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Valassis special postage deal goes out with a whimper

*By Tonda F. Rush, CEO and general counsel, NNA
Pub Aux, Nov. 20, 2015*

WASHINGTON—The long struggle between the newspaper industry and Valassis Inc., over the direct mail company's special postage discounts from the U.S. Postal Service appears to have ended with a whimper. In November, Valassis filed a report saying it had carried out no mailings eligible for the special discount. It announced it had paid an agreed \$100,000 penalty to USPS last September.



The tension between newspapers and its long-time insert customer began in April 2012 when the Postal Service requested a special contract rate for Valassis that was designed to pull advertising inserts out of Sunday newspapers and into a new weekend Valassis direct mail package. If the program had launched and successfully mailed 1 million qualifying mail pieces, Valassis could have earned a 22 percent to 34 percent Standard Mail postage discount. The newspaper industry fought the proposal, even taking it to the U.S. Court of Appeals. But in the end, the market ruled.

Valassis announced it had launched programs in May 2013 in Atlanta, Phoenix and Washington. It reported mailing 2 million pieces in 2013, but that these were not qualifying pieces under the rules of the contract agreement. There were no mailings in 2014 or 2015.

NNA President Chip Hutcheson, publisher of the Princeton (KY) Times-Leader, said the \$100,000 fine was a fitting end to an unfortunate chapter.

“We want to think of this whole experience as an episode of recession fever at the Postal Service. They were facing grim markets, as we all were, and USPS was grasping at straws. The fever ignited this idea of picking winners and losers in the advertising marketplace for the sake of maybe getting in some new mail volume. We at NNA didn't think it would work, and it didn't. So USPS got \$100,000, and spent unreported thousands in lawyers and analysts' time. The newspaper industry and Valassis spent heavily to advance their various viewpoints. And in the end, there was no new mail. Newspapers were undoubtedly hurt in those test markets and Valassis couldn't come up with the advertisers.

“There is a moral to this story that every parent knows: don't play favorites in the family. No good comes of it. We are glad this chapter is over and we intend to continue to work with Valassis to develop its markets and with USPS to improve the mail. Money is tight. We need to plant our seeds where they can grow.”

Good work!

The following newspapers sold network ads. To help inspire your paper to sell network ads, we've included the amount of money each newspaper made in selling these ads.

Week of 11/23:

2x2

Falls City Journal-Nikki McKim (paper made \$300.00)
Hebron Journal Register-Jami Knerl (paper made \$150.00)
Hickman Voice News-Linda Bryant (5 ads) (paper made \$925.00)
Hickman Voice News-Austin Roper (2 ads) (paper made \$325.00)
North Platte Telegraph-Mahaila Botts (paper made \$150.00)

NCAN

Broken Bow Chief-Shannon Murray (paper made \$149.50)
Kimball Observer-Penny Merryfield (NCAN Special Free Ad)
Nebraska City News-Press-Erin Johnson (paper made \$112.50)
North Platte Telegraph-Julie Murrish (paper made \$112.50)

Week of 11/30:

2x2

Falls City Journal-Nickki McKim (paper made \$300.00)
Hickman Voice News-Linda Bryant (2 ads) (paper made \$450.00)
Hickman Voice News-Austin Roper (paper made \$162.50)
Seward Independent-Patrick Checketts (paper made \$150.00)
West Point News-Karey Rahn (paper made \$325.00)
York News-Times-Paula Miller (paper made \$300.00)

NCAN

Broken Bow Chief- Shannon Murray (paper made \$149.50)
Kearney Hub - Laura Buehner (2 ads) (paper made 263.50)
Nebraska City News-Press-Erin Johnson (paper made \$112.50)

Norman Rockwell painting nets \$10.2 million for National Press Club



By Benjamin Mullin, Poynter, November 20, 2015

It may not be a Pulitzer contender, but one picture made a sizable contribution to journalism Thursday when it fetched more than \$10 million at auction.

“Norman Rockwell Visits a Country Editor,” an idyllic painting by Norman Rockwell, was sold to an anonymous bidder during an auction held by Christie’s in New York City. The National Press Club, which owned the painting, plans to spend the proceeds on expanding “a robust program of education and training for journalists,” according to a press release from the club:

“We’re gratified that this bucolic portrayal of a small-town newspaper newsroom from the mid-20th century has lived up to its estimated value,” said John Hughes, president of The National Press Club. “The impact of the Club’s stewardship of this great work will pay dividends far beyond what the artist might have imagined.”

After it was given to the National Press Club in the early 1960s, the painting hung outside the Reliable Source, an eatery on the 14th floor of the club’s building. It was transferred to the National Press Club Journalism Institute in 1988. When the painting came back to the club after a stint at the Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, Massachusetts last year, officials at the club worried they might not have the resources to keep it secure. So, they decided to sell.

The country editor who inspired Rockwell’s painting is Jack Blanton, who worked at the *Monroe County Appeal* in Paris, Mo., according to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. He was a 50-year veteran of the newspaper business who worked until he died at the age of 85 in 1955.

The bidding war for the painting was intense, with two executives at Christie’s outbidding each other by \$100,000 increments “for nearly five full minutes,” according to the press club:

The price was within Christie’s estimate of \$10 million to \$15 million, though Club members who had gathered to

watch the auction got concerned when bidding temporarily stopped at \$5 million before resuming its upward climb. “When it cleared \$9 million people whooped. When it went over \$10 million they went crazy.” Club Manager Bill McCarren said.

Reynolds Journalism Institute announces launch of Accountable Journalism database

Reynolds Journalism Institute, November 16, 2015

The Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute and the Ethical Journalism Network have launched the Accountable Journalism, <http://accountablejournalism.org>, database, which includes more than 400 media ethics codes from across the globe, as well as information about various press councils in a user-friendly and searchable Web application.

Within the database, users can search for media codes based on country, as well as by topic, type of organization, region and date of creation/update. In addition to improving the technology and interface, the revamped Accountable Journalism database also includes additional codes of ethics and links to hate speech, which is problematic both online and offline.

Although the database is launched, it’s a work in progress. A goal of the project is to be an ongoing crowdsourcing initiative to keep the database current.

The RJI/EJN team is asking people to submit codes that aren’t already part of the database, as well as submit updated codes that haven’t been updated in the database yet.

To learn more, please read the media announcement: <https://www.rjionline.org/stories/accountable-journalism-media-codes-database-launched-to-promote-ethical-com>



Lincoln Journal Star Advertising promotes Jill Aerni

Lincoln Journal Star, November 16, 2015

Jill Aerni has been named advertising manager classified and events at the *Lincoln Journal Star*.

In her new role, Aerni will have responsibility over recruitment, real estate, events and marketing.

“Jill has been an incredible asset to the advertising department during the past ten years and has held multiple leadership roles,” said Natalia Wiita, advertising director. “Her continued leadership will be instrumental to the success of our classified and events areas during the next year.”

Wynn Christian named director of digital sales for Omaha World-Herald

Omaha World-Herald, November 16, 2015

Wynn Christian has been named Director of Digital Sales for the *Omaha World-Herald*.

Most recently, Christian was director of digital sales for BH Media Group and was based in Auburn, Alabama. BH Media Group is the parent company of the *Omaha World-Herald*.

At the *Omaha World-Herald*, Christian will work with the newspaper’s account executives to develop effective digital advertising solutions for clients, and continue to direct BH Media’s national sales group.

“He will coach our staff to better serve the Omaha business community with multimedia campaigns that generate results”, said Larry Etienne, VP of Advertising for the *Omaha World-Herald*.

A graduate of Auburn University, Christian’s work experience includes serving as GM of a group of online properties in the southeast and as ad director of the *Opelika-Auburn (AL) News*.

Deb McCaslin named executive director of Custer Economic Development Corporation


Broken Bow native and former publisher and executive editor of the *Broken Bow Custer County Chief*, Deb McCaslin, has been named Executive Director of the Custer Economic Development Corporation. The announcement was made the end of October.

McCaslin, who retired from the Custer County Chief earlier this year after many years as publisher and, most recently, executive editor, received unanimous support for her appointment from CEDC’s executive board.

McCaslin’s accolades include the 2015 AARP Andrus Award, the 2014 ServeNebraska First Ladies Lifetime Achievement Award for Volunteerism and the Nebraska Press Association’s 2012 Harpst Leadership Award.

She currently serves on the National Newspaper Association Foundation Board of Directors, is the immediate past chair of NNA’s Government Affairs Committee and is a past president of the Nebraska Press Advertising Service.

In a recent Custer County Chief article about her new appointment, McCaslin said, “This is going to be fun. I have a lot to learn, good partners focused on the same outcomes, and I am looking forward to the challenge.”



Upcoming Webinars

PubAux Live - Creating a Letters to Santa Special Section
Thursday, December 3
Presenter Sue Brown, Pleasanton (Texas) Express

Using Alternative Story Formats: The How and Why
Thursday, December 10
Presenter Carlene Cox, GateHouse Media

Using Social Media to Engage Your Audience
Friday, December 11
Presenter Lisa Rossi, Des Moines Register

Register at
onlinemediacampus.com

High-quality, low-cost web conferences that help media professionals develop new job skills without leaving their offices.

“ Happiness is not something ready-made. It comes from your own actions. ”

- Dalai Lama

Tailored for selling

By John Foust, Raleigh, NC

Have you fallen into an order-taking rut? Are you passively relying on your accounts to tell you what and when to advertise? Are you following their creative directions like a police artist (“Make the hair longer, make the ears bigger.”)? Are you keeping up with events in their industries? Do you know which products are selling? Do you know what offers have worked in the past? What about seasonal merchandise? Should they consider featuring those products in a separate ad or a bigger ad?



There’s no excuse for being in a rut. If we look, we’ll find plenty of opportunities.

We can learn a lot about selling by studying other sales people. Each time someone tries to sell us something, we see the good and the bad come to life – from a consumer’s point of view.

I remember a trip to a clothing store to buy a new suit. I had shopped there before and knew I would have no trouble finding what I wanted. I was a hot prospect, ready to buy.

When I arrived, all the sales people were huddled around the front desk, talking and telling jokes. Expecting someone to follow me, I walked directly to the suit section and found my size. I glanced at the front of the store and realized that – even though I was the only customer in the store – no one had noticed me.

I picked out a suit and tried on the jacket. It looked like a good possibility, so I took the trousers into the dressing room, rolled up the legs and put them on. Then I put the jacket back on and stood in front of the mirror. With a few standard alterations, the suit was just what I wanted.

Another glance to the front revealed no signs of life. So, having made a buying decision, I found the alteration department and asked for the tailor.

There I was – standing at the mirror, pants rolled up 12 inches, coat sleeves reaching my knuckles, price tags hanging from the sleeves, tailor on the way with pins and chalk. Then a salesperson walked up and said, “Can I help you?” (No kidding, that’s what he said.)

“What a relief,” I thought. I was afraid I was going to have to write up the sale myself. (I wonder if they would have paid me a commission.)

In spite of the inattention, I did buy the suit. But that’s all I bought. The store was staffed with poor observers. In addition to taking ten minutes to recognize a customer, my sales person missed a chance to sell a couple of shirts and ties to go with my new suit. If he had been good at his job – if he had been more than an order taker – perhaps he could have sold another suit, as well. He made a sale and lost a sale at the same time.

Months later, I walked through that shopping mall again. The store was no longer there.

(c) Copyright 2015 by John Foust. All rights reserved. John Foust has conducted training programs for thousands of newspaper advertising professionals. Many ad departments are using his training videos to save time and get quick results from in-house training. E-mail for information: john@johnfoust.com

NCAN(classified) Ads:

- Ads running wk of 12/28/15
 - DL Tues., 12/22/15 at 10 a.m.
- Ads running wk of 01/04/16
 - DL Tues., 12/29/15 at 10 a.m.

2x2/2x4 Display Ads:

- Ads running wk of 12/28/15
 - DL Mon., 12/21/15 at 4 p.m.
- Ads running wk of 01/04/16
 - DL Mon., 12/28/15 at 4 p.m.

Please pass this information along to all employees.
There will be NO exceptions to these deadlines.

Our Office Will Be CLOSED Dec. 24 & 25, 2015,
CLOSING AT NOON on Dec. 31, 2015 & CLOSED Jan 1, 2016.

If you have any questions regarding the above deadlines,
please contact Carolyn Bowman.

Nebraska Press Association
Nebraska Press Advertising Service
800-369-2850 Fax: 402-476-2942
www.nebpress.com, cb@nebpress.com

Classified Advertising Exchange

Nov 30, 2015

NEWSPAPER FOR SALE: Bloomfield Monitor in Northeast Nebraska. Profitable weekly newspaper with strong commercial printing department and equipment. Reasonably priced, includes business and real estate. For more information contact Joe or Mary Skrivan, 402-373-2332.

ATTACHED TO THIS WEEK'S BULLETIN:

Classified Advertising Exchange, NPA Foundation
Holiday Letter, Online Media Campus Webinar Flyers.

Available through NPA:

**Reporter's Guide to Media Law
and Nebraska Courts (2005)**
\$3.00 ea.

Nebraska Open Meetings Act Booklet (2012)
\$1.00 ea.

(plus postage)

To purchase copies, contact the NPA office, 402-476-2851/(NE) 800-369-2850, or nebpress@nebpress.com

ORDER SAFETY VESTS THROUGH NNA

U.S. Dept. of Transportation regulation requires media representatives who work within the rights-of-way of federal-aid highways to wear a specific type of high-visibility safety vest. This applies to all newspaper employees - not just reporters & photographers. **NNA offers ANSI Class II-2004-107 safety vests with reflective markings and Velcro closure. In large letters on the back is the word PRESS. Sizes S-XL, \$19.50 ea.; sizes 2XL-4XL, \$21.50 ea. (plus S/H). To order, call NNA at 573-777-4980.**

Advertising in the Classified Advertising Exchange is no charge for NPA members and \$10 per week for non-members (approximately 25 words). It's a great way to sell or find equipment, hire a new employee, advertise a service which you provide, sell or buy a newspaper. Only Nebraska member newspapers may advertise for help wanted for Nebraska newspapers. No out-of-state help wanted advertisements accepted. Just mail, email or fax us your ad copy by noon Friday for the following weeks' Bulletin. For questions or additional information, contact the NPA office: (402)476-2851, NE: 800-369-2850, FAX: (402)476-2942 or email: nebpress@nebpress.com.



Nebraska Press Association Foundation, Inc.

*“We make a living by what we get, but we make
a life by what we give.”*

~ Winston Churchill

Dear Colleagues, Employees and Friends of Nebraska newspapers:

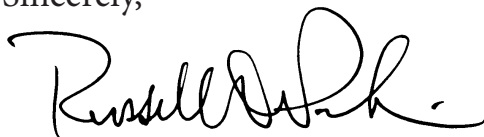
As 2015 comes to a close, I respectfully and sincerely ask you to consider supporting the work of the Nebraska Press Foundation through a year-end charitable gift.

Our mission consists of providing support - both financially and through staff resources - to working journalists, student journalists, adult literacy initiatives, summer high school journalism workshops, grants to high school journalism programs, as well as annual scholarships to college and high school journalism students.

Simply put, we could do much more with additional funding from friends like you - people who care about the future of print journalism, people who care about the important role newspapers serve in their local communities, and people who care about the generations of young people - future journalists - who will follow in our footsteps.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and generosity, and best wishes for a joyous holiday season and new year.

Sincerely,



Russ Pankonin
Chairman, Foundation Trustees



High-quality, low-cost web conferences that help media professionals develop new job skills without leaving their offices.

Using Alternative Story Formats: The How and Why



Thursday, December 10

2:00-3:00 p.m. EST

1:00-2:00 p.m. CST

Registration fee: \$35
Registration Deadline:
December 7

Presented
by:



Group discounts are available. Visit our website for more information.
Registrations submitted after the deadline date are subject to a \$10 late fee.

In this webinar...

Alternative story formats have been shown to grab more readers' attention, and allow readers to better retain information. This presentation gives an overview of how and when to use alternative story formats, and gives many examples.

Who should attend: This is an intermediate course for reporters and editors who are unfamiliar with alternative story formats, or would like new ideas. GateHouse recommends each newsroom run multiple alternative story formats in every issue published.

The presenter...

Carlene Cox



Carlene Cox is the director of newsroom development for GateHouse Media.

Cox is a member of GateHouse Media's News & Interactive division, which provides training and support to newsrooms throughout the country.

Presented in partnership with:



CANCELLATION POLICY: Registration fees cannot be refunded if a cancellation is made less than 72 hours prior to the session.

REGISTER TODAY AT WWW.ONLINEMEDIACAMPUS.COM



High-quality, low-cost web conferences that help media professionals develop new job skills without leaving their offices.

Using Social Media To Engage Your Audience

--Without annoying your friends and fans



Friday, December 11

2:00-3:00 p.m. EST

1:00-2:00 p.m. CST

Registration fee: \$35
Registration Deadline:
December 8

*Group discounts are available. Visit our website for more information.
Registrations submitted after the deadline date are subject to a \$10 late fee.*

In this webinar...

You must be proficient in social media and digital space, the job ad reads, but do you know how to effectively use social media to extend your news and advertising efforts? Or your brand?

In this webinar, IowaWatch board member, former American Journalism Review editor and now-Des Moines Register writing coach Lisa Rossi will share her social media expertise.

She will cover:

- Tips on the kinds of messages that work.
- The most effective times to send messages.
- How to get those messages to a wider audience.
- And more!

This session is beneficial for reporters and editors interested in learning how to better engage their audiences.

Presented in partnership with:

CANCELLATION POLICY: Registration fees cannot be refunded if a cancellation is made less than 72 hours prior to the session.

The presenter...

Lisa Rossi



Before becoming the storytelling coach at The Des Moines Register this past spring, Lisa Rossi was on the journalism faculty at the UMD Philip Merrill College of Journalism for two years where she was news editor of American Journalism Review. While on the faculty, Rossi taught a capstone course on advanced reporting and writing, along with social media.

Prior to that, she held leadership roles at AOL's hyperlocal digital-only news experiment, Patch.com, as well as editing posts at two lifestyle magazines in North Carolina. Rossi started her career as a news reporter at The Des Moines Register, where she spent five years covering a variety of beats.



REGISTER TODAY AT WWW.ONLINEMEDIACAMPUS.COM