

THE FRIEND OF THE PEOPLE

Ski town newspapers are vital to the health of mountain communities



When I arrived in Lake Tahoe five years ago at age 30, I was seeking something...dare I say...professional? I lucked out with a job at Truckee's indefatigable monthly newspaper, *Moonshine Ink*, where I wrote about powder pursuits and local issues.

I was pleasantly surprised by how many locals looked to us for news. Nevertheless, an omnipresent struggle presented itself on how to relay to the public—especially the younger audience—the evergreen value of a newspaper against the quick-hit appeal of updates on a smartphone.

Plus, the revenue challenges outside of that are enough to grind down even the sturdiest publication. How to keep ad money rolling with Craigslist, Facebook, and Google? How to stay timely for a monthly publication when the internet updates itself every few seconds?

I don't know if we figured out any end-all answers, but it was obvious why our paper and others like it

are as vital as steep north-facing terrain and late-night happy hours.

Ski town papers offer local insight in a way that distant web-based media outlets can't, and I think we can all agree that Facebook just doesn't cut it. The papers and their reporters *get* your town and work really hard for little pay to make sure everything gets coverage, from deep-dives into local elections, to avalanche accidents, to senior citizen profiles, and junior freeride comps. When a particularly noteworthy event happens, the local reporters are often the first ones to get the facts out nationally, via print and digital, often guiding the conversation about the doings and doers in ski towns. All you have to do to reap their benefits is subscribe or grab one at the coffee shop.

What follows is just a few ways local rags can help you learn WTF is going on in your town.

—*Dave Zook*

Classifieds

Need a job, somewhere to live? Yes, you do! Check the classifieds section and remember not everything is online. That half-decent, highly sought out, and hard-to-find \$500 room near the mountain is just waiting for you scrunched in the back of the classifieds. Same with finding a ski partner or a used snowmobile. Or a snow removal service, via the *Park Record* in Utah.

Opinion

Want to know what makes the town tick, or gets people ticked off? Read the Opinion page, stuffed fat with raging passion on every possible ski town issue. Sure, some may be a tad dry—from the *Idaho Mountain Express*: "Be careful about expanding bike path use"—but they also discuss relevant issues to the modern ski bum, like backcountry access, transportation, wage inequality, and resort development.

Articles

Let's not forget classic quality reportage. The *Telluride Daily Planet*, for example, covers a full spectrum of topics—from tax measures for affordable housing, tensions between backcountry user groups, and the lamenting of lousy winters as a result of climate change.

Oldest of the Old-School:

The *Silverton Standard*, founded in 1875, is the oldest continuously operating newspaper on the Western Slope of Colorado. It almost folded in 2009, but the town's historical society stepped up and took it over.

From the Blotter:

Via *Taos News*:

8:48 a.m.

A caller said someone dropped a dog off at her property.

2:30 p.m.

A caller said some males were playing music loudly outside. When she asked them to turn it down, she said they flipped her off.

12:35 p.m.

A man wearing a black beanie cap was urinating everywhere.

Best Headlines:

"Long-range Forecasting is like Predicting the Super Bowl"
—*Steamboat Pilot*

"In Offseason, No One Can Hear You Scream"
—*Telluride Daily Planet*

"Getting Lit in the Environment"
—*Juneau Empire*

"Long-lost Yellowstone Llama Lured out of Loneliness"
—*Jackson Hole News and Guide*

Difficulty rating by beat



WEDNESDAY NIGHT BEER LEAGUE



THURSDAY NIGHT KICKBALL



FRIDAY NIGHT BROOMBALL