

October 2001

# Telling our story



Joyce Carlson, Powell River Peak Publisher  
& Katie Dalziel, scholarship winner

## Rewards of Selling Network Classifieds

Remember, all you have to do is sell one network classified ad to have your name put in this year's draw to win a trip to vibrant San Francisco.

Thanks to everyone for your help in selecting a winner for our new BCYCNA \$5000 high school scholarship.

Katie Dalziel of Powell River answered the question, why a community newspaper is important, with a personal, thought-provoking and well-written essay. Her entry came from the Powell River Peak and competed against more than 80 finalists. Katie plans on attending university next year to pursue a science degree.

And here is her winning essay -

By Katie Dalziel

Whether you agree with globalization or protest vehemently against it you can be connected with the other side of the world in the same amount of time it takes to call a

neighbour. We can be in touch with a stockbroker in Tokyo, a business partner in France, or a university professor on the other side of the country via the web but we have trouble remembering our neighbour's name, who is on council, and what is happening in our community. Although large national newspapers may mention our town's name twice a year; our own name, a child's name, or a loved one's story appears in our local paper regularly.

The paper's staff enhances this sense of community and family. We know who the reporters are and go to school with their children.

Clippings from newspapers of the past tell the story, not only of a town, but also of a family and a community. Local archives provide pictures and write-ups on important events, new buildings, tragedies, and triumphs. Funeral, wedding, and birth announcements keep everyone in touch. The paper's staff enhances this sense of community and family. We know who the reporters are and go to school with their children. All this helps us realize that they are deeply committed and connected to the community.

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## Meet your new staff

I've already spoken with a few of you, but let me introduce myself to the rest of the members. I've just joined the staff of BCYCNA in the last month and will be working here full-time. My job description is varied and I'll have my hands on everything from classified ads to this newsletter and making sure our office runs smoothly. I will be in the office from 9:00-5pm, so feel free to use me as a point of contact with the association.

Trena White  
Communications Coordinator &  
Administrative Assistant

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### 'Key to customer service,' Sept 2001 newsletter

I so enjoyed this article. Common sense and empathy seem to be the key words and actions for me when it comes to "Customer Service." However, we must not forget that this does not only apply directly to "salespeople" but to any employee or employer who has direct contact with the public.

Jo-Ann Daffern,  
Customer Service  
The Chief Newspaper,  
Squamish, B.C.

## COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER FOR SALE

97-year-old Community Newspaper with paid, verified circulation (supplemented by PAP) for sale in Enderby, B.C., located in the North Okanagan Regional District, between Vernon and Salmon Arm. Wonderful community, great potential for independent operator.

Please write [mckyeates@telus.net](mailto:mckyeates@telus.net) for more information.

# Panel will decide on court-camera brief

The BCYCNA is pulling together a group of journalists to consult on the possibility of submitting a brief to the Supreme Court of British Columbia suggesting recording devices - including cameras - be allowed in B.C. courtrooms.

B.C. Supreme Court policy on media in the courtroom is "that there shall be no broadcasting, televising, recording or taking of photographs in the courtroom, or areas immediately adjacent thereto, during sessions of court or recesses between sessions, unless the parties to the proceeding consent, and unless prior permission has been expressly granted by the presiding judge."

Other provinces have different laws on allowing recording devices in court. In Nova Scotia, reporters can purchase audiotapes of court proceedings, but only for verification purposes, not for rebroadcast. Filming or photography is not permitted without the express permission of the court, except in the

court of Appeal as part of a special pilot project. New Brunswick prohibits making video or audio recordings in court except under special circumstances. Saskatchewan also does not allow video or audio recordings, except for ceremonial occasions or with the consent of the presiding judge. Ontario allows audio recording devices into courtrooms, but not cameras or broadcast equipment.

B.C. media lawyer David Sutherland is working with us to come up with the panel of journalists. "By increasing access, you will stimulate interest in community newspapers and the court system," he says. "This could become a national issue - whatever decision the B.C. Supreme Court makes could have ramifications in the rest of the country."

The deadline for submissions to the B.C. Supreme Court is November 1, 2001. We'll keep you updated on this topic in future newsletters. ■

## Free workshop Search warrants in the newsroom

The Law Society of B.C. and the Jack Webster Foundation are sponsoring a FREE workshop and dinner on how the media should handle search warrants in the newsroom. Journalists and media lawyers will review recent cases and discuss how to be prepared when law enforcement comes knocking.

Location: Law Court Inn in the Courthouse, 800 Smithe Street, Vancouver  
Date: November 8, 2001  
Time: 7-9:30pm

Reservations required. Contact Nora Newlands at the Webster Foundation, 604.261.6184 or email [info@jackwebster.com](mailto:info@jackwebster.com).

## For writers Professional development from CAJ

National Writers' Symposium  
November 3-4, 2001  
Ocean Pointe Resort and Spa,  
Victoria, B.C.

The Canadian Association of Journalists hosts the National Writers' Symposium, a professional development event for writers, reporters and editors. It's a

weekend of intensive, hands-on workshops, covering all aspects of the writing process. Bring your work for review at the 'Red Pencil' sessions where some of the best editors in the country will go one-on-one to help you sharpen your writing.

For more information, visit [www.caj.ca](http://www.caj.ca).

# The winning essay

Continued

In our knowledge-based economy we are increasingly realizing the importance of information. A newspaper that is locally run is that source of information for a community. Whether it is a small gas spill or an industrial accident involving chlorine the local paper not only reports on it but also provides information on how to deal with possible consequences. Controversial issues such as garbage and waste disposal are discussed and options are pursued. Heated opinions openly aired in letters to the editor lead to real change in popular opinion and public policy.

Many things contribute to a healthy, growing, and vibrant community but few things safeguard this vitality more than the local community newspaper. Our global village is made up of communities that are strengthened by the press, especially the local press. Helping us to get involved in the lives of those around us, the local community newspaper continues to play an essential role in this new millennium. As new technology grows so quickly, bringing us together as a global village, the community newspaper ensures that we do not lose our sense of connection to home.

Tying our busy and sometimes fragmented lives together cannot be achieved by cutting ourselves off from the broader world around us. However, before our presence can be felt on a national and global level, we must first seek to understand our own background, our own community, and our heritage. No one from across the world is an expert on our local politics but the local paper with its roots deep in the community will certainly keep us informed. Even though the issues a particular community newspaper may cover change over the years, the effect of that newspaper remains the same. It informs, entertains, and ultimately shapes a robust community. Not overnight, but with time, access to information, programs, and events helps create a community of people. People who are eager to get involved and who support local business, talent, and ingenuity.

# From Your General Manager

George Affleck  
BCYCNA General Manager



The world is changed. The events of September 11, 2001 have had an enormous impact on life, the economy, friendships, tolerance ... you name it. When I was woken up early that morning by relatives from back east, I sensed the news would not be good. But this ... this was my generation's Pearl Harbour or Kennedy assassination. This was big. And now we are coming to terms with the aftermath.

The worst part about it is no matter what you do or talk about, you do not want to sound trite. So is it right to launch into a discussion on how this might impact the newspaper industry? The International Newspaper Marketing Association (INMA) does not think so. They have released a special report for the newspaper industry titled "Newspapers in a Crisis Economy: What Lies Ahead."

The report (albeit American) is available for purchase at [www.inma.org/2001specialreport.html](http://www.inma.org/2001specialreport.html). It takes a look at how newspaper advertising revenues and profitability might be affected given what happened on September 11. The 25-page illustrated PDF file examines the potential ramifications to the newspaper business in the next five quarters — bringing together data, history, perspectives, and analysis that look at strategic scenarios expected to emerge in the weeks and months ahead.

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## **BCYCNA October 2001**

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Closer to home, we know things are not good.

The government in Victoria is revising its budget deficit predictions (again). And if we see any economic growth in this province, we are sure to be surprised.

Federally, Air Canada is looking for help, border and immigration policies are under review, and military action is being demanded.

Prepare yourselves — the weeks and months ahead might be the most challenging we have ever seen.

# Ups from downs



I have a wonderful friend, Claire Chew, who is 91 years old and with a little encouragement he will tell me stories about what it was like when he was growing up. He is very sharp and knows more history than most people. (Of course, he has lived through more history than most people)

I am a little more than half of Claire's age, but have been in the publishing business long enough to share a story of doing business in the old days.

In 1980, I was a new manager for our group of papers in Michigan and found the economy heading south quickly. Businesses were pulling back on their advertising expenditures. As the early eighties wore on and the economy continued to struggle we began to see businesses close their doors. Car sales had plummeted due to the high interest rates. Mortgages were at 18% interest. Radio stations, car dealerships and all types of retail businesses were beginning to close their doors under the pressure of the high inflation and economic recession.

I was 27 years old and too optimistic to let something get in the way of our paper's growth. I looked for the bright side. Most situations present an opportunity if you look hard enough to find them.

While in my early twenties, I had spent three years managing a retail furniture store and knew that all I ever wanted from my advertising expenditure was results. I wanted people to buy furniture. I wasn't concerned about what media I used just that the money I spent was bringing customers through my front door. I realized that especially in a soft economy that all any business wants from us are results from his advertising expense.

My strategy began while conducting a sales training meeting. I asked the salespeople why they read the newspaper.

They answered with the common answers, to keep up with the local news, to know what is going on with people in the community, what is on sale, etc. I asked if they were reading the classified ads. Most agreed that they were reading the classified section even more than in the past (probably job hunting) looking for used cars, furniture, garage sales and "good deals." Our shopping guide was increasing in line ads. Our salespeople, like our readers, were beginning to search for better buys on everything they purchased.

That was our hook. We convinced our advertisers that readers were looking a little harder for better deals on what they purchased and the readership of our line ads was at an all-time high. In the weak economy, more than ever, our paper was the source for consumers to find the best deals on everything they bought. They were reading the paper more thoroughly looking for the best product and the best price. Line ads and display ad readership were both being read more thoroughly. The result for the advertiser was better readership and more people at their front door.

In the weak economy, more than ever, our paper was the source for consumers to find the best deals on everything they bought.

I should say that this was not simply a story. The readership results were true. The results were not verified by an independent agency but the advertisers verified them. If the results were not there, we could never keep the advertisers spending money on advertising in our papers.

We also began looking at new opportunities for revenue. We began new exciting promotions and special sections that created more readership of our papers, community involvement with our papers and of course, more advertising revenue.

We experienced a true recession in 1980, 1981 and 1982 in Michigan. During that same period, our papers increased in revenues by 21% in 1980, 23% in 1982 and just over 20% in 1982. Three

consecutive years of 20% plus growth! Businesses were cutting back on their overall ad budgets but they were pulling money away from our competition and putting everything into our papers. They found we provided results. They were not sure the other media could provide results and were not willing to try them.

We were in the midst of a strong economic recession but found a positive approach with our advertisers. We also created some long-term relationships with businesses that continue 20 years later. Even though it took some convincing on our part, these businesses put their eggs in our basket and we delivered them safely to their front door.

*Dave Baragrey is a business consultant and sales trainer for Publishers-Edge, a Special Section syndicate for print and on-line special sections, and Consulting business specifically designed to help newspapers and shopping guides. E-mail: dbargrey@Publishers-Edge.com.*