

UP
front

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Some of you have been with us since the beginning. Thank you, sincerely. Some have found us recently. Thank you, too.

What is The Skinnie? It's a means of communication, entertainment, and connection, targeted at you and your community. It's an invitation to dialogue. It hopes to introduce you to people and businesses and organizations who are of interest and service to you. It's a platform from which you can express yourself and engage with others, if you choose. We strive to be an asset – your asset – as you navigate your life.

Twenty-two and a half years ago, a friend of mine perceived a hole in a market. While everyone in media was using technology to scale, hoping to maximize metrics like “eyeballs,” narrowly targeted assets, like small-town newspapers, were slowly dying unglamorous deaths. If we could frequently and regularly produce high-quality content in a way that makes our audience feel like they are in conversation with us, we could buck the trends and find a niche. A couple of challenges, though: We both had young families and full-time jobs, and neither of us had any media, printing, or graphic design experience. We enlisted another friend to write some things for the magazine, and the first friend decided to tend to his other responsibilities before we released our first public word. So, I had to figure it out...or stop before getting started. Trust me, figuring this stuff out isn't easy, but it's rewarding. The main reward is our relationships with you and our advertisers. We consider you partners, both.

We are a commercial enterprise, a for-profit business (aspirationally, at least), though nobody has or is likely to get rich making this thing. In a way, it's a passion project ...a creative outlet and a bridge between people who share similar experiences but might never meet in real life.

We are a family business, to an extent. My dad has been writing for the magazine since its beginnings. He continues to as a 91-year-old today. My wife manages the relationship with our clients and provides creative ideas. We bounce ideas off one another at home – some make it to you, some don't. My mom continues as a faithful delivery person, running copies to advertising clients every two weeks. Sharing this project with my loved ones is a gift.

Philip Schweier is our creative director, though he tends to handle a little of everything we do. He is our longest-tenured non-family team member, and you've probably interacted with him if you've done anything with the magazine. It's rare to find such a steady, dependable, capable compatriot. We are fortunate to have Philip on our side.

You are our silent partner. When you tell an advertiser that you found them in the pages of The Skinnie, you reinforce our fundamental worth. When you suggest a story idea, you reveal something to your neighbors that might inspire them and bring them joy. When you write a letter to the editor, you share your voice in a meaningful way. Do one or all these things, please. You are our reason-for-being and the engine of our shared success.

Thank you to each person I mentioned above. Thank you to every advertiser who has trusted us to connect with you. Thank you to everyone who has contributed a word or an image to our pages. Thank you to you.

In the immediate future, your assignment is simple. Enter our football pool. Find it and its easily understandable instructions on page 30. Like the lottery, you must play to win.

Scott A. Lawrence

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