladies' Home Journal are other sources of material.

Then go after the advertisers and get them to take advantage of the interest created, to boost their wares.

Again, how about getting farmers who raise turkeys, geese, or ducks, to do some advertising. There is nothing like a turkey or a goose right off the farm—nothing!

More Care for Christmas

Christmas requires more deliberation. The campaign for Christmas advertising offers a much wider field and ought to be worked out with greater care. Here the list of possible advertisers will be much larger.

Why not make out your list, and then go to the advertisers with a definite plan to co-operate with them in interesting the people of your community to shop at home. Such co-operation would call for editorial advice on your part as to the interesting reading there is in your advertising columns and the preparation of interesting advertising copy on the part of your advertisers—with your help, possibly.

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AMONG OURSELVES

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WHAT IS "GOOD WILL?"

"Good will" is a phrase frequently heard in business in these modern days. As the term is used, good will is regarded as the foundation of success.

Just what good will is, however, is not always clearly indicated. We think a fair definition is this. Good will is confidence plus an element of friendship. Good will alone will attract patrons. It will not do this to the same extent, however, if there is absent an element of friendship. One may have perfect confidence in two business men, but for the one he may have also a feeling of real friendship. When he comes to buying, therefore, he goes to the man in whom he has confidence plus friendship rather than to the man in whom he has confidence alone.

The moral of this statement is that the business man should devote a part of his time, use a part of his advertising, to make friends. It was this idea that led John Wanamaker to adopt a new plan in writing his advertising, using a column or two of space in the newspaper each day to talk in an intimate or friendly way about his business to possible readers. One of the large department stores in St. Paul has recently been publishing a series of advertisements or "ethics in business." The purpose of these advertisements has been to create confidence and a feeling of friendship.

A recent writer in Editor & Publisher, said that good will is the product of three things—good goods, good service and good advertising.

NEWS-WRITING SERIES

Among Ourselves has received several requests for a series of papers on the writing of news and other newspaper material. It has hesitated to attempt to comply. It is one thing to try to give instruction to college students who have had little or no experience in writing for the press. It is a very different thing to attempt something of the same sort for men who have spent years as writers and editors. However, the requests having been received, the editor will at least try to outline the principles of good news-writing and to illustrate in a measure their application by the press.

The first of the series appears in this issue of Among Ourselves.

NEEDS OF THE PRESS

Willard G. Blever, director of the work in journalism, University of Wisconsin, in a recent address before the Inland Daily Press association, among other things had this to say of journalism

as an unorganized profession:

What newspaper work needs most today is to be given a more definite professional status. It needs a greater feeling of solidarity among all newspaper writers and editors, from the 'cub' reporter to the editor-in-chief. It needs a salary scale for reporters, desk-men, city editors, and managing editors equal to that offered to men of like ability and training in publicity, advertising, and business. It needs local, state, sectional, and national organizations of newspaper writers and editors, comparable to organizations engaged on the business side of newspapers and to similar organizations in other professions such as law and medicine. It needs generally accepted standards of admission and standards of practice like those of other professions. It needs more general recognition by the public at large of the fact that competent, intelligent newspaper writers and editors, as purveyors of the food of opinion, are absolutely essential factors in the success of our republic, its government and society."

Mr. Bleyer's views apply not only to daily papers, but weekly as well, and is a real contribution to the thought and ideals, which are today lifting journalism to a higher position as a profession.

MAN AVAILABLE

Among Ourselves is in touch with a man of newspaper experience who would be interested in an editorial position. Publishers interested should address: The Editor, Among Ourselves, University Farm, St. Paul. For the benefit of the postoffice authorities it may be said that this is not a paid ad, but just a bit of information which may be of value to some publisher.

Want Ads That Pay

The Chicago Tribune has issued a booklet on the want ad. The title is: "Wording a Want Advertisement to Make It Pay." The gist of the advice is: "The more you tell, the quicker you sell."

As an illustration of the application of this idea, here are two ads. The first failed to produce the desired results; the second succeeded because it gave more details.

SALSLADIES—PERMANENT POSITIONS. Good salaries for young ladies who are willing to work. Apply Miss ——— 3rd floor. XXX & Co., 00 S. State St.

GIRLS—STATE STREET STORE needs several salesladies to receive training to later become department heads; prefer girls who live at home; experience not necessary. Apply XXX Co., 00 S. State St., 3rd floor. Miss H——.

The idea is a good one. Applied it will help to swell the want ad department returns by producing more want ads that will get better results.

The Tribune of Lake Crystal is prospering in the capable hands of B. C. Ellsworth and has found it necessary to enlarge to 12 pages.

W. V. Tousley, a prominent newspaper man of North Dakota, has cast in his fortunes with The Press at St. Peter and will have charge of the business department.

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sibly. That is, you would draw attention to the interesting quality of the advertising in your paper, and then your advertisers and you would see to it that the advertising was interesting.

A little bit—but not too much—about shopping at home might be printed, appealing to community and neighborhood loyalty, but this should not be the principal appeal.

The appeal should be to self-interest; to the fact that your advertising holds highly interesting suggestions, and then, through the advertising, the proof that what you say is true.

To make Christmas advertising interesting to the Christmas buyer, abundance of suggestions as to gifts should be given. Every ad ought to be crammed with suggestions for dad and mother, sisters, cousins, and aunts, sweethearts, and all the rest.

Christmas, also, is a day of good cheer about the table, and therein, again, is opportunity for advertising by the butcher, the baker, the grocer, the candlestick maker with his decorative candlesticks and other things.

Plan Takes Thought

Consider all of the things people will be wishing to buy in the next few weeks and all the people who have those things for sale, and then use your gray matter to the solution of the problem of bringing buyer and seller together through your paper.

The game is worth the candle just to see what one can do when the market is right, to create advertising. If you make good on it, too, there will be a large carry-over, for the man whose goods you sell through your Christmas advertising will be after advertising when he wishes to move other classes of goods than those which appeal immediately to the Christmas trade.

Daniel M. Coughlin, son of J. P. and junior editor of The Waseca Herald, has taken home a bride, formerly Miss Bessie Blackwood of Duluth.

The Tribune of Stewart, Gazette of Gibbons, Review of Jeffers, and the Press of Bovey are among Minnesota newspapers which are now being set on new linotypes.

The Tribune-Herald of Chisholm has moved into a new building and added a new press and other equipment. Happy days!

Arthur L. Sheets, who had been with the Crosby Courier the last six years, died October 12.

W. E. Stoothoff, who has had a long and varied experience in newspaper work in Minnesota, has joined the staff of the Tribune at Brainerd.

C. J. Buckley of Delano is trying to demonstrate his staying qualities. For 40 years he has been with The Eagle and contemplates sticking around a while longer.

A. W. Clement postmaster at Waseca and editor of The Journal, has been joined by Donald Brown, who will relieve him of some of his work on the paper. Mr. Brown recently sold his interest in The Star at New Richland.

Three Lamps of Good Newspaper Writing

(This is the first paper of a series on writing for the press, published by request.)

News-writing, and, in fact, almost all writing for the newspaper, calls for the consideration of two things: Style and structure. Style is the manner in which the writer expresses himself. Structure has to do with the arrangement of his material.

The requisites of a good style are fundamental; they are found in all forms of literature, and they are just as effective in one form as another. They apply with equal force in the news story, in the essay, in the special article, in the short story, in the novel, in the history, in the scientific paper at its best. They may be named in three words which may be called the three lamps of good writing. These three words are:

Clearness
Conciseness.
Originality.

Willard G. Bleyer, head of the department of journalism in the University of Wisconsin, discusses these requisites of good style briefly but effectively in his book, "News-Paper Writing and Editing," a book worthy of the study of any newspaper man.

Clearness Imperative

Clearness, of course, is essential. Any piece of writing which is not clear defeats its purpose. News especially ought to be presented clearly. The newspaper is intended for rapid reading, and one can not read rapidly if the meaning is not transparent almost at a glance.

Clearness is attained through simplicity—the use of simple words, words in common use, put together in direct, straightforward sentences. Big words, abstract words, are to be avoided for the concrete. Long and involved sentences must also be shunned. For a study of clearness one can not do better than to go to the King James version of the English Bible.

Conciseness demands the cutting out of needless words and the use of just the right word in the right place. Conciseness, again, calls for the straightforward sentence; for definite, clear-cut assertion. It forbids the overloading of the news story with details that are not essential to the report of the facts which it is sought to convey to the reader.

Economy of Attention

Clearness and conciseness make for economy of attention on the part of the reader. They save his time and mental effort. W. G. Shepherd, well known as a writer of magazine articles, was for several years a special correspondent for one of the large press associations. He said once: "My aim is to write my stuff so simply that the reader will not be conscious of any effort in reading; I try to make my stories what you might almost call stories without words." Mr. Shepherd's idea was just that of Herbert Spencer's essay on "The Philosophy of Style." He was striving for economy of

attention, a minimum of effort on the part of the reader.

Key to Originality

Originality is another matter. Originality has been regarded as something of a gift; something to which one is born, not something which can be acquired. Originality is the element of one's writing which separates it from the writing of others; it is that which distinguishes one's style. Originality is rather hard to define. It is based at its best on thought rather than on tricks of expression. Its richest source is in seeing things in new relations. Seeing things in new relations with some is a gift; with others it is acquired. In either case, it can be cultivated. To cultivate it calls for the study of the thing in hand, until some new relationship is suggested; some new relationship which can be put into a compact sentence, phrase, or word.

A few years ago a young man with some friends stood before a picture at an art exhibit in Minneapolis. The catalog gave the title of the picture as "The Yellow Tree." The picture was one of the impressionistic kind, a splash of yellow against a green background. After a look at the picture and a reference to the catalog to get its title, the young man remarked: "Looks to me more like scrambled eggs garnished with parsley." The remark may not have been fair to the picture, and, perhaps was rather silly as art criticism. It raised a laugh, however, because it hit off the color combination perfectly. It suggested an unexpected relationship. It was a bit of originality.

Mark Twain's Originality

Illustrations of the truth of the statement that originality, in large measure at least, springs from seeing things in new relations can be found on every hand. A story told of Mark Twain is another example. A friend once met the humorist on the street, and paused to tell him of the illness of a child friend of both. The child had a double infection, according to the story; say, scarlet fever and diphtheria. "Can you imagine anything worse than having scarlet fever and diphtheria at the same time?" inquired the conveyor of the news. "Yes," flashed back Twain; "having acute rheumatism and St. Vitus dance." The humor of the story lies in bringing things unexpectedly into a new relationship.

Flaubert's Instructions

With most writers these things do not come in lightning-like flashes; they are thought out, after the manner in the advice given by Flaubert to De Maupasant, in part as follows:

Everything which one desires to express must be looked at with sufficient attention, and during a sufficiently long time, to discover in it some aspect no one has yet seen or described. The smallest object contains something unknown. Find it.

Whatever one wishes to say, there is only one noun to express it, only

one verb to give it life, only one adjective to qualify it. Search, then, till that noun, that verb, that adjective are discovered; never be content with "very nearly"; never have recourse to tricks, however happy; or to buffooneries of language to avoid a difficulty.

This is the way to become original. Clearness, conciseness, and originality can be cultivated, but not without effort. Style in writing may be a gift, but, with most, it is a gift won through painstaking effort.

NEW JERSEY ADOPTS A CODE OF ETHICS

The New Jersey Press association, like that in many another state, has adopted a "code of ethics," and this code differs somewhat from others, which has come to the attention of Among Ourselves. For this reason, it is printed here. It maintains that members of the association should strive:—

1. To consider first the interest of the public.
2. To maintain secrecy as to the source of news or news information given in good faith, when requested or understood by the informant.
3. Never deliberately to pervert or misrepresent facts.
4. To eliminate, in so far as possible, personal opinions from news columns, but be leaders of thought in editorial columns, and make criticisms constructive.
5. To strive constantly to eliminate free reading notices and to keep reading columns independent of advertising consideration.
6. To decline any advertisement which has a tendency to mislead, or which does not conform to business integrity.
7. To solicit subscriptions and advertising upon the merits of the newspaper.
8. To supply advertisers with complete information regarding character and extent of circulation, including detailed circulation statements.
9. To give proper credit for articles taken from other newspapers or publications, and to avoid unfair practices in competition with them.
10. To make prompt and complete correction of serious mistakes of fact or opinion, whatever their origin.

The thirtieth anniversary of The Herald-Review at Grand Rapids prompted several interesting sketches and editorials from the pen of E. C. Kiley and L. A. Rossman, editors. The Independent of Grand Rapids was 22 years old October 2 and has been under the guidance of A. L. LaFreniere since 1905.

Harry Koeppen, who sold The Tribune at Stewart some time ago, has settled down at Ironton where he is editor of The News.

RICHMOND IS NEXT N. E. A. MEETING PLACE

The National Editorial association will meet next in Richmond, Va. So announces H. C. Hotaling, executive secretary of the association, from his headquarters in St. Paul.

Richmond was decided on as a result of urgent invitation, not only from the Virginia Press association but from civic groups in all parts of the state.

Three Days in Capital

Present plans call for three days in Richmond for the transaction of the business of the association and for the visiting of places of exceptional interest, and then a tour of Virginia, including in the itinerary Williamsburg, Jamestown, Yorktown, Newport News, Norfolk, Lynchburg, Roanoke, the Natural Bridge, Lexington, Charlottesville, Monticello, Staunton, Newmarket and Endless Caverns, Winchester and Harper's Ferry. All of these are places of historic or other interest.

The plan includes, also, a visit to Washington, D. C., and to Fredericksburg, and then to Mount Vernon and Alexandria.

The prediction is that the next meeting will attract a larger number of editors than any meeting for a long time.

A Membership Drive

The association is putting on a membership drive, for which prizes amounting to more than \$2,000 have been provided, according to Mr. Hotaling. The drive will close May 1, 1925, so as to allow for the announcement of awards at the meeting in Richmond in the following June. There will be fifty prizes, and the person who gets the most new members will be allowed the choice of all the prizes. The person who gets the next highest number will have second choice, and so on down the list.

BUILDING UP THE PRINTING BUSINESS

Building up one's printing business is a matter of systematic approach. It calls for a study of the field, the kind of printing it will demand, and solicitation.

Business organizations of various kinds in these days of successful merchandising first make a careful study of the field they expect to cover, the probable amount of their products for which a demand can be created, and then they go after the buying public to realize on the estimates they have made. All the time, of course, they seek to find ways of increasing the demand and broadening the field.

Just the same kind of plan can be used by the local publisher and printer.

Why not list the possible customers—buyers of printing—in your field, as a first step? Make this permanent; put the list where you can add to it, as names may suggest themselves.

Next, taking the list, make a careful study of the possible kinds of printing each person or concern listed might be interested in. Rack your brain for suggestions such as might appeal to each. This means work, but it is productive work, and will pay. One can not put everything else aside to work out such a scheme, but a little thought now and

then will soon crystalize a plan.

Then when the plan is ready, there remains the business of getting the business; of selling one's ideas to the potential customers on the list.

If such a plan works with others why not with local printing houses?

GETTING INTO AN OTHER MAN'S FIELD

The problem of getting circulation in another paper's territory is one which a publisher is called on now and then to solve. The editor of *Among Ourselves*, in connection with a study of the problems of one of Minnesota's country weeklies, recently came up against the problem. He had set out to visit farmers in the country adjacent to the point of publication. He wished to find out whether they were reading the paper whose problems were being studied, or some other paper, and he wished to know the reason for taking this or that paper. His travels took him into an adjoining county.

In this adjoining county he found the farmers were taking their own county papers, though their nearest trading center was that of the paper back of the investigation. The reason offered was that through their home county papers they got the legal and official news which was of most concern to them. In addition to this, they got a lot of general news which dealt with matters of immediate personal concern.

It was plain that these farmers did not feel that they could do without the papers of their own county.

Nevertheless, they were interested in the news of their near-by trading center, where they had many friends and acquaintances both in and out of business. Moreover, they wished to keep in touch with the activities of the community—its sports and pastimes and entertainments—as well as the news of its people. Some of them, therefore, took the community paper as well as that of their own county, but not very many.

The conclusion seems to be clear enough—that one in such a situation can not hope to displace the paper of the county in which a man resides. If he hopes to get circulation across the border in another county, he must do so by selling his paper *in addition to the others*; that is, he must recognize the county paper's claims in the field, and sell his own paper for different reasons—*because it contains the news of his trading community*.

Now to sell a farmer a paper in addition to one which he feels he must have is not an easy matter. It can be done, however. And there is one *surest way*, and that is to *print lots of news from the farmer's territory, getting in rather frequent items about the farmer himself*.

The foregoing is one of the preliminary deductions from the study which the division of publications is making in co-operation with the paper referred to. It is the hope of the division that some results flowing from the inquiry may be of considerable value to Minnesota's country weekly publishers.

Ham Clay, Sr., of The Tribune at Farmington, has bought out the Bancroft Printing company in Minneapolis.

SHOPPER REBELS AGAINST THE SALE

Sales are killing themselves. Every day in every way the merchant is advertising sales. There are too many of them, and the thrifty housewife is becoming suspicious. There is no doubt about it. As a result, some big advertisers are adopting the policy of no "sales" advertising. They simply advertise their wares, giving pictures, descriptions, and prices, and let it go at that.

In *Business*, published by the Burroughs Adding Machine Company, for October, appears an article on the subject. In the article is this:

One day recently I rode into town with a neighbor, and together we glanced over the advertisements in the morning paper I was carrying.

"Look" said she, pointing to an advertisement of blouses. "Embroidered crepe de chine suit blouses for \$5.95, reduced from \$11.75. Goodness, that's cheap."

I agreed.

"But," she remarked, "I wonder if the blouses are worth any more than \$5.95. You know that store isn't in business for fun."

There you are. The constant advertising of sales awakens a suspicion in the mind of the thoughtful advertising reader.

Another possibility intrudes. The advertisement reader has come to know that sales of goods a little past their season will be advertised—overcoats along in midwinter, say. Very well, the man who may need an overcoat thinks: "Well, I'll just wait a month and then I can get a coat at bargain prices." The editor of *Among Ourselves* heard a man make a remark of just that kind the other day.

So, too many sales spoil the broth of business. The merchant should be conservative about advertising sales, and when he does advertise a sale he should make it an honest-to-goodness sale.

On November 15 the first issue of a monthly to be known as the South Central Minnesota Real Estate News will be issued from the office of The Banner at Kerkhoven.

LeRoy A. Goodrich has been 18 years at the helm of the Lake City Graphic-Republican, which is 63 years of age and doesn't care who knows it.

James O'Brien of The Eden Valley Journal is doing California by motor. On the way west he visited with old time friends in North Dakota and Montana.

The American of Askov recently finished ten years of service to its community. The Star of Kennedy recently celebrated its twenty-fifth year. The Mercury of Motley has started its twenty-fourth year. For 17 years it has been under the immediate eye and hand of E. G. Haymaker, owner and publisher.

Kenneth Howard, who has been with the advertising department of the Minneapolis Journal, is now in charge of display advertising for the Austin Daily Herald.