

I have been looking for something off and on for the past few days, something I know I have not thrown away. Right now, I wish I were more of a “saver,” as there are many things—mostly made of paper—that I have discarded and now regret.

I have one copy of one issue of the school newspaper I edited as a senior in high school. And, I only have that copy by chance. While I was working part time at the post office, we cleaned out some old files that were no longer relevant, and among them was a copy of an issue of the *Tustinaire* from 1962, the year I graduated from high school. The school newspaper was sent out as a boxholder from the local post office, and every rural mailbox and village lockbox received a free copy. We also sold papers in school.

I never realized at the time we were publishing that little newspaper how many skills we used that would be obsolete in just a few decades. And yet, those practices provided opportunity for us on the newspaper staff to exercise independence, initiative, creativity, and a good deal of ingenuity. Now, of course, I wish I'd kept copies of all of those papers.

The home economics room at the school was an old one room schoolhouse that had been moved to the school in the village and attached to an addition along a hallway. A basement had been constructed for the building, and that became our newspaper room.

Our excellent English teacher was also our newspaper advisor, but he left the paper up to us, knowing we would get the job done. The only glitch in the proceedings was the expulsion of two of our staff—the ones who were, at the beginning of the year, responsible for the art work in the paper—for smoking in the stairway that led outside as a fire escape.

So, there were just a few of us, about eight in all, who wrote the articles in the newspaper, constructed the advertisements, and produced the paper. I believe we printed a paper about every three weeks, so, perhaps, there were nine or ten issues during the school year.

After articles were written, we typed up the copy and made a “mock-up” of the paper. All of this came to mind when the “cut and paste” option on the edit tools of the word processing program I sometimes use caught my eye. I thought back to the days when “cut and paste” was really, physically, “cut and paste.”

If I had been able to find the copy of the newspaper, I might not have to think back and guess at some of the details, but I believe our paper, put out on standard size—but heavy—eight and a half by eleven inch paper, had four columns of print. Each column was, if I remember, 22 spaces wide. That figure popped up in my mind, but it might be wrong.

When we typed up an article, therefore, we set the margins at 22 spaces and made a rough copy. When a word could not be fit into that space, or hyphenated to fit the space, the end of each line was filled with /////.

When all of the articles were typed, we cut them out to fill our pages. After pasting them onto each mock-up page, we were ready to type the stencils—blue mimeograph stencils now only a memory to most people, and not even that to anyone under fifty. At this point, we “justified” our columns by leaving

extra spaces across each line to correspond to the number of /////s in the line. With a manual typewriter, one could also “squeeze” an extra letter into a line, so that was also sometimes done to justify the line.

Advertisements were made with stencils of letters of different sizes and fonts, line drawings that we could copy, and the directions of local businesses that paid for the ads. A sharp “stylus” was used to cut the stencils. And we did proofread and, I think, did a pretty good job of that.

The boys who ran the mimeograph inked the machine and ran off copies of each page of the paper. As the pages were finished, we laid each pile in order on our long work table. When all pages were finished, printed on both sides, and a cover page was made, the newspaper staff all came to the basement room, and we walked around the table, adding a sheet from each pile—hopefully, right side up—and when we reached the last page, stapled the copy on the left edge. We boxed the papers up, took them to the post office, and they went out to the local people the next day. At school, students could buy a paper for a nickel or a dime.

The *Tustinaire* had news from the various classes, profiles of seniors—each graduating boy or girl had a column sometime during the year—sporting news, news from the administration, and various other “features.” I believe people in the community looked forward to finding copies of the student newspaper in their mailboxes. The local grocery stores, the grain elevator, the hardware store, the bank, and the gas station were regular advertisers.

There was not much direction or control from the school administrators—except for one time. I wish I had a copy of our issue that mimicked *Mad* magazine. There were spoofs and satire and funny drawings, and probably infringement of copyrights if I remember a picture that didn’t deviate much from *Mad*’s own star character. That issue did get us in a little trouble, only because one of the articles referred to a “detective agency” with the names of the school superintendent and principal as the chief investigators. If I remember, I had to go to the principal’s office that day, where he chastised me while the superintendent sat there reading the paper and laughing.

A little more supervision of the paper room might not have hurt. Probably, if a teacher had been there, the mimeograph operators would not have inked the red handle of the machine when they knew that we girls were going to use it. And, maybe, the cardboard box with the target drawn on it that was standing on a folding chair would not have been there. And the sharpened butcher knife used for throwing at the target would not have seen action. But, we all pretty much did our jobs on that little paper, had a lot of fun, and finished each newspaper on the designated day.

So, I wish I had been more of a saver. I would like to look at those papers now to see if my memory is correct. And, at least, I wish I could find the one copy I know I have—somewhere.