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Title: KEEPING LANCASTER COUNTY IN THE NEWS

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In December 1983, John M. "Jack" Buckwalter returned from a Florida vacation for a board meeting at Lancaster Newspapers Inc., publisher of the daily Intelligencer Journal, Lancaster New Era and the Lancaster Sunday News.

The meeting took an unexpected turn for Buckwalter, who at the time was executive vice president of the newspaper publishing company. "I was just sitting in that meeting and all of a sudden Peggy Steinman (a director and a company owner) moved that I be named president and chief executive officer," Buckwalter said in an interview last week, calling it the most exciting event in his 50-year newspaper career. "As I sat there, I almost fell off my chair."

Steinman's fellow directors approved, promoting Buckwalter to the top post at the newspaper company. It was the ultimate achievement for a man who literally worked his way up from the basement at Lancaster Newspapers, where he began working in the pressroom at age 15 on June 17, 1946.

On June 3, members of the Steinman family, Lancaster Newspapers' owner, hosted a black tie dinner at the company-owned Pressroom Restaurant, honoring Buckwalter's 50 years of service. After presentations by Caroline Steinman Nunan, Peggy Steinman, Caroline Nunan Hill and Hale Krasne, Buckwalter thanked his hostesses, saying, "I am a very lucky person to be associated with a business owned by the Steinman family."

In brief remarks at the dinner, Buckwalter reminisced about his first job.

"On the first day they sent me in search of the paper stretcher. Considering the price of newsprint today, I wish I could have found it," he said. "But that was a gag that they played on all new people."

In the interview, Buckwalter said he realized in those early days working part time in the pressroom that a career in the newspaper business was his vocation. He grew up close to the business since his late father, Isaac Z. Buckwalter, worked for Lancaster Newspapers for 43 years, retiring as the executive vice president in 1963.

During a seven-year stretch when his and his father's careers overlapped and they both lived in Millersville, they drove to work together. The commuting time served as valuable preparation for Buckwalter, because he learned many lessons from his father about running a newspaper business.

Two of his father's lessons make as much sense to Buckwalter today as they did when his father told

him in the 1950s:

1) Publishing a newspaper is a business of reporting local news that during a year's time must displease thousands of readers and hundreds of advertisers, yet the newspaper must carry out this responsibility and do it with truthfulness and fairness.

2) Keep company expenses low, so they don't exceed sales.

As a further reminder of his father - the most influential person in his newspaper career - **Buckwalter** has on his desk a leather folder monogrammed with his father's name on the front to hold papers on pending items.

**Buckwalter**, 65, a Franklin & Marshall College and Harvard Business School graduate, rose through the advertising and marketing side of Lancaster Newspapers

Since becoming president, he has guided the newspaper company through a period of dramatic technological advances in news gathering, advertising and production.

"He has done remarkably well in dealing with the changes in technology, most recently with the Internet," said Willis W. Shenk, chairman of Lancaster Newspapers and the president before **Buckwalter**

Before he was president, **Buckwalter** played an influential role in perhaps the most pivotal decision in the modern history of the 200-year-old publishing company. In 1978, Lancaster Newspapers' board of directors decided to keep the firm in downtown Lancaster. The company owned a 14.9-acre tract in Manheim Township and considered building a plant and relocating to the suburbs.

**Buckwalter** was then and continues to be an enthusiastic supporter of doing business in the city.

"There is no stronger an advocate, no one that champions the future of the City of Lancaster more than **Jack**," said Rufus A. Fulton Jr., chief executive officer of Fulton Financial Corp. and a close friend of **Buckwalter's**.

To that end, **Buckwalter** has worked tenaciously behind the scenes with local community leaders trying to find buyers for the vacant Watt & Shand and Pinnacle Mortgage buildings, two large commercial sites in the city.

Also, Lancaster Newspapers recently struck a deal with one of its downtown tenants, CoreSource, to

provide additional space to keep the third-party health-care administration firm and its 200 workers downtown.

**Buckwalter** said, "It is so important for the entire Lancaster County area that we have a solid center, a solid core, which is the city and the downtown. If that is kept viable, it helps the vitality of the entire county."

After deciding to stay downtown, Lancaster Newspapers spent \$50 million during the next 10 years to build a new production building and a parking garage, remodel the five-story newspaper office building and install a new flexographic printing press.

The ambitious renovation program, which underscored the firm's commitment to a vibrant downtown, was finished when the flexo press started rolling in October 1988. At the time, Lancaster Newspapers was only the second newspaper in the country to print a daily newspaper with the flexo process.

The flexo press has enabled the company to publish newspapers with water-based ink that doesn't rub off on your hands, clothing or furniture and to add full-color photographs and advertisements to the papers.

"There was no question about it when we were buying this new press, one of the big assets of flexo was its ability to print very high-quality color. This adds to the product immensely," **Buckwalter** said.

The entire news gathering and production operations at Lancaster Newspapers have been augmented with computers.

**Buckwalter** said the next challenge is to determine when to begin electronic delivery of the news.

Already, top stories from Lancaster Newspapers are teased on local cable television, but the Internet - dubbed the information superhighway - provides the future link between a newspaper and its readers.

Today, reporters can glean information from the Internet to help gather the news and the newspaper company offers Internet access to the community through Lancaster On-Line. However, to read the daily local news one must still purchase a newspaper

Certain newspapers across the country have moved recently to put the entire content of their daily papers on the Internet, basically giving away the news to computer users who surf the Net.

Lancaster Newspapers might eventually find an opportunity to sell news stories via the Internet,

but Buckwalter doubted the firm will give all the news away.

"The point is we're basically the main information source in Lancaster County. In that regard, we will be delivering the news whether it's delivered to the reader electronically or in a printed product," the chief executive said. "I would guess for a long, long time into the future there will be a newspaper, because of its portability and convenience and it's certainly easier to access exactly what you want, when you want it, in the printed product."

Combined daily circulation of the morning Intelligencer Journal and afternoon New Era has been declining over the past several years, but Buckwalter isn't overly concerned.

"The fact is we are doing things that have really slowed the rate of decline (in circulation). I'm confident we can build the circulation again," he said. "The one thing that of course impacted our circulation was we had to increase the single copy and home delivered price, because newsprint went up 61 percent in 14 months (in 1994-95). And then as you raise the price that impacts your circulation numbers.

"We've now come through a year's cycle since that happened and we're seeing signs that things are changing," he said.

The U.S. newspaper industry has consolidated due to declining readership and increased competition. Its own circulation decline, notwithstanding, Lancaster Newspapers plans to continue publishing two daily papers.

"I could say with a very high degree of assurance we will continue to have two daily newspapers in this town," Buckwalter said. "There are those that want an evening paper and there are those that want the morning paper. ... We operate them separately. Each competes with the other newspaper. By doing this, we think this maximizes the vitality of the newspapers."

When Buckwalter isn't in his fourth-floor office overlooking the first block of West King Street, he may be huddled with fellow members of the Lancaster Alliance or Economic Development Co. of Lancaster County trying to effect positive economic change in the community, or he may be managing his real estate development ventures, or he may be teeing it up on the golf course at Lancaster Country Club.

It's much simpler to find Buckwalter in the morning. He starts each day at 6 a.m. the same way, by walking a couple miles through his Lancaster Township neighborhood. While walking, Buckwalter carries a little voice recorder in his pocket so if something important comes to mind he can record his thoughts and listen to them later.

He's usually at his desk at work by 8:30 a.m. He routinely works through lunch, attending business

meetings. He typically leaves the office at 6 p.m., often taking home unfinished work. Although he has reached retirement age, he has no plans to stop working.

"Jack enjoys what he's doing, does it well and his health is good. Given all that, there's no need for him to retire," Shenk said.

Outside work, Fulton said Buckwalter has a good sense of humor to take the edge off his busy schedule. Fulton has seen Buckwalter's wit in full swing at the Hamilton Club in Lancaster, where the two businessmen are part of the Wash Day Club, a group that lunches together on Mondays.

Buckwalter takes a lot of ribbing over the lunch table from friends who bring him clippings of mistakes published in his local newspapers. Usually, Buckwalter reacts to the playful jabs at the papers with jokes of his own.