

11/4/07

Good evening,

As promised, I am passing along the major details of our newsroom reorganization.

We will hold staff meetings to discuss it at 5 p.m. Wednesday for the night staff and 11:45 a.m. Thursday for dayside.

What I am posting here is a framework mostly, dealing with staff assignments. But that is only the first phase. We have considerable work to do if we are going to fully realize this structure's potential on the printed newspaper page and online.

Among other things, we'll need to revise all of our news protocols. And just about every reporter on the list will have to endure what we call a "beat clarification" process to establish topical priorities.

For now, the structure you see here will simply overlay the existing print and online newspapers. But if we do our jobs well, within a few weeks, you'll begin to see real changes on the page. They will be, I sincerely hope, for the better.

Let me say for the record, once again, with roughly 25 fewer newsroom staffers, there will be noticeable content reductions in some areas. No reorganization plan can change that. Some things we've done in the past cannot be done.

As we've talked with people today, several have asked "why me" or "why this decision instead of that." Well, the whys for these changes ought to be well understood by now. The San Diego Union Tribune announced a newsroom staff reduction targeted at 10 percent today. Other papers, in just the last few weeks, have announced similar or greater reductions. Our overall budget reduction will be about 10 percent. After rehires, our new staff will be about 12 to 15 percent smaller.

Absent these changes, over which the newsroom had no control, many of the assignment changes outlined below would not have happened. Many of the

columns we killed today would have continued. Many of the restructured departments would look unchanged.

But we had to make changes, significant changes and what is outlined here represents our best ideas for maintaining the core of our print newspaper while continuing to build our online presence. All of this can be second guessed and I would guess it will be in coming weeks.

But do always keep in mind, if it doesn't work, if it doesn't achieve our hoped for goals, then we'll do something else. More than ever, we need to be both patient and flexible. As always, my door is open to anyone who wants to discuss these issues further.

Among the most significant changes is the creation of a new online/print news team, sort of a journalistic skunk works. This team will be led by Carla Savalli, our senior editor for local news who has been our chief change agent in the last year, creating the 24/7 news desk for one thing.

Carla becomes senior editor for innovation and new content. She'll supervise the skunk works and also oversee our online operation.

Her team will include:

- Nancy Malone -- Deputy editor
- Kevin Graman -- Daily general assignment
- To be announced -- AM breaking news/general assignment
- Rehire or new hire -- PM breaking news/general assignment
- Erica Curless -- Idaho general assignment
- Jim Camden -- Online data base reporter

In addition, Bill Morlin, investigations and federal courts will continue to report to Carla. Jim Camden will be giving up his Spin Control political column. However, we're going to develop a new political blog, similar to the hugely successful SportsLink, where all of our public life and government writers can post on political developments.

The innovation and new content team will flip on its end the traditional late-in-the-day deadline structure. For this group, deadline pressure will come early in the day as they write first for the web and then provide context and insight for the online newspaper. They will use all of the tools at our

disposal, print, online, blogs, audio, video, etc., to tell the stories that make our region different from any other on any given day.

The reordered city desk will be run by Addy Hatch, our current city editor. Her deputies will include Dave Wasson, Dan Hansen and Scott Maben.

The big change in the city desk structure is the incorporation of the Business department and staff into the city desk. We'll continue to have a daily, Saturday and Sunday business section, of course. But the staff will be supervised through the city desk. Alison Boggs, the current business editor, returns to reporting.

You'll see that we've asked Shawn Vestal to return to reporting, meaning The Falls blog will end. And Pia Hansen is giving up her column to take on an important general assignment role. Bert Caldwell gives up his column and returns to full-time business reporting.

That gives us this city desk lineup:

- Alison Boggs – Social services/aging
- Shawn Vestal – Higher education
- John Stucke – Health
- Jody Lawrence-Turner -- Public safety
- Jonathan Brunt -- Spokane City/Spokane County
- Sara Leaming -- K-12
- Richard Roessler -- Olympia
- Rehire – Natural resources
- Karen Dorn-Steele -- County/state courts
- Pia Hansen -- GA/personality profiles/obits
- Becky Kramer – Idaho GA
- Betsy Russell -- Boise
- Parker Howell -- Business
- Bert Caldwell -- Business
- Tom Sowa -- Business/.txt
- Doug Clark – Columnist

Among the newspaper's most important initiatives is our Voices operation. This year, we launched a weekly Voice for Post Falls/Rathdrum/Spirit Lake. Next spring we'll launch a new Voice for the West Plains. We also have a twice-weekly Voice for the Spokane Valley and two weekly sections for the city of Spokane. The Voices are among our fastest growing print section and

readership just keeps growing. Under this plan, for the first time, the Voices will be fully staffed by full-time reporters.

Tad Brooks will continue to serve as Voices editor. Jeff Jordan is deputy editor and Jim Allen is assistant editor. Tad and his team will assign reporters to specific Voices. For the first time ever, a staff reporter will be assigned to Handle extra serving Kootenai County.

The Voices staff now includes:

- Nina Culver
- Mike Prager
- Lisa Leinberger
- John Craig
- Amy Cannata

Amy, our first mobile journalist (MoJo) will bring her particular expertise to the Voices where we intend to launch a significant online initiative sometime next year.

For those specifically interested in Idaho coverage, the breakdown is this:

- Erica Curless – Idaho general assignment
- Becky Kramer – Idaho General Assignment
- Betsy Russell – Boise bureau and capitol coverage
- To be named – Handle Extra/Post Falls Voice reporter (from the Voices reporters listed above).
- Dave Oliveria – Online and Huckleberries Online

That is a net loss of three Idaho news reporters from the pre-layoff period. We will continue to staff the Idaho bureau office. We'll cover Idaho preps and University of Idaho sports out of that office and Kathy Plonka will remain in Idaho as a staff photographer. The quantity and quality of Idaho coverage ought to improve immediately as we get these folks in place. Before the end of the year, we'll launch our new Regional page where content from Idaho and the Valley that doesn't make one of the section fronts will get good display.

On the Features side, the most significant change is the loss of Shadra Beesley as 7 editor. Shadra has been a force since joining us a year or so ago. She didn't just caretake the 7 she inherited from Nancy Malone, she put her own stamp on it. But Shadra is one of our most versatile editors. She will

move to the night copy desk where she will be an invaluable help in simply putting out the paper. My thanks to her. Jim Kershner will be giving up his longtime column in order to help boost our features reporting.

Features Editor Ken Paulman and deputy editor Rick Bonino will take on 7 as part of their regular editing responsibilities. Cheryl-Anne Milsap will continue to edit Home, write her weekly Home Planet column and produce our new Spokane Scene page.

The Features reporter lineup doesn't change over much, except we did have to accommodate for the loss of Virginia DeLeon. The staff:

- Heather Lalley -- Ethics, values and religion
- Jim Kershner – General assignment and performing arts
- Paul Turner -- The Slice
- Dan Webster – General assignment, books and movies
- Lorie Hutson -- Food/GA
- Tom Bowers -- 7
- Som Jordan – 7

Our online operation will continue to be run by Online News Editor Ryan Pitts who will report to Carla Savalli, but retain full responsibility for the operation of SpokesmanReview.com and our other digital platforms. This is a department where we took some serious hits. At one point we had lost all three of our online producers. Here is Ryan's lineup:

- Colin Mulvaney -- Multimedia coordinator
- Gina Boysun -- Programmer
- To be hired -- Programmer
- Andrew Zahler -- Online producer
- Thuy Nguyen -- Online producer
- Rehire or new hire – Online producer/multimedia
- Dave Oliveria -- Huckleberries Online

Our night and day copy desks, now consolidated, also lost a number of key staff members.

Geoff Pinnock retains oversight of our desk and production departments, as well as photo, as our senior editor for design and presentation. Bertil Peterson remains news editor. Adrian Rogers, who was deputy news editor until taking time off to go back to school, will return as Bertil's chief deputy. Copy editors include:

Tom Green
Kat Smith
Ruth Reynolds
Cathy Reynolds
Katharine Kumangai
Anne LaTourneau
Mike McGarr
Shadra Beesley
Rehire or new hire

Design and art staffers include:

Ralph Walter – assistant design chief
Rick House -- Copy editor/designer
Kimberly Lusk -- Copy editor/designer
Molly Quinn – Artist

The Editorial Page staff includes:

Doug Floyd -- Editorial page editor
Gary Crooks – Editorial page writer
Rebecca Nappi – Editorial Page writer
Lynn Swanbom -- Editorial page copy editor

The editorial assistant staff includes:

Mary Beth Donelan -- Administrator
Rainey Wilson -- Editorial assistant
Marissa Hipp -- 7 editorial assistant
Sherry Adkins -- Editorial assistant
Tracy Poindexter -- Editorial assistant
To be hired -- Receptionist

The photo staff includes:

Larry Reisenouer -- Photo editor
Liz Kishimoto – Assistant photo editor
Brian Plonka -- Photographer
Dan Pelle -- Photographer
Christopher Anderson -- Photographer
Jesse Tinsley -- Photographer
Kathy Plonka -- Photographer
Bart Rayniak -- Photographer

To be hired -- Photographer

The Sports staff is unchanged.