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**HISTORICAL ANALYSIS  
OF  
THE MACOMB DAILY**

**By**

**Cindy Lynn Mooty-Hoffmann**

**A THESIS**

**Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
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## **ABSTRACT**

### **HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE MACOMB DAILY**

**By**

**Cindy Lynn Mooty-Hoffmann**

Between 1964 and 1988, The Macomb Daily was owned by a private family, a public chain and a private chain. Based on circulation figures, it was most successful when it was owned privately, followed by private chain ownership, and lastly as a public chain.

As a private newspaper (1964-1971), local news accounted for 52 percent of the stories counted, 46 percent of the front page column inches, and 13 percent of column inches on the editorial pages. There were also fewer reporters writing the shortest articles.

As a private chain (1982-1988), local news accounted for 64 percent of the stories counted, 100 percent of front page column inches, and 34 percent of the column inches on the editorial pages. The reporters also averaged the most articles.

As part of a public chain (1971-1982), local news accounted for 43 percent of the stories counted, 81 percent of front page column inches, and 36 percent of column inches on the editorial pages. There were also the most local editorials, and the largest staff writing the longest articles.

***For my husband, Peter Thomas Hoffmann.***

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This thesis could not have been completed without the assistance of Michigan State University Associate Professor Stephen Lacy. He has helped through each phase of this thesis.

Also, gratitude is owed to co-workers Diane Kish and Donna Zetterlund. Ms. Kish assisted in the reliability check for measuring and coding the newspapers, while Ms. Zetterlund provided the artwork in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

Thank you all, sincerely.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

From 1964 to 1990, Macomb County's only local daily newspaper, The Macomb Daily, has had four different types of owners--private, independent owners; a public corporation which owned approximately 100 other newspapers; a private corporation which had six newspapers all in the Detroit area; and a private, out-of-state corporation which owns other newspapers and magazines.

This thesis examined the news-editorial content of the newspaper during its first three ownerships to determine the percentage of local news which was printed. The newspaper under the current owners, Adams Communication Corp., was not analyzed because the format changes in the news-editorial pages took place near the end of the research portion of this thesis.

The purpose of this paper is to determine the future of The Macomb Daily by analyzing it's past. Specifically, the author wanted to establish under which type of ownership was the newspaper most successful based on its circulation and Penetration figures and the amount of local news that was Printed.



Analyzing this daily newspaper is significant because the variety of owners it has had during the past twenty-five years is consistent with ownership patterns of newspapers across the nation.<sup>1</sup>

Previous research has determined that newspapers owned by public chains have a variety of problems, most of which center around the desire to have maximum profits in order to create a high valuation of the company's stock.<sup>2</sup> This desire for profits could cause publishers to place a greater emphasis on earnings over the quality of the publication so they can climb the corporate ladder.<sup>3</sup> Other problems of public chains include using chain-owned wire services which result in less local reporting and similar opinions on the editorial pages.<sup>4</sup> There also may be fewer editorials on local issues, fewer editorials on controversial topics and the paper's editorials could become "less vigorous."<sup>5</sup> Another problem is that political endorsements could become more homogenous in their

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<sup>1</sup>Ben H. Bagdikian, "Conglomeration, Concentration and the Media," *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 30, 1980, pp. 59-64.

<sup>2</sup>Philip Meyer and Stanley Wearden, "The Effects of Public Ownership on Newspaper Companies: A preliminary inquiry," *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 48, 1984, New York, pp. 564-577.

<sup>3</sup>John Soloski, "Economics and Management: The Real Influence of Newspaper Groups," *Newspaper Research Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Nov. 1979, pp. 19-27.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>Ralph R. Thrift, Jr., "How Chain Ownership Affects Editorial Vigor of Newspapers," *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 54, 1977, pp. 327-331.

support of the favored candidate.<sup>6</sup>

Private ownership has its own unique set of problems, primarily a lack of funding which could lead to a reduced staff.<sup>7</sup>

An examination of a newspaper, like The Macomb Daily, that has gone through these different types of ownerships, can be used to further test those research findings.

A secondary importance for this thesis is that there is a lack of research concerning suburban dailies and their various owners. Research on suburban newspapers has detailed at length the type of articles that are printed<sup>8</sup> and the variety of competition the suburban papers face.<sup>9</sup> However, there have been few analyses done comparing one particular newspaper's performance under different owners. Perhaps, the best analysis in this area is The Buying and Selling of

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<sup>6</sup>Daniel B. Wackman, Donald M. Gillmor, Cecilie Gaziano and Everette E. Dennis, "Chain Newspaper Autonomy as Reflected in Presidential Campaign Endorsements," *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 52, 1975, pp. 411-420.

<sup>7</sup>Loren Ghiglione, *The Buying and Selling of America's Newspapers*, R.J. Berg & Co., Indianapolis, Ind., 1984.

<sup>8</sup>George A. Donohue, Clarice N. Olien, and Phillip J. Tichenor, "Reporting Conflict by Pluralism, Newspaper Type and Ownership," *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 64, 1985, pp. 489-499; Ronald H. Wagenburg and Walter Soderlund, "The Influence of Chain Ownership on Editorial Comment in Canada," *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 52, 1975, pp. 93-98.

<sup>9</sup>Gerard H. Borstel, "Ownership, Competition and Comment in 20 Small Dailies," *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 33, 1956, pp. 220-222; Stephen Lacy, "The Effects of Group Ownership on Daily Newspaper Content," *Journal of Media Economics*, in press.

America's Newspapers in which Ghiglione analyzed ten newspapers which had been sold from families to chains and found mixed results as to whether private or public ownership was best.<sup>10</sup> However, that study was done nearly a decade ago and needs to be updated.

A final rationale for this paper is to discover the amount of local news printed under the various owners to calculate when it was the most successful. An analysis of what has been successful in the past, may be used to draw conclusions about what can be done in the future to make the paper more prosperous. This may be helpful especially now that the paper has experienced a recent drop in circulation figures.

The Macomb Daily is a suburban daily newspaper based in the county seat of Mount Clemens, Michigan. (See Appendix 1 for area map.) Since 1923, the Mark McKee Sr. family of Mount Clemens owned several newspapers in Macomb County and created a daily newspaper in 1942. However, it wasn't until 1964 that the family decided to combine their weekly papers with the daily newspaper to make one large newspaper circulating throughout Macomb County. They named this paper The Macomb Daily. It remained in the McKee family until 1971 when they sold it to the Panax Corp., a public chain of papers owned by John McGoff. During the economic strain of the 1980s, McGoff attempted to sell all of his newspapers, but could not find

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<sup>10</sup>Ghiglione, Buying and Selling, 1983.

anyone willing to purchase The Macomb Daily. At that time, he sold the paper from his public Panax Corp. to his private SEM Newspaper chain in 1982. Both newspapers were officially owned by McGoff, who worked from his corporate offices in Williamston, Michigan, near Lansing.

The Macomb Daily is currently the property of another chain, the Adams Communication Corp. However, this company differs from the others in two ways: it has headquarters in Florida and Minnesota, not locally like the rest, and The Macomb Daily was the only newspaper within that corporation at the time of purchase. It has since added other newspapers, including one in a county adjacent to The Macomb Daily.

In order to determine how much local news was printed under the first three ownerships, two weeks during each of the first three years were selected to be analyzed. Each of these newspapers were then compared in several ways:

- One was an item count of the articles and visual material printed in the news sections. This information was used to compare the total number of local articles and visual material printed during the ownerships.

- A second method was to measure the column inches of all articles and visuals which appeared on the front pages and editorial pages. This information was used to compare the total amount of space in these key pages during the ownerships.

All the articles and visuals were then organized into

several geographic categories to determine the amount of local news each ownership published.

► A supplementary source of information came from interviews with key newspaper officials. These were used to determine the philosophies of the owners and the editorial policies each ownership had.

► Lastly, after all this information was compiled, circulation figures were used to determine under which type of owner circulated newspapers in the most homes in the county. Specifically, this analysis attempted to determine if the paper was more successful when it featured "local" news or when it emphasized articles about the world or nation.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

This literature review is organized into two sections. One is an analysis of existing literature depicting the impact of chain ownership on newspaper content. A second portion details The Macomb Daily's ancestors, which date back 150 years.

#### Ownership Patterns Affecting News-Editorial Content

The issue of newspaper's ownership impact on the news-editorial content needs to be examined especially since chain ownership is becoming more common. In 1960, chain newspapers owned 30 percent of daily newspapers in the United States. By 1974, that figure nearly doubled with chains owning 55 percent of daily newspapers.<sup>11</sup> By 1985 chain control of the nation's daily newspapers rose to 71 percent.<sup>12</sup> Bagdikian also reported that in 1980, the ten biggest chains controlled

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<sup>11</sup>Raymond B. Nixon, "Number of Dailies in Groups Increased by 11 Percent in Three Years," Editor and Publisher, Feb. 23, 1974, p. 9.

<sup>12</sup>William Gloede and Robert Goldsborough, "Big Spenders up the Ante in Ownership Game," Advertising Age, Vol. 58, Jan. 26, 1987, pp. S1-S2.

36 percent of all circulation and 20 percent of all newspaper companies.<sup>13</sup>

While chain newspapers began in the late 1800s with pioneers E.W. Scripps and William Randolph Hearst, it was not until 1929 that these papers started going public when employees of Scripps-McRae and Gannett purchased stock in these companies.<sup>14</sup> Since then, public corporations have noted a variety of dilemmas, most of which center around a desire to have maximum profits to create higher valuation of company shares. Because chain ownership is becoming more common, it is important to examine these obstacles.

One of the problems Soloski noted was the publisher's role changes when they focus on the bottom line and not the content of the paper. He also said chain-owned wire services encourages members to print certain news stories which results in less local reporting and similar opinions on the editorial pages since they are using the same copy.<sup>15</sup>

Olien, Tichenor and Donohue also said ownership may affect the type of reporting being done.<sup>16</sup> They discovered that corporate owners are more likely to run business articles

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<sup>13</sup>Bagdikian, "Conglomeration," pp. 59-64.

<sup>14</sup>Sam Kuczun, "Ownership of Newspapers Increasingly Becoming Public," *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 55, 1978, p. 342-345.

<sup>15</sup>Soloski, "Economics and Management," pp. 19-27.

<sup>16</sup>Clarice Olien, Phillip Tichenor and George Donohue, "Relation Between Corporate Ownership and Editor Attitudes About Business," *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 67, 1988, pp. 259-266.

than articles on arts, cultural or civic events. Their results supported Demers and Wackman's work which said most of the independently owned newspaper editors they surveyed were more interested in "community service" than profit.<sup>17</sup>

On the other hand, in Lacy's study of 114 newspapers (thirty-nine privately-owned independent papers, thirty-nine privately-held chain papers and thirty-six publicly-held chain papers), he discovered that chain newspapers had larger staffs but had fewer square inches of copy per reporter, indicating the reporters had more time to devote to writing copy. He also said that chain papers had more editorials about the city where they were located and more editorial cartoons.<sup>18</sup>

This study was supported by several others who determined there is very little difference between private and public newspaper chain ownerships.<sup>19</sup> Shoemaker also suggested that ownership may not be a big issue in the day-to-day running of a newspaper, because the various owners of group corporations act differently.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>David Demers and Daniel Wackman, "Effect of Chain Ownership on Newspaper Management Goals," *Newspaper Research Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 1988, pp. 59-68.

<sup>18</sup>Lacy, "Effects of Group Ownership," in press.

<sup>19</sup>Ghiglione, Buying and Selling, 1984; Stephen Lacy and Frederick Fico, "Newspaper Quality and Ownership: Rating the Groups," A paper presented to the Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research, Chicago, Nov. 1988.

<sup>20</sup>Pamela J. Shoemaker with Elizabeth Kay Mayfield, "Building a Theory of News Content: A Synthesis of Current Approaches," *Journalism Monograph*, Vol. 103, June 1987.



Rystrom's results about the editorial pages were consistent with Lacy's findings. Rystrom reviewed thirteen independently-owned newspapers for their election coverage in six elections from 1970 to 1980. He discovered that eleven of the thirteen papers were more "diligent" in taking an editorial stand after they were sold to chains.<sup>21</sup>

These findings contradict earlier studies completed by Borstel and Thrift. Borstel's study of twenty small dailies found nominal difference between chain and non-chain publications on its editorial pages.<sup>22</sup> Thrift's study of twenty-four West Coast daily papers, and their 1,445 editorials, discovered that once an independent publication is purchased by a chain, there will be fewer editorials on local issues, fewer editorials on controversial topics and the papers' editorials will become "less vigorous."<sup>23</sup>

Wackman et al. also discovered that chain newspapers are more likely to endorse political candidates than independent papers. However, they said the endorsements were more homogeneous in their support of the favored candidate.<sup>24</sup> This contradicted a study of Canadian newspapers by Wagenberg and Soderlund. They determined that editorial writers within a

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<sup>21</sup>Kenneth Rystrom, "Apparent Impact of Endorsements by Group and Independent Newspapers," *Journalism Quarterly*. Vol. 64, 1987, pp. 449-453, 532.

<sup>22</sup>Borstel, "Ownership, Competition," pp. 220-22.

<sup>23</sup>Thrift "Editorial vigor," pp. 327-331.

<sup>24</sup>Wackman, "Chain Newspaper Autonomy," pp. 411-420.

chain network do not show conformity on their issues or endorsements.<sup>25</sup>

While the future at The Macomb Daily cannot be easily predicted, if Donohue, Olien and Tichenor are correct, there will be less conflict reporting in the publication now that it is owned by an out-of-state corporation. In their study of twenty-one daily newspapers in Minnesota, they found that newspapers owned by chains within the state contained three times as much conflict reporting about local governments than newspapers with owners outside of the state.<sup>26</sup>

In summation, when a newspaper is owned by a public chain, it appears the publishers may become concerned about the financial stability of the paper. This interest in making the paper profitable may be due to ulterior motives in the publisher wanting to climb the corporate ladder. These publishers also tend to print articles supplied by the company-sponsored wire service or running other articles which fit into the philosophies of the owners.

However, most of the research to date has centered on metropolitan or small dailies and not medium-sized suburban dailies, like The Macomb Daily. Further research is needed in this area to determine if suburban dailies fall into the same pattern of if they need a category to themselves.

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<sup>25</sup>Wagenburg and Soderlund, "Influence of Chain Ownership," pp. 93-98.

<sup>26</sup>Donohue, Olien, and Tichenor, "Reporting Conflict" pp. 489-499, 507.

Historical Review of  
The Macomb Daily's Ancestors

The first newspapers delivered in the Mount Clemens area arrived in about 1840, when both the Statesman and the Mount Clemens Patriot were created. The Statesman only lasted a decade, but the Mount Clemens Patriot continued for the next 150 years, going through several owners and name changes. It is the forerunner of The Macomb Daily. (See Appendix 2.)

Thomas Perry is credited with founding The Macomb Daily, because he created the democratic Mount Clemens Patriot. He had settled into the area via steamboat with printing materials in an area now occupied by the Macomb County Jail. In addition to being a printer, he was said to be entirely suited for his new profession:

The Patriot was a Democratic newspaper, edited and conducted in the interest of the local democracy, with more than the ordinary ability bestowed on country newspapers. Mr. Perry was, in his way a remarkable specimen of pugnacity and tenacity. He had seen much of the world, and was entirely absorbed in his editorial profession.<sup>27</sup>

His newspaper, which was published on a sometimes weekly basis cost \$2 per year if it was paid in advance. Otherwise, it was \$2.50 per year. Perry moved his newspaper to an office on Pearl Street, now North Gratiot Avenue, where he continued to operate it successfully until 1849, when he was challenged by The Macomb Gazette. The Gazette, created that year by Allen P. Bentley, began to lure away some of Perry's

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<sup>27</sup>M.A. Leeson, History of Macomb County, Michigan, (Chicago: M.A. Leeson Co., 1882) p. 332.

the Gazette absorbed the Patriot.<sup>28</sup> Perry next went on to the Macomb County Herald, which was created in 1848, while Bentley operated The Gazette.

The Gazette then changed hands three times during the next ten years. It was first sold to Abner P. Smith, a lawyer who was described as one of the prominent men of the county. The Gazette, under Smith's guidance, supported the democratic cause. However, when he sold it to William L. Canfield in 1856, it became known as the Republican Standard. Canfield retained the newspaper for four years before he sold it in 1860 to two printers, Walter T. Lee and Edgar A. Weeks. They renamed it The Monitor -- a name which was carried on for the next sixty-three years. The pair remained partners until Weeks left the newspaper in 1867 to devote more time to his law practice and to pursue public office. He later became the county's first congressman. Lee sold the paper in 1870 to D.M. Cooper. Cooper kept it for nine years before he sold it to E. O'Brien, who turned around and sold it one month later.

However, the man who bought the newspaper from O'Brien, also brought a sense of consistency to the paper. John E. Nellis & Son bought the paper in 1879, and it remained in their family's hands for the next forty-three years.

"Under their management the paper has been a progressive and consistent Republican sheet and an important factor in the

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<sup>28</sup>John Harwood, "The Monitor begins its 75th year," January 5, 1934. Not published.

Republican politics in the county," Eldredge stated.<sup>29</sup>

When John Nellis died in 1904, the Monitor was passed on to his son, Frank. When Frank died in 1923, the paper was sold to longtime family friend Mark Thompson McKee, Sr. for \$5,000--as stipulated by Nellis' will. It then remained in the McKee family for an additional forty-eight years with McKee's brother, Paul, becoming the family's first publisher.

Under his guidance, the family began an active role in the Macomb County newspaper market. In 1926, they created six weekly newspapers: the St. Clair Shores News, Roseville Record, East Detroit News-Post, Warren-Fraser Herald, Van Dyke-Center Line Press, and the New Baltimore-New Haven Star. Less than five years later, these first five weeklies were combined into The South Macomb News. The newspaper, at that time, was said to be one of the largest weekly newspapers in Michigan.<sup>30</sup>

Meanwhile, the family began head-to-head competition with Samuel Price's Daily Leader by operating the Monitor on a daily basis in 1940. Unfortunately, the tiny community couldn't support both daily newspapers, and it wasn't long before Price sold his Leader to Frank McKay of Grand Rapids. Less than one year later, McKay sold it to the McKee's who merged it with the Monitor, calling the merged newspapers the

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<sup>29</sup>Robert Eldredge, Past and Present of Macomb County, (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing co., 1905) p. 619.

<sup>30</sup>Dorothy M. Magee, Centennial History of Mount Clemens Michigan 1879-1979 (Mount Clemens: Mount Clemens Public Library, 1980) p. 78.

Daily-Monitor Leader. On April 3, 1942, the first issue of the combined newspaper was printed.

The next project the McKee's undertook was creating another weekly newspaper the Tri-City Progress, which served Warren, Center Line, Sterling Heights and Utica.

Paul McKee died in 1964 and the control of the properties were passed on to Mark McKee's son, Mark Jr. Mark Jr. had returned from World War II in 1946 and had been working in various media positions throughout the McKee holdings. He served first as the telegraph news editor, moving to station manager at the family's radio station before becoming circulation manager and then assistant publisher at the newspaper.

Under Mark McKee Jr.'s leadership, an ambitious expansion program began with the purchase of a sixty-four-page high-speed press to replace a fifty-year-old unit which the paper was using. He also constructed an addition to the Monitor-Leader building to make room for the new equipment. However, McKee said at this time, their presses couldn't handle producing both weekly papers in addition to the growing daily paper:

The little daily was Mount Clemens only paper, and the weeklies would cover the other communities. We thought, wouldn't it be great if we could have one giant daily covering the whole county? We decided to have one big daily and kill off the two weeklies.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Mark Thompson McKee Jr., interview at his Mount Clemens home, July 1988.

On Sept. 1, 1964 the Daily-Monitor-Progress first hit the news stands. However, McKee said people had trouble accepting the paper because of its name. He said they had to then come up with a new name for the paper:

We tried to have one big daily newspaper with one encompassing name and for a while we thought why not call it The Macomb News? But the trouble was we already had a weekly called the South Macomb News. So I thought, let's call it The Macomb Daily, because I thought people would say, Macomb Daily What? I thought it would cause people to question it.<sup>32</sup>

So, on Oct. 15, 1964, The Macomb Daily was published for the first time. It continued to be published Monday through Friday until the following January when a Saturday paper was added.

The newspaper ambled on--with relatively few high or low points--until 1971 when the McKee's sold the paper to the Panax Corp. headed by then-media mogul John McGoff. Mark McKee Jr. stayed on as publisher for several years, while McGoff hired general managers to oversee the business aspects of the paper. When McKee Jr. retired in 1975, he was replaced by Ronald Hedley.

Under Hedley's leadership, the company began construction of a \$6.5 million printing plant in Clinton Township. Within that facility was a 128-page Goss-Cosmo offset press capable of producing 52,000 newspapers per

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

hour.<sup>33</sup>

McGoff purchased several weekly papers in the area, namely the Advisor (covering the Sterling Heights and Utica areas) and the Richmond Review (covering the Richmond and Lenox Township areas). The Macomb Daily also created a weekly newspaper called the Community News, which covered the southern portion of the county. This paper was phased out in 1986.

During the economic strain of the early 1980s McGoff had decided to liquidate all of his various media properties. However, he was unable to find a buyer for those in the Macomb County area including The Macomb Daily. Therefore, in 1982, McGoff sold the Macomb County papers from his publicly-owned Panax Company to his privately-owned SEM Newspapers. Around the same time, Hedley retired and J.Gene Chambers was brought in as the new publisher. Chambers was then credited with turning around the financially-struggling newspaper and making it profitable.<sup>34</sup>

McGoff sold The Macomb Daily, Advisor and Review in 1988 to the Adams Communications Corp. This was the first newspaper purchased by Adams, a company based in Florida and Minnesota. However, less than one year later, it also purchased a daily newspaper in a neighboring county, The Daily Tribune.

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<sup>33</sup>"Gov. Milliken dedicates new Macomb Daily printing plant," The Macomb Daily, August 29, 1980. page A1.

<sup>34</sup>"Suburban newspapers maintain watch on Adams Communications," The Detroit News, Nov. 27, 1988.



redesign, which made them nearly identical in graphical form. The two daily newspapers combined some departments, including the composing room and circulation staff, and are also combined on Sundays--producing the first Mount Clemens-based Sunday daily newspaper.

### Research Questions

Once The Macomb Daily was sold to an out-of-state private corporation, the newspaper was redesigned to reflect a new management style. However, there was no change in the type of articles printed or where these articles were placed. It is still primarily a "local product," but is this the most successful use of the reporters or should they be writing articles of state or national significance.

This research concentrated on what happened with the news and editorial pages through each of the three ownership types in order to determine a successful approach to the paper's future. This analysis will then be compared to the circulation figures for the various years. The highest circulation figures compared to the county's population will denote the highest level of success. A key question is whether the paper was more successful with a local news focus or when it presented national and foreign news.

Specific research questions are:

- 1) What were the policies toward the news and editorial content during the three ownership periods?

2) What was the geographic orientation of the articles and photographs in the news sections during the three ownership periods?

3) What was the focus of the editorial pages during the three ownership periods?

4) Was the content of the news and editorial pages consistent with the news-editorial policies during the three ownership periods?

5) How did the content of each era affect the paper's performance in the area of circulation?

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODS

The goal was to examine how changing ownerships at The Macomb Daily affected the content of the news and editorial pages by compiling both a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the newspaper.

The years 1967, 1977 and 1985 were selected for analysis. These years are approximate mid-points during the three types of regimes which operated the publication. Any changes of content that took place following an ownership change would likely have been in place by these years.

#### Quantitative

The quantitative analysis of The Macomb Daily consisted of a detailed measurement of the items on the front pages and editorial pages and an item count of the remaining news pages during the years 1967, 1977 and 1985. (See Appendix 3.)

Information was compiled from two randomly constructed weeks of the six-day-a-week paper during each of the three years.<sup>35</sup> As Stempel's research determined, the success rate

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<sup>35</sup>The dates used were: 2nd, 27th Monday; 5th, 32nd Tuesday; 9th, 38th Wednesday; 14th, 41st Thursday; 20th, 45th Friday; 23rd, 50th Saturday. In 1967, a strike occurred on the 41st Thursday, the 42nd Thursday was used. In 1977, July 4th fell on the 28th Monday, the 29th Monday was used.

for reviewing twelve newspapers for one year is as sufficient as reviewing forty-eight papers.<sup>36</sup>

Specifically the analysis concentrated on:

► What was the geographic orientation of the lead article and lead editorial?

► How many local, metro, state, national or foreign articles or photographs appeared on page one, the editorial page and the remaining news pages?

► How many square inches of the front page and editorial page did the respective geographic categories occupy?

► How many articles had local bylines?

Based on the analysis of the above information, what percent of the articles were from a wire service or bureau or by a staff reporter?<sup>37</sup> If the article had a staff byline, it was measured in full length to compare the amount of work the reporters did during each of the three years.<sup>38</sup>

In order to make a comparison over the years, the front page articles were also measured for their prominence based

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<sup>36</sup>Guido Stempel, "Sample Size for Classifying Subject Matter in Dailies," *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 29, 1952, pp. 333-334.

<sup>37</sup>If the article was on "local" news but did not have a byline or wire service slug, it was assumed to be by a staff reporter. If it could not be determined, a separate category of "no identification" was created.

<sup>38</sup>Community round-ups were not counted as staff, because they could be written by several staff members combined or even community stringers. Also, columnists were not counted as staff unless it appeared they did the work of a full-time reporter.

on Richard Budd's research.<sup>39</sup> The prominence factor for this paper is as follows: one point was given if the article was above the fold, one point was given if it was at least two columns wide, and one point was given if the total length of the article and correlated art work equalled 2/3rds of a column length. For this paper, any item which received three points was noted to compare the nature of play the various geographic categories received over the years.

Before this paper can go any further, the terms need to be operationalized.

The "news" section included pages designated for news articles, excluding the editorial pages, society, religion, entertainment, sports, business or any other "special pages." There may be advertisements on these pages, but there must be at least one article with a minimum of three paragraphs in it.

"Local" articles included news about Macomb County or its twenty-three communities. Lists such as community calendars, honor rolls or marriage licenses were not counted.

"Metro" articles included news about neighboring Oakland or Wayne counties.

"State" articles included news within Michigan, but excluded the previous categories.

"National" articles included news reported in the other forty-nine states in the United States.

"Foreign" articles included news anywhere in the world,

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<sup>39</sup>Richard Budd, "Attention Score: A Device for Measuring News Play," *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 41, 1964, pp. 259-263.

excluding the United States.

"General" articles were feature articles which didn't belong to any one particular geographic category.

#### Page One

This content analysis consisted of the square inches devoted to each article exceeding three paragraphs, photograph or art. Measurement was rounded to the nearest one-eighth inch. This excluded headlines, bylines, jump lines, lift quotes, white space, indexes and weather conditions not in story form. This analysis addressed the geographic orientation of each item measured and the category of each lead. On this page only, articles with bylines were measured completely, including the measurements of jumps. This measurement was used to compare the amount of work reporters were responsible for during each of the three years.

#### Editorial Page

This analysis consisted of measuring each editorial, column, letter to the editor, cartoon, photograph or other related items on the editorial page and placing the items in various geographic categories. This analysis also addressed the geographic orientation of the editorial. As on page one, the analysis excludes measurement of headlines, bylines, jump lines, lift quotes and white space. If the staff box appeared on this page, it was not considered.

### News Section

This analysis determined the total pages devoted to the news of the day and the number of articles or photographs appearing on these pages. Geographic orientation was also addressed. Only articles of more than three paragraphs were considered to eliminate counting "fillers." However, if articles of this length, appeared in a "news briefs" category, they were counted.<sup>40</sup> Obituaries were not considered.

### Variables

The independent variables include the ownership: private, public chain or private chain.

The dependent variables include the number of reporters, square inches of copy per reporter, percent of news space given to each of the geographic categories: local, metro, state, national, foreign or general; percent of editorial space given to each of the geographic categories; percent of page one space given to each geographic category.

After the content analysis was completed local content became an independent variable and circulation was a dependent variable.

### Statistical Analysis

In order to analyze the information from the various years, a confidence interval was created using the standard

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<sup>40</sup>The rationale for counting articles in a "news briefs" category was the management had to devote a specified amount of space to these areas on a daily basis.

error of proportion based on the number of stories studied from each of the years. The author assumed  $P = 50$  percent, or .5, and derived the standard error by comparing sample size.<sup>41</sup> At the 95 percent probability level, the standard error of proportion for 1967 was 3.5 percent, and the standard errors for 1977 and 1985 were each 3.4 percent, also at the 95 percent level.

$$SE \text{ proportion} = \sqrt{\frac{p \times q}{n}}$$

### Qualitative

Since the amount of local news in the newspaper is dictated by an owner or publisher, the philosophies of the newspaper's decision makers had to be determined. In order to do this, at least two people who were involved in the editorial product during each of the eras analyzed were interviewed.

► The McKee administration (private owners from 1923 to 1971): interviews were conducted with Mark McKee Jr. and Maurice Vincent. McKee's family owned the paper, and he was the paper's assistant publisher for eleven years and the publisher for an additional eleven years. Vincent was the City Editor. He was hired as a reporter in 1953, and is the current Editor Emeritus.

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<sup>41</sup>N for 1967 was 796; N for 1977 was 866; and N for 1985 was 455.



► The Panax regime (public chain owners from 1971 to 1982): John McGoff, Ronald Hedley and Mitch Kehetian were interviewed. McGoff was the owner of the company. Hedley was the publisher from 1975-1982. Kehetian was the managing editor. Kehetian is currently the senior managing editor.

► The SEM administration, a division of Global communications (private chain owners from 1982 to 1988): interviews were conducted with McGoff, Kehetian, and Publisher J. Gene Chambers.

► The Adams regime (private chain owners from 1988 to present): Publisher Benjamin Burns was interviewed. No one else was interviewed since the author was only interested in the newspaper's future.

The questions placed to each of these men varied depending on the position they held with the newspaper.

John McGoff's questions focused on his requirements when he purchased a newspaper, the qualifications he wanted in a general manager or publisher, if there were any specific goals he had for *The Macomb Daily*, and if his personal involvement in the paper change over the years.

The questions posed to publishers Mark McKee, Ronald Hedley, Gene Chambers and Ben Burns ranged from their involvement in the publication to their personal background, if they had any personal goals for the paper, and if their goals emphasized local or non-local coverage. For McKee, the author was also interested in his family's philosophy in operating the paper and to what extent was he involved in the

paper.

The questions for editors Maurice Vincent and Mitch Kehetian centered on their daily involvement in the paper, if they had any control regarding the content of the news sections, or if their preference was local or non-local articles.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

This chapter presents a chronological analysis of the three years studied. Each year consists of three parts: General Observations noted by this author, a Quantitative Analysis of what was on the pages, and a Qualitative Analysis of what the key newspaper officials thought about the newspaper.

#### General Observations of 1967

The Macomb Daily of 1967 was a combination of many different formats which included having a variety of syndicated columnists with no regular placement on the pages and having one-column house ads on the front page.

Articles on page one in this year, which the masthead stated was the 107th year of the publication, were primarily about World War II, Macomb County crimes or fires, and national tragedies. Also printed were running lists of marriage licenses, Parent/Teacher Association notes and long columns of honor roll students at the local schools.

A byline count revealed twenty-three people were writing for the paper in 1967, six could be considered full-time staff, six were columnists and the remaining eleven writers

had less than five articles printed each.<sup>42</sup> The most bylines anyone had was eight. That reporter covered local education. Other reporters covered a variety of topics, and it was difficult to determine "beats." There were approximately six bylines in the paper and usually only one or two on the front page. There were commentaries appearing on the editorial page, while some editorials appeared on the front page. The reporters averaged 25.38 inches of copy each.

A 1966 memo showed reporters were hired in at \$70 and could earn a maximum of \$110 a week. The paper's circulation in 1967 was at 41,228,<sup>43</sup> or in 27 percent of the homes in Macomb County.<sup>44</sup>

In 1967, the paper contained approximately thirty, eight-column pages. The smallest paper was a Tuesday in August when there were eighteen pages. The largest papers had forty pages: a Wednesday, two Thursdays and a Saturday that was published the week before Christmas.

The approximate breakdown of the paper consisted of:

- ▶ twelve pages for a news hole;<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>The author determined full-time reporters should have written five articles during the two-week period.

<sup>43</sup>Standard Rate and Data Service, Newspaper Rates and Data, Vol. 49, No. 12, Dec. 12, 1967.

<sup>44</sup>Macomb County Planning Commission reported 150,496 Macomb County households in 1967.

<sup>45</sup>The news hole consisted of any page that had an article of at least three paragraphs, excluding editorial pages, society, religion, entertainment, sports, business or any other "special pages."

- ▶ one editorial page (excluding Thursdays)
- ▶ one or two society pages;
- ▶ three sports pages;
- ▶ one page for television listings and crossword puzzles;
- ▶ one business page (excluded on Mondays);
- ▶ five pages for classified ads; and
- ▶ one or two full pages for display advertisements.

Specialty pages were also featured throughout the week:

◆ four pages on Wednesday and Thursday were related to the food and home section;

◆ one page on Friday was on entertainment news; and

◆ two pages on Saturday were on religion.

Although the biggest paper of the week was on Thursday, it was the only day without an editorial page, and was the only day when a "second front page" was used. It featured local news and appeared as the front page in section B.

The number of full-page display advertisements fluctuated on a daily basis. In the smallest paper analyzed that year, none of the ads were a full page. Yet, before Christmas, there were seven full pages of advertising in the Saturday issue. On average, there were fewer than two full pages of advertising in a paper.

On page one, the weather was printed alongside the masthead, and there was also a "special reading" index on the lower left-hand corner of the paper. This index was two columns wide and three and one-half inches deep. (See Appendix 4.)

Another common sight in 1967 was a banner headline running across all eight columns of the paper, with the article placed only in the right-hand column. This usually led to an important shorter story. However, this skewed the measurements because headlines weren't included in the calculations. Shorter articles also seemed to be a normal occurrence during this year, because most of the front page articles did not "jump" to an inside page. Only two of the twelve papers observed had jumps from the front page.

Inside pages didn't have much consistency. One of these "news" pages had almost no advertising, but instead of containing lengthy articles, it was jammed with filler material (Jan. 9). That page had eleven articles ranging from two paragraphs to four paragraphs and two freestanding photographs. It appeared jumbled by 1990 standards.

There were also interesting items mentioned in shorter articles or photos which in later years could have necessitated full-length articles. One example is a free-standing photograph which showed a jet engine lying alongside a Mount Clemens house (Jan. 9). The cutline said the engine fell from a jet flying over the Selfridge Air National Guard Base in Mount Clemens. With the scare from airplane crashes in the 1990s, this issue probably would have necessitated a full-length article with multiple pieces of art if it ran in present day.

Smaller freestanding photographs also were more common in the 1967 issues. One in particular was a front page one-

column photo of Ronald Reagan discussing the possibility of running for the governor's office in California.

As mentioned previously, columnists didn't have a regular placement. Syndicated writers such as Dick West, Walter Winchell and Don MacLean sometimes appeared on the editorial pages, but they also were jammed together with other columnists on a "feature page" in the back of the newspaper.

Most of the front pages in 1967 dwelt on national or foreign news. There was only three papers when this was not the case. On Aug. 8, Sept. 5 and Oct. 26, five out of the six front pages articles were local.

A "News in Briefs" column was started on page three late that year to provide a consistent placement for articles concerning events outside the county. These articles covered events from the metro area to the foreign countries.

However, there was no consistency for the obits during 1967. They could be on page two, six or twenty.

#### Quantitative Analysis of 1967

A story count analysis of the entire paper showed local copy was used slightly more often than wire service copy. Fifty-two percent of the articles and photos used in 1967 were generated by the local staff, while 48 percent came from a wire service or syndicate.<sup>46</sup> (Refer to table 1.)

While 52 percent of the articles and photos used in the

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<sup>46</sup>The author assumed any articles on local news were written by local staff.

TABLE 1--CHARACTERISTICS OF 1967			
	Entire Paper	Front Page	Editorial Page
Geographic Emphasis			
Local News	52%	46%	13%
Metro News	3%	9%	0%
State News	4%	9%	0%
National News	16%	24%	43%
Foreign News	7%	12%	18%
General News	18%	0%	26%
Source			
Staff	52%	46%	6%
Other	48%	54%	76%
Identity Unclear			13%
Letters to Editor			5%
Totals			
Items Analyzed	796		
Square Inches		2,484	2,393



paper were on local news, the percentages given other geographic categories varied extremely. The second most popular category used in this year was general news--news which had no geographic basis, with 18 percent of the items. The third most popular category in 1967 was national news. It constituted 16 percent of the items. The rest of the categories were relatively minute: metro news--3 percent, state news--4 percent, foreign news--7 percent.

On page one, however, these non-local categories received more prominent play than local news. Wire copy made up 54 percent of the space while staff news figured in 46 percent of the space. However, when comparing local articles with articles in other areas, local articles appeared more often. On this page, articles on Macomb County people or events were featured in 46 percent of the front pages and were the lead article in 25 percent of the issues. Local photos were used far less on the front page. They constituted only 8 percent of the total measurement.

National news was the lead article on the front page 17 percent of the time, and it constituted 24 percent of the front page measurement (17 percent of the space was for articles and 7 percent was photos).

As mentioned, articles and photos on foreign news barely made a dent in the news hole allocation for the paper. Yet, they were the lead article on page one 33 percent of the time, and the articles and photos combined on page one represented 12 percent of the page.

The metropolitan and Michigan categories combined averaged 9 percent of the total copy on the front page. The lead article or banner was about "metro" news 17 percent of the time and on Michigan news 8 percent of the time.

The prominence index followed this same pattern.<sup>47</sup> Local articles contributed to 41 percent of the category followed by 31 percent for national news. Thirteen percent of the foreign news in 1967 met all the requirements in this category, as did 11 percent of the metro news and 5 percent of the state articles.

On the editorial pages, wire copy produced an overwhelming amount of the total articles and visual--76 percent. Whereas, the staff copy was only featured in 6 percent of the space on the editorial pages, and letters to the editor totaled 5 percent of the pages. Unidentified copy, which was usually the non-local editorials, appeared in 13 percent of the editorial page analysis.<sup>48</sup>

Specifically, 13 percent of the information printed on this page was local news. Considering this, it was somewhat surprising that 20 percent of the editorials that year were on local events. There were no local photos whatsoever on the

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<sup>47</sup>The prominence factor included all articles placed above the fold, of at least two-columns wide and at least 2/3rds of a column in length.

<sup>48</sup>This category was created when the editorials were about news of a state, national or foreign influence, because an interview with Mark McKee Jr. revealed most editorials were "canned." Therefore, it could not be assumed the editorials were written by staff members.

editorial pages.

By far, the majority of the editorial page space was on national news--34 percent of the space was on national articles and 9 percent for visuals. It was also the focus of the editorials in half of the papers.

Editorials on foreign news appeared 20 percent of the time. In the space allocation category for the editorial page, foreign articles represented 15 percent of the copy and 3 percent of the visual. There were also many articles and visuals of a "general" nature on this page--16 percent, and 10 percent, respectively. These were primarily guest columns that had no geographic orientation, or possibly cartoons.

There were no articles or photographs on the editorial pages on metro or state news.

Length of the editorials fluctuated. Some days, there were two short ones; other days, only one longer one appeared. Still other days, as mentioned, there were none. The average length was 31.06 inches.

In summation, the majority of the copy throughout the entire paper came from the staff (52 percent). However, on page one and the editorial pages, the other geographic categories received the most play. On page one, local news was used 46 percent of the time and on the editorial page it was used 13 percent of the time.

### Qualitative Analysis of 1967

Former Macomb Daily publisher Mark McKee Jr. mentioned there were two distinct times in history for The Macomb Daily: before the famous Detroit newspaper strike, and after it.

He said before the year-long 1964 strike, the paper's ancestor, the Mount Clemens Monitor-Leader, had a 15,000 circulation, and had a 3 p.m. press deadline the day of the publication. He also said the tiny staff consisted of an editor, sports reporter, society editor, columnist, "who did other things too," photographer and "probably two or three guys you might call reporters." After the strike, he said they backed up the press deadline and enlarged the staff:

I think the most significant thing was before the newspaper strike, it was a typical small town newspaper. It had the bias of the people in the town. We didn't try and be noble--just reflect what people thought...but, after the strike, we tried to be more liberal, to a limited degree.<sup>49</sup>

However, after the strike, the Detroit News and Detroit Free Press took their readers and advertisers back. "We never lost money, but if we made \$200,000, we thought, 'Wow!'" McKee said. The staff went down right after the strike to a small degree, but he could not remember how many.

My first thought was to be the William Randolph Hearst of Macomb County, and then my quick second thought was to somehow survive....Small town newspapers can be independent and go broke, or you can be as respectful as you can without losing the respect of the advertisers.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>McKee interview, 1988.

<sup>50</sup>McKee.

Maurice Vincent, city editor in 1967, said while they competed with the Detroit newspapers for advertising, The Macomb Daily's news staff far surpassed the other papers in terms of local coverage:

We were always competing with the News and Free Press. During the strike, of course, we had the guns, but when the strike ended, we were back where we started. Although we always thought we had the edge on local coverage.<sup>51</sup>

Vincent, current Editor Emeritus at The Macomb Daily, said when the strike began, they launched an effort to have reporters throughout the county "covering all the communities from one corner to the other." However, he said with the limited staff after the strike, it became a matter of selectivity.

Shortly after the strike ended, McKee said some advertisers wanted the newspaper to keep the "entire world" coverage it provided during the strike. However, McKee balked. He said the cost was too high to continue. Besides he said if they wanted to do that, they would need more reporters. Instead he decided to reduce the editorial staff, and concentrate more on the coverage from the wire services. "It was a lot cheaper to buy AP and UPI, and we did both," he said. This lack of staff also prevented the paper from printing local editorials, McKee said. He said they were "mostly canned" and that the staff would write one if there was some important local event.

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<sup>51</sup>Maurice Vincent, interview at his home, May 1990.

While McKee said it may have been cheaper to subscribe to the wire services in lieu of hiring reporters, as mentioned earlier, wire copy and staff copy were pretty well evenly matched during the two weeks analyzed in 1967. Wire copy was used 48 percent of the stories counted and wire photos 47 percent of the time. Staff copy fared slightly better at 55 percent of the total articles and 53 percent of the total photos.

However, that still didn't help make the small paper profitable. McKee said they were only making 4 to 6 percent profit at a time when other newspapers were making 12 to 16 percent profit:

Aside from the strike, where we made enough money to buy new equipment, we never made more than 4 percent profit. So, why did we sell the paper? That (lack of profit) was as good a reason as any. The other thing was we were very reluctant to raise advertising rates. Probably, we should have. Selling the paper was kind of sad in a way.<sup>52</sup>

In 1971, the McKee family sold the newspaper to then-media mogul John McGoff because of financial concerns and the fact that Mark McKee was the only family member interested in operating the newspaper. Mark McKee stayed with the newspaper for another four years as a publisher until he retired in 1975.

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

### General Observations of 1977

In 1977, *The Macomb Daily* appeared more structured than in 1967. It used "news in brief" columns on the left side of the first three pages, a "second front page" for local news on page three, and it used the page one index to promote an article on one of the inside pages. There were also political endorsement ads on page one.

Articles on the front pages of 1977, which the masthead revealed was the 117th year of the publication, were mainly about local government news followed by (either local or national) crimes and fires news. News from the local schools was the third most popular topic from this year.

A byline count revealed there were twenty-two reporters. However, five were columnists and two others only had two articles printed. The remaining fifteen reporters averaged eight articles during the two weeks. It appeared there was a reporter covering the municipalities of Roseville, Warren, Sterling Heights, St. Clair Shores, Shelby and Washington townships. Also being covered was the Macomb County Circuit court building, the Macomb County Board of Commissioners and education in general. There was an average of twelve bylines in any given paper and usually four on the front page. Reporters generated approximately 34.33 column inches of copy on a daily basis.

According to the Newspaper Guild handbook for 1977, the reporters' starting salary was \$256.03 a week and topped out

at \$383.51. The paper's circulation was 46,536,<sup>53</sup> or in 22 percent of the homes in Macomb County.<sup>54</sup>

On average, the paper contained twenty-eight six-column pages. The smallest papers were on Tuesdays, when there were only twenty pages. The largest papers had thirty-six pages --a Wednesday in September, the other two were Thursdays.

The approximate breakdown of the paper consisted of:

- ▶ nine pages for a news hole;
- ▶ one editorial page;
- ▶ two society pages;
- ▶ four sports pages;
- ▶ one comic page;
- ▶ one page for television listings;
- ▶ one page for full page display advertisements;
- ▶ five pages for classified ads;

Specialty pages were also featured throughout the week:

- ◆ One or two pages on Wednesdays were for Food and Home.
- ◆ Thursdays had one page for Outdoors and four for Building and Home improvement.
- ◆ Saturdays had one business page and two religion pages.
- ◆ Two or three pages on Fridays went to Real Estate news.
- ◆ There was also a Lawn and Garden page in May and a Hobby page in October.

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<sup>53</sup>Standard Rate and Data Service, Newspaper Rates and Data, Vol. 59, No. 12, Dec. 12, 1977.

<sup>54</sup>Macomb County Planning Commission reported 211,811 Macomb County homes in 1977.



The first five papers studied that year had a full page of advertising. Yet, in the second half of the year there were only two days with full page ads.

The general design of page one had two distinct formats. One style consisted of running a three-column photo on the top left hand side of the page, balanced with an equally large photo on the bottom right-hand corner of the paper. A second style called for a banner headline with the article running across all six columns. There was generally no more than two photos on any of the front pages. (See Appendix 5.)

The masthead said The Macomb Daily was "Macomb County's Complete Newspaper," and it sold for 15 cents.

The front page index was one-column wide and placed at the bottom of the paper, it was called "Inside Today." In addition to mentioning the location of various articles, it also promoted an article on an inside page.

Most of the articles on the front page were about local news. There were only two days when the percentages were reversed. On Jan 10, the lead article was local, but the entire right-hand side of the paper was from the wire service. The material included a four-column photo of California fans at a Super Bowl celebration, and a three-column article about Congressional measures. Also, on Dec. 17, the lead article was local, but the majority of the page was filled with national news, particularly on President Jimmy Carter who was covered in a five-column article and a separate article of three columns in width.

There were only four instances when the lead article was not about local news. Twice it was about metropolitan news, once it was about former President Richard Nixon saying the Vietnam war was prolonged because of the activities of dissenters (May 20), and on June 11, the lead article was on the Dutch army.

Monday through Friday the paper used "briefs" columns running the entire length of the paper on pages two, three and four. On page two the "Michigan Today" briefs consisted of news in the metro area or state. Page three had a "Nation Today" column that included briefs on national news and listed the weather outlook as the final entry. Page four utilized a "World Today" which printed articles from the wire service regarding foreign issues.

On Saturday, there was only one column, generally on page three, combining all three topics. The editorial page on this day was changed from its regular placement on page five during the week to page six.

Articles jumped from page one usually ended up on page two, four or five, and obituaries generally appeared on page four or five.

It is interesting to note that there were articles generated from the Panax news bureaus in Lansing and Washington D.C. Panax owned the newspaper at this time. The paper used the bureaus for articles in addition to subscribing to the AP and UPI.

### Quantitative Analysis of 1977

A quantitative analysis of the entire paper showed the articles and photographs were split between those from the staff and those from a wire service or bureau: 57 percent of the articles and photos used throughout the paper were from the wire service compared to 43 percent from the local staff. (See table 2.)

Local news only constituted 43 percent of the articles and photographs throughout the paper. This category was followed closely by national news which had 31 percent of the items in paper. The rest of the geographical categories were mixed: 8 percent on foreign news, 8 percent on state news, 7 percent for metro and 3 percent for general.

While the non-local categories receive the most play throughout the entire paper, on page one this relationship was reversed. News and photos from a wire service or news bureau comprised only 16 percent of the total space, while 84 percent of the copy was written by the local staff. This being the case, it is not surprising that local news far surpassed the other geographical categories on page one. In 1977, articles and photos on Macomb County people or events were featured in 81 percent of the front page space (54 percent was articles and 27 were photos). A local event or person was the lead story 67 percent of the time.

National copy was the next largest category. It was the lead article only once (8 percent), and comprised 11 percent of the page (8 percent articles and 3 percent photos). While,

*****				
*			*	
*	TABLE 2--CHARACTERISTICS OF 1977			*
*				*
*		Entire	Front	Editorial
*		Paper	Page	Page
*				
*	Geographic Emphasis			*
*				*
*	Local News	43%	81%	36%
*	Metro News	7%	3%	1%
*	State News	8%	3%	1%
*	National News	31%	11%	52%
*	Foreign News	8%	2%	4%
*	General News	3%	0%	6%
*				*
*****				
*				*
*	Source			*
*				*
*	Staff	43%	84%	20%
*	Other	57%	16%	51%
*	Identity Unclear			11%
*	Letters to Editor			18%
*				*
*****				
*				*
*	Totals			*
*				*
*	Items Analyzed	866		*
*	Square Inches		2,159	2,450
*				*
*****				

state, metro and foreign news combined for 8 percent of the space on page one. Metro and state news each represented 3 percent of the front page, while foreign news only comprised 2 percent. However, metro articles were the lead article 17 percent of the time and foreign news 8 percent.

Local news was also better represented in the prominence rating devised by the author. Local news constituted 84 percent of this category followed by 6 percent of metro news, and well as 3 percent each from the state, national and foreign categories.

On the editorial page, the local staff was only responsible for 20 percent of the total copy, barely topping the amount of space dedicated to letters to the editor which comprised 18 percent of the space measured. Whereas, the wire services or syndicate, were used for 51 percent of the space. Again, on this page there was an additional category for "no identification" referring to editorials which could have been picked up from a wire service or syndicate (11 percent).

Specifically 36 percent of editorial space was on local news, and local editorials were printed 58 percent of the time.

The most popular topic on this page was national news. It was featured in 52 percent of the space available. It was also the editorial topic 25 percent of the time. The other categories barely made a dent in the measurements: metro copy and state copy measured 1 percent of the space each (and each represented 8 percent of the lead editorials); foreign copy

measured 4 percent of the space, and general articles were featured in 6 percent of the space.

Editorial length fluctuated slightly. The editorials were still on the left-hand side of the page, and either two short editorials or one longer one was printed. The average length of space dedicated for the editorials was 38.64 inches.

In summation, the majority of the copy throughout the entire paper came from the wire service or syndicate (57 percent). On the editorial pages, that is especially true since only 36 percent of the news was local. However, on page one, local news received the most play--81 percent of the space.

#### Qualitative Analysis of 1977

The Macomb Daily owner John McGoff said when he wanted to buy a newspaper, he looked for one which was broken down and not making money, which he said he found in The Macomb Daily. Next, he examined those who worked at the paper to see if they would fit in his "team":

If they were competent and could grow with us, we developed them through the management teams we created. That was my form of managing my 100 and some properties. To attempt to manage on a day-to-day basis would have been impossible.<sup>55</sup>

Those who belonged to his "team" he said were creative, aggressive and had a willingness to move around in his

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<sup>55</sup>Interview with John McGoff, July 13, 1988, at his office in Williamston, Mich.

organization. That willingness to change positions within the company also created a situation where there were six general managers at The Macomb Daily within the first five years he owned the paper. During this time, Mark McKee Jr. was still the publisher. While some could have thought the constant movement at the top of the paper meant an inability for McGoff to find any quality operators, he said the opposite is true. McGoff said he considered the general manager position a stepping stone:

If you look casually at all the general managers, you say 'holy cats, they must have had all kinds of problems.' No it was really a great stepping stone. It was a large daily and the chain group always looked for people who were creative - - those things that I already mentioned -- and good managers and entrepreneurial in style. All the general managers were that.<sup>56</sup>

This "stepping stone" mentality continued until 1975 when McGoff hired Ronald Hedley to be his general manager and publisher, forcing Mark McKee to finally retire. McGoff described Hedley as being in the "waning of his career" and said he was not interested in moving around in the Panax organization. However, McGoff said he liked what Hedley did with the newspaper and said he was very successful. "He was very committed there," he said.

Hedley also agreed with McGoff's philosophy of providing world coverage in the newspaper. He said he wanted a "good representation" of national news, but he did not want to see many columns.

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

"I wanted national news on the front page, because there was not always a good local story in Macomb County. All I was trying to do was create a much better paper," he said.<sup>57</sup>

McGoff said that providing non-local articles was necessary since the newspaper was part of a large chain and had bureaus in Lansing and Washington. McGoff was so involved in that respect that during the 1970s he also wrote a column on a semi-weekly basis, and he said he had no qualms about submitting an article to his newspapers and demanding it be published. He said that was his "prerogative" as the owner and publisher of all the newspapers.

The managing editor of the newspaper during the Panax regime was Mitch Kehetian, who was first hired as a reporter for the Daily Monitor-Leader in 1961. Kehetian recalled that under Hedley's leadership, there was a large staff, but an even larger newspaper to fill. He said that Hedley believed the best way to attract readers was to give them a complete package of news:

When Hedley came on, the advertising was horrendous, but how do you sell the paper? His theory at that time was give them a complete newspaper with five solid pages of editorial copy. At the time it seemed feasible, we all agreed we could put out a complete package, but it was incomplete.<sup>58</sup>

Kehetian said that filling all that space taxed the

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<sup>57</sup>Ronald Hedley telephone interview, Feb. 25, 1990 at his home in Florida.

<sup>58</sup>Mitchell Kehetian, July 13, 1988, interview in his office in Mount Clemens, Mich.



reporters. He also said that was one of the main reasons they started relying on the wire service so much.

"All of a sudden we became a national newspaper, not because we wanted to, but because we just ran out of copy and the planning was poor. That's the way it was, and nobody wanted it any other way," Kehetian said.

He said he still relied on his reporters to attend the council meetings in the respective communities they covered, even if they did not write an article. He said that the presence of a reporter showed the community that the newspaper cared about their community.

And, he said, the community, or local news should be the focus of the newspaper. His suggestion was not to compete with the considerably-larger Detroit News or Detroit Free Press, but to "saturate and cover everything and anything that is going on in the county--do what they can't do or don't want to do:"

I want to make the paper so anyone living or working in this county must subscribe to The Macomb Daily. Give them such a local product, but also with a package of state, national and world news that they can't be without The Macomb Daily.<sup>59</sup>

#### General Observations of 1985

The Macomb Daily of 1985 was heralded as "Your Community Information Center." That statement was made obvious when reviewing the number of local articles which appeared in the

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

paper that year.

The Macomb Daily in the year 1985 was packaged in such a way to present a very slick appearance. A "Second Front Page" appeared on page three with a "news briefs" column on the left side. Page headers or "ribbons" were also used for each section or special page.

Articles on the front page in 1985 primarily concentrated on the local governing bodies, followed closely by local crimes or tragedies. Education was the third most popular topic.

A byline count revealed sixteen reporters were writing for the paper. Two were columnists, while five others had fewer than the required five articles for the two weeks analyzed. The remaining nine reporters had at least one article printed in each day's paper. It appeared that three reporters were on a general assignment beat, while the others covered the county government, education, and the communities of Warren, Roseville, Clinton Township and Mount Clemens. There was an average of nine bylines in the paper each day while five of those appeared on page one. The reporters averaged 28.05 inches.

According to the Newspaper Guild handbook for 1985, reporters starting salary was \$386.08 a week and topped out at \$559.22 a week. The paper's circulation was 55,092,<sup>60</sup> or

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<sup>60</sup>Standard Rate and Data Service, Newspaper Rates and Data, Vol. 67, No. 12, Dec. 12, 1985.

in 23 percent of the homes in Macomb County.<sup>61</sup>

On average, the paper contained twenty-two pages using a six-column format. Three papers only had sixteen pages--both Tuesdays and the last Friday. The largest was a Thursday in October when there were thirty-two pages.

The approximate breakdown of the pages were:

- ▶ seven pages for a news hole;
- ▶ one editorial page (excluding Saturdays);
- ▶ two society pages;
- ▶ two or three sports pages;
- ▶ one comics page;
- ▶ two full pages of display advertising pages;
- ▶ five pages of classified ads.

Special pages used in 1985 include:

◆ Saturdays had one page each for entertainment and real estate, two pages for religion, and four for a pull-out television section.

◆ Wednesdays had one page each for home improvement and hobbies/pets.

◆ Thursdays had one page for a Kitchen Corner.

It was interesting to note that the Saturday paper was published in tabloid form without an editorial page. It was a compilation of various special pages with two or three articles on the front pages. Also, the column width was shrunk to make it a five-column page.

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<sup>61</sup>Macomb County Planning Commission reported 241,048 Macomb County homes.

The Thursday paper carried the most advertisements. There were six full-page ads in the first Thursday paper analyzed and four full-page ads in the second Thursday. The papers on Tuesdays had no full-page ads, same with the last Friday of the year.

The design of the front pages fluctuated on a daily basis. Several pages had banners running across the top of the page and others used a three-column photo on the left side of the page balanced with a two-column article on the right. (See Appendix 6.)

Perhaps most interesting was the variety of column-widths used. The paper was basically printed in a six-column format using 2-1/8 inch columns. When banners were used, they were usually spaced out to where they were five-columns of type used (2-3/4 inch columns). However, if an article was boxed in a three-column format, the type was shrunk to present four-columns in the box (1-7/8 inches wide).

The masthead said, "Your Community Information Center," selling for 20 cents. The masthead was also used to refer to something inside the paper. It usually included an artwork and several words used to describe an article or section on one of the inside pages.

The front page index was one-column wide and 1-1/2 inches deep listing the various sections in the paper. It also printed the weather for "today" and "tomorrow."

On page three Monday through Friday, news briefs ran on the left side of the page encapsulating Macomb County,

Michigan, national and world news. The lottery numbers were printed at the bottom of this column. On Saturdays, this column was replaced by "People Talk"--a man-on-the-street section including photos of those interviewed.

Obituaries generally appeared on page four where the "jumped" articles were. On occasion, they appeared on page two.

#### Quantitative Analysis of 1985

A quantitative analysis of 1985 revealed the majority of the articles and photographs were submitted by the local staff: 64 percent of the articles and photos used throughout the paper came from the local staff, while 36 percent came from the wire service. (See table 3.)

As mentioned, 64 percent of the items in the paper was local news (42 percent was articles and 22 percent was photos). The next most popular topic in 1985 was national news, which totaled 19 percent. The rest of the categories were: 7 percent for state news, 5 percent for metro, and 5 percent for foreign.

All the front page articles were local news, and there was only one article used on the front page from the UPI wire service. However, this article was also on a local news event (July 1).

Since all front page articles were local, it's not surprising that 100 percent of the articles which qualified for the prominence rating (above the fold, at least two

*****					
*			*		
TABLE 3--CHARACTERISTICS OF 1985					
*			*		
*			*		
*			*		
*			*		
	Entire	Front	Editorial		
	Paper	Page	Page		
*			*		
Geographic Emphasis					
*			*		
	Local News	64%	100%	34%	*
	Metro News	5%	0%	0%	*
	State News	7%	0%	9%	*
	National News	29%	0%	50%	*
	Foreign News	5%	0%	7%	*
	General News	0%	0%	0%	*
*****					
*			*		
Source					
*			*		
	Staff	64%	100%	12%	*
	Other	36%	0%	53%	*
	Identity Unclear			13%	*
	Letters to Editor			22%	*
*****					
*			*		
Totals					
*			*		
	Items Analyzed	455			*
	Square Inches		1,702	2,009	*
*****					

columns wide and 2/3rd of a column in length) were all local. Twenty-eight stories qualified for this rating.

The editorial page presented a different picture: 53 percent of the page came from the wire service, 12 percent from staff, 22 percent letters to the editor and 13 percent were unidentifiable, which were primarily editorials on state or foreign news.

Local news or visuals were featured on 34 percent in the editorial space in 1985 and was the lead editorial 40 percent of the time. The most often used category was national news (22 percent of the articles and 28 percent for visuals). However, the lead editorial was never on this topic. It was also interesting to note that while state and foreign news combined only constituted 16 percent of the editorial space in 1985 (9 percent and 7 percent, respectively), they made up the bulk of the editorials (40 percent were on state news and 20 percent were on foreign news).

The editorial length was fairly consistent. They still ran down the left side of the page with either one long editorial or two shorter ones. The average length was 43.59 inches.

In summation, the majority of the copy throughout the entire paper came from the local staff (64 percent). This finding was consistent on the front pages which had 100 percent of the total items on local news. However, on the editorial pages, only 34 percent of the news was local.

### Qualitative Analysis of 1985

While the papers in the 1960s and 1970s seemed to focus on providing news of a national and international basis, the opposite was true in the 1980s.

Publisher J. Gene Chambers, said that providing "world coverage" was causing the paper to lose more than a million dollars a year:

Editorially, it did not play to the community. It was more of a national paper then it was a Macomb County newspaper. It tried to compete too much with the News and Free Press from a stand point of page one and inside stories. The first thing I tried to do was analyze the newspaper. After extensive meetings with the staff, we started to make changes.<sup>62</sup>

Chambers, who was hired as publisher in 1982, was previously the publisher of a group of weekly newspapers in Macomb County. He moved on to publish weekly papers in the Upper Peninsula and finally to Little Rock, Arkansas.

When he was hired to publish the Macomb Daily, he changed the paper's philosophy. He wanted a local product:

We made changes in the editorial product with the understanding that we are going to produce the best local product in Macomb County, and that we were going to get out of some of the old things like covering all of the (municipality) meetings. We only started going to meetings where we knew something of significance was happening that would effect the people of Macomb County.<sup>63</sup>

Macomb Daily Owner John McGoff, who very much wanted a "complete" paper in the 1970s agreed to the change in format.

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<sup>62</sup>J. Gene Chambers interview in his Mount Clemens office, July 1988.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.



"It was not very wise to think we were a metro daily in dealing with national and international news as the number one priority. The number one priority has to be the local community and its needs," he said.

If that sounds like a change in tune from when he owned the paper in the 1970s, it is. He said they changed because Panax was no longer involved in other media businesses:

We definitely had to change to reflect that community 100 percent. It always did reflect the community, but there was a major portion that had to relate, in my judgement to national and international news. We were an organization that had a circulation of five million and we had broadcast radio and TV and UPI. I was very much involved on an international level with these other entities.<sup>64</sup>

Chambers said they zoned the paper so smaller advertisers could purchase ads. They also cut the size of the staff and news hole, and redesigned the paper in 1982 or 1983. He said the redesign was undertaken because he didn't like what was in the pages. He solicited staff reaction and three months later, the format was changed.

Managing Editor Mitch Kehetian had a different philosophy as to why the paper was redesigned:

The paper was wasn't generating enough revenue to make the overhead. So that meant cutting down the size of the paper. OK, while we are doing this, let's redesign it so people won't say "how come the paper is so skinny?" We wanted to let the readers know they are going to have a new Macomb Daily. You do things only because of a crisis.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>McGoff interview, 1988

<sup>65</sup>Kehetian interview.

Kehetian, who said the thirty-one-member editorial staff started "shrinking" when Panax decided to liquidate in the early 1980s, had lost five reporters on the first crack. Two others left and were never replaced.

"That was difficult. The complete local paper we couldn't do any more," he said.

Chambers also instituted a number of policies regarding the editorial content which called for eliminating non-local wire articles from the front page and making all the editorials significant to the readers:

No more wire stories on the front page unless they were earth shattering news such as the president getting shot or a plane crash--something that would be of great significance to the Macomb County resident. And, then it was not to be the lead story. The direction for the entire news paper from the editorial page on down was local.<sup>66</sup>

To provide a forum for the state and world news, they created a "news briefs" column on page three which encapsulated the non-local news.

Whether it was Chamber's policies or a changing environment, the paper started prospering. Chambers said at the tail end of 1983, they started making a profit; in 1984, the company "broke even;" and in 1985, they had a cash flow of "well over" \$2 million. That was also the year the company issued profit-sharing checks with the employees the first time in the company history.

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<sup>66</sup>Chambers interview.

### Summary of Three Ownerships

The size of the paper and news hole continued to shrink over the years. The paper in 1967 averaged thirty pages with a twelve-page news hole. In 1977, that figure dropped to twenty-eight pages total and nine pages for news articles. In 1985, that figure dropped even further to a twenty-two page newspaper with only seven pages for news. (See table 4.)

*****				
*				*
*	TABLE 4--Size of paper and news hole			*
*				*
*	Year	#/Pages	#/News Pages	Percent
*				*
*	1967	30	12	40%
*	1977	28	9	32%
*	1985	22	7	32%
*				*
*****				

This research has determined there were an average of nine pages for news during the three years. It also discovered that there were always approximately one or two pages of full-page display advertising, two pages for society news, three pages for sports, five pages for classified and two religion pages every Saturday. Editorial pages ran every day, excluding Thursdays in 1967 and Saturdays in 1985. Comics were not printed in the 1967 issues, but the 1967 pages had a daily business page which the others lacked.

The amount of work the reporters did in each of the three years varied greatly. In 1967, there were more bylines than any of the other years, but fewer reporters (numerous staff members had less than the prerequisite five articles to be

The smaller number of reporters in 1967 did not have much of an impact on the overall scenario of the paper since there was an average of only one or two bylines on the front page that year. In 1977, the front page averaged four bylines, and in 1985, it averaged five.

On the average, Macomb County crimes and fires were the most popular topic during each of the three years. This was followed by Macomb County government, local education articles, foreign news and national tragedies. A story count analysis for the entire paper showed the staff contributed more than the wire services and in 1967 and 1985, but not in 1977. (Refer to table 6.)

*****					
*				*	
*				*	
*	TABLE 6			*	
*	Source of Information for Entire Paper				*
*				*	
*		1967	1977	1985	*
*					*
*	Staff	52%	43%	64%	*
*	Other	48%	57%	36%	*
*					*
*****					

On the front pages, the source of information was a different story. In this section, the staff contributed more articles in 1977 and 1985 than in 1967. (Refer to table 7.)

*****					
*				*	
*				*	
*	TABLE 7			*	
*	Source of Information for Front Page				*
*				*	
*		1967	1977	1985	*
*					*
*	Staff	40%	84%	100%	*
*	Other	59%	16%	0%	*
*	No Id	1%			*
*					*
*****					

Local news was also the most popular lead article. When averaged over the three years, it was the lead article 61 percent of the time. Foreign news was the next popular, featuring in 14 percent of the lead articles over the three years, with metro and national news taking 11 percent each. News in Michigan was the lead only once, or 3 percent of the time.

The articles which qualified for the author's prominence rating were also of a local nature. Seventy-five percent of the articles were local, followed by 11 percent on national

news, 6 percent for metro news, 5 percent for foreign news and 3 percent for state news.

The editorial page was a different story. The majority of this page was always from the wire services or syndicates. Macomb Daily staffers contributed 6 percent to this page in 1967, 20 percent in 1977 and 12 percent in 1985. Space for Letters to the editor increased over the years. It began with 5 percent in 1967, rose to 18 percent in 1977, and was printed in 22 percent of the editorial space in 1985. (See table 8.)

*****					
*				*	
*				*	
*	TABLE 8			*	
*	Source of Information for Editorial Page			*	
*				*	
*		1967	1977	1985	*
*					*
*	Staff	6%	20%	64%	*
*	Other	76%	51%	36%	*
*	No id	13%	11%	13%	*
*	Letters	5%	18%	22%	*
*	Editor				*
*					*
*****					

Even though a majority of the paper was not produced by the staff, 39 percent of the editorials were on local news during the three-year period. That figure was followed closely by national news, 25 percent. State news was the lead editorial 16 percent of the time, foreign news was featured 13 percent of the time and metro and general topics each represented 3 percent of the column.

The length of the editorials grew longer as the years progressed. In 1967, they averaged 31.06 inches, in 1977,

that figure increased to 38.64 inches and in 1985, the editorials were 43.59 inches.

In summation, when the paper was owned by a private family, it had the least amount of local news on the front page and editorial page and had the least amount of reporters writing the shortest articles and shortest editorials. Six full-time reporters responsible for 52 percent of the articles printed in the paper.

When the paper was owned by a public chain, it had the most reporters writing longer articles. It also had the least amount of local news but had the most local editorials.

When it was a private, chain paper, the nine reporters generated more articles than the other ownership periods and had 63 percent of the publication full of local articles. It had the most local news in the entire paper and most local news on the front page. The reporters in this year were also responsible for writing more articles and longer editorials.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS

The first research question asked was: What was the policies toward the news and editorial content during the three ownership periods? Both Mark McKee Jr. and J.Gene Chambers felt The Macomb Daily should be a local paper. Whereas, Publisher Ron Hedley, with the backing of Panax owner John McGoff in the 1970s, felt the most successful paper was one which had a variety of geographical areas.

However, McGoff must have realized the error in packaging The Macomb Daily in such a way, because when Chambers was hired and wanted to have a "local" paper, McGoff thought the format change was a good idea.

"It was not very wise to think we were a metro daily in dealing with national and international news as the number one priority," McGoff said. "The number one priority has to be the local community and its needs."

The second research question asked was: What was the geographic orientation of the articles and photographs in the news sections during the three ownership periods? This research determined that local news was the focus of the news section in all three years. However, in 1977, local news was only in 43 percent of the items counted in the paper. This



was followed closely by 32 percent for national news. (Refer to table 9.) When trying to draw a comparison through each of the years, the statistical analysis were distinctly different at the .05 level. In 1967, there is a 95 percent probability that the local news constituted 48.4 percent to 55.6 percent of the entire paper.<sup>67</sup> In 1977, there is a 95 percent probability that the local news constituted 39.6 percent to 46.4 percent of the entire paper.<sup>68</sup> In 1985, there is a 95 percent probability that the local news constituted 58.3 percent to 61.2 percent of the entire paper.<sup>69</sup> The differences could be the result of the different owners or publishers seeking different goals.

*****					
*				*	
*				*	
*	TABLE 9			*	
*	Geographic Emphasis of Entire Paper			*	
*				*	
*		1967	1977	1985	*
*					*
*	Local	52%	43%	64%	*
*	Metro	3%	7%	5%	*
*	State	4%	8%	7%	*
*	National	16%	31%	19%	*
*	Foreign	7%	8%	5%	*
*	General	18%	3%	0%	*
*	Total Units				*
*	Analyzed	796	866	455	*
*					*
*****					

The focus of the front page was also predominantly local in its content. It was the most popular in 1977 and 1985 (84

<sup>67</sup>The Standard Error was 3.5 percent.

<sup>68</sup>The standard error was 3.4 percent.

<sup>69</sup>The standard error was 3.4 percent.

percent and 100 percent, respectively). But in 1967, local news carried 46 percent of the page, while the other categories combined for 54 percent. (Refer to table 10.)

*****			
*			*
TABLE 10			
Geographic Emphasis of Front Page			
	1967	1977	1985
Local	46%	81%	100%
Metro	9%	3%	0%
State	9%	3%	0%
National	24%	11%	0%
Foreign	12%	2%	0%
General	0%	0%	0%
Total Square			
Inches	2,484	2,159	1,702
*****			

The third research question was: What was the focus of the editorial pages during the three ownership periods? Whereas the front pages and inside pages were predominately local news, the opposite was true for the editorial pages. On this page, national news was clearly the favored topic in each of the ownerships. (Refer to table 11.)

*****			
*			*
TABLE 11			
Geographic Emphasis of Editorial Page			
	1967	1977	1985
Local	13%	36%	34%
Metro	0%	1%	0%
State	0%	1%	9%
National	43%	52%	50%
Foreign	18%	4%	7%
General	26%	6%	0%
Total Square			
Inches	2,393	2,450	2,009
*****			

The fourth research question wanted to know if the content of the news and editorial pages were consistent with the news-editorial policies during the three ownerships. It appears that the content was consistent in all three periods.

In 1967, McKee and Vincent felt the paper should be a local product, however, McKee said that buying the wire services were cheaper. That's why the pages were so diverse. Even though they wanted a local product, they knew it was not feasible.

McGoff, Hedley and Kehetian all wanted *The Macomb Daily* of 1977 to be a complete package of local, national and foreign news. They accomplished that on most pages but the majority of the front page had local news (81 percent). It seems that if they wanted a "complete package," the front page should have been mixed up slightly more.

The only policy which fell through in 1985 was the amount of non-local news on the editorial page. Chambers wanted the entire paper "from the editorial page on down" to be local. Yet on the editorial pages of that year, local news only constituted 34 percent.

The final research question was: How did the content of each era affect the paper's performance in the area of circulation? Based on the penetration of *The Macomb Daily* delivered into the Macomb County community, this study determined the paper was most successful when it was owned by the private, independent family (McKees-1960s), followed by

when it was owned by a private chain (SEM-1980s), and was least successful when it was part of a public chain (Panax-1970s). (Refer to table 12.)

*****				
*				*
*				*
TABLE 12				
Comparison of Circulation Figures				
*				*
*	Year	#/Households <sup>70</sup>	Circulation <sup>71</sup>	Penetration
*				*
*	1967	150,496	41,338	27%
*	1977	211,811	46,536	22%
*	1985	241,048	55,092	23%
*				*
*****				

However, the high success rate of the newspaper in the 1960s could be attributed in part to the high delivery percentage all newspapers were experiencing at the time. Ever since the 1940s, Bogart reported that the gap between circulation delivery and the number of homes nationwide has continued to widen at a tremendous rate.<sup>72</sup> Therefore, the penetration decline of the 1970s would seem to fit into this pattern, but the increase in the 1980s would have to be considered extraordinary in comparison.

Also, the circulation figures of *The Macomb Daily* does not take into consideration other newspapers being delivered in the county. Both the *Detroit News* and *Detroit Free Press*

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<sup>70</sup>Figures provided by the Macomb County Planning Commission.

<sup>71</sup>SRDS, 1967; SRDS, 1977; SRDS, 1985.

<sup>72</sup>Leo Bogart, "The Challenge to Newspapers," Press and Public, 2nd Edition; Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1989.

are delivered, as well as several "free" weeklies.

Therefore, the newspaper performed at a lower level in 1977 since the circulation did not increase in proportion to the number of households in the county. It averaged an increase of 520 papers per year over 1967, whereas the paper in 1985 increased 1,089 per year over 1977. At a time when trends call for the delivery to continue declining, this increase in the 1980s has to be considered as being as successful as the paper in the 1960s.

Another interesting facet of the 1980 newspaper, is when it was sold to the Adams Corp. in 1988, it was the only time in the paper's history that the paper was sold while it was making money. The previous sales were orchestrated so the owners could cut their losses before the paper lost further money.

In conclusion, local news is the best approach in marketing the paper because the newspaper in 1977 had the least amount of local news in the entire paper. When the amount of local news was increased, the penetration figures were greater. (See figure 1.) When it was the private property of the McKee family, local news was in 52 percent of the news hole allocation; in 1977, that figured dropped to 43 percent; and in 1985 it rose to 64 percent.

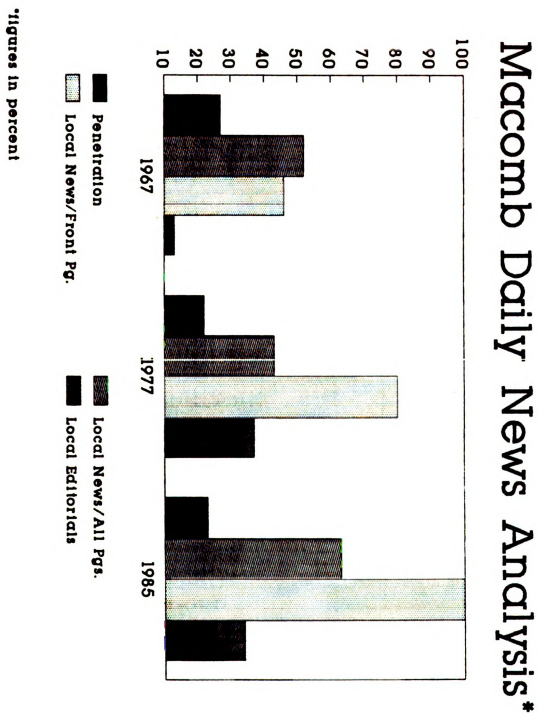
This study is consistent with several portions of a 1979 study by Soloski.<sup>73</sup> The similarities entail having the

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<sup>73</sup>Soloski, "Economics and Management."



Figure 1 -- Macomb Daily News Analysis



corporate appoint a publisher who may have no vested interest in the community which the paper reports, and that this publisher may use that position as a "stepping stone." McGoff admitted that was his philosophy when his public Panax Corp. owned *The Macomb Daily*.

Soloski also discovered that the chain newspapers tend to use material supplied by the chain, Panax for example, which make the content of the various newspapers in the chain similar. While Soloski said the chains used this material to save money in lieu of hiring a larger reporting staff, the newspapers under McGoff used the material because of McGoff's philosophy in wanting a complete newspaper.

However, Soloski's study said that the publisher may attempt to save money by cutting back staff. The opposite was true under Panax. During that regime, the paper had the largest staff.

A follow-up study to this research may be to examine the circulation rates of competing newspapers in the area. It could be that the circulation decline in the 1970s was a pattern indicative of the entire Detroit-metropolitan area, and that the public chain ownership was more successful.

### Future

When peeking into the future of *The Macomb Daily*, one has to be concerned about what is in store. Less than two years after the Adams Communication Corp. purchased the paper from John McGoff in 1988, it has begun publishing a Sunday paper



for the first time in its history. However, it is also experiencing one of the worse circulation declines since the mid-1970s. An inner-office memo reveals the circulation is slightly more than 51,000, which is a penetration of 21 percent of the homes in Macomb County.<sup>74</sup>

Publisher Benjamin Burns is counting on the circulation figures to rise now that they created The Suburban Sunday. He said once they lure the readers from the two Detroit dailies--which has a joint operating agreement publishing a combined Sunday product--the advertisers will follow. That thought is interesting considering the circulation began its descent after the Sunday paper was introduced. This could be attributed to it being a "forced buy" for subscribers. Another problem is that less than one month after the Sunday paper was introduced as being "free" with home delivery, the price of the total package was raised.

The Suburban Sunday is a combined product with Adams' other daily newspaper in Oakland County, The Daily Tribune which was purchased in 1989. Portions of the staffs were consolidated with Suburban Sunday being launched in February 1990 with 86 pages. It currently averages 48 pages.

However, Burns seems optimistic. He said the paper has "far exceeded original projections" and that it will "probably" become profitable by the end of 1990. He also said the businesses will start advertising in The Macomb Daily and

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<sup>74</sup>Based on the Macomb County Planning Commission estimate of 243,652 households in the county in 1988.

The Suburban Sunday once they are convinced that the papers are a viable alternative:

That means we have to produce an editorial product that the News and Free Press are not producing. We are not in head-to-head competition with them, but when the news is on our own turf we have to try and do something special. We have to use our better contacts.<sup>75</sup>

As publishers before him, Burns, a former executive editor at the Detroit News and director of the Wayne State University Journalism Program, is a firm believer in keeping The Macomb Daily, a community newspaper. He also wants to make The Macomb Daily and Daily Tribune into a "strong suburban franchise:"

I want to develop it as one of the premier daily and suburban papers in the country. I think that we have an opportunity to do some very good things in terms of journalism and in terms of creating a solid and well-run company in the next decade.<sup>76</sup>

To accomplish this, Burns promised an expansion of the reporting staff. However, both newspapers have the same number of reporters as before the Sunday paper, but there has been an increase in the number of free-lance reporters.

In order to make the paper more successful, the reporting staff has to be increased, but more importantly, more emphasis has to be placed on the Sunday paper. As this research has determined, the readers want a local product. Currently, the Sunday paper combines news from both Oakland and Macomb

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<sup>75</sup>Benjamin Burns interview in his Mount Clemens office, May 1990.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

counties. So, what is local for one community, is not local for the other.

Based on the successful paper of the SEM Corp., a sample of what the ideal newspaper should look like is: there should be a minimum of ten full-time reporters (nine reporters were responsible for the six-day-a-week publication in 1985), covering local crimes, government and education; few inside pages for miscellaneous news shorts

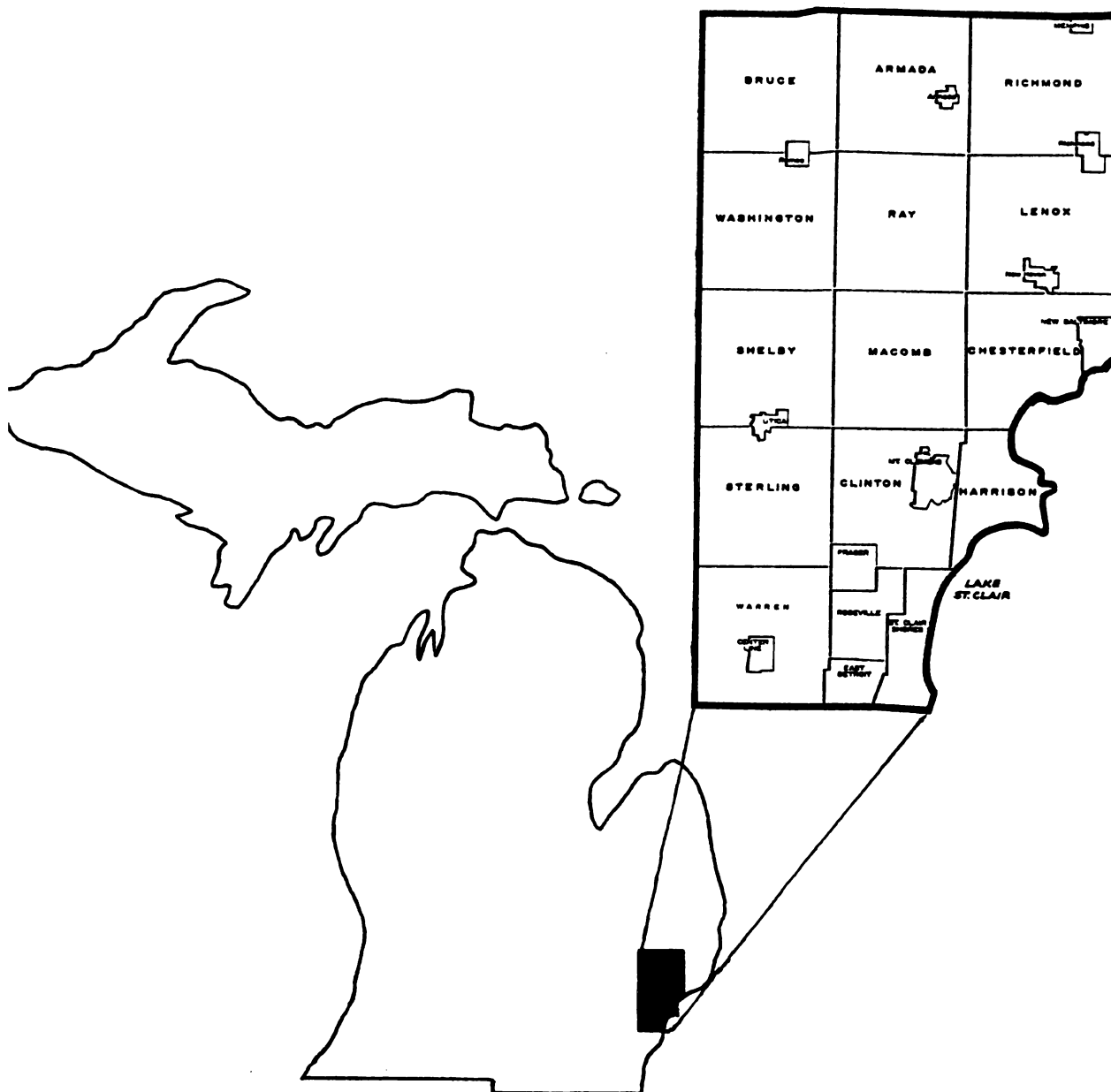
Secondly, the "forced" buy has to be eliminated. Other area newspapers that have a Sunday paper, Detroit News, Detroit Free Press and Oakland Press, have a circulation higher on Sundays than during the rest of the week without being forced buys.

Once these issues are examined, the paper should become more successful.

## **APPENDICES**

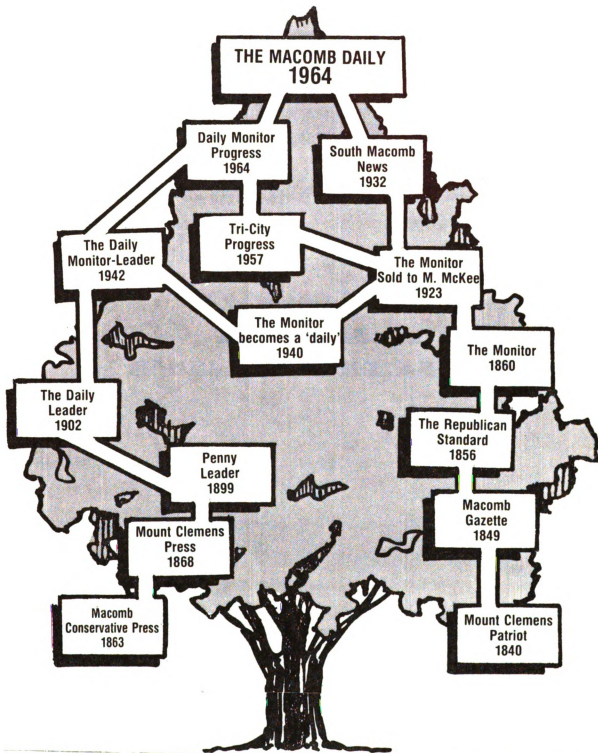
**APPENDIX 1**  
**MACOMB COUNTY MAP**

# MACOMB COUNTY, MICH.



**APPENDIX 2**

**MACOMB COUNTY ANCESTORS**





**APPENDIX 3**  
**SAMPLE CODING SHEETS**

# ENTIRE PAPER ANALYSIS

DATE..... DAY..... PAGES.....

# ARTICLES..... # VISUALS.....

LEAD ARTICLE..... # PAGE 1 BYLINES.....

# REPORTERS..... AVERAGE COPY.....

LEAD EDITORIAL..... # LETTERS TO EDITOR.....

## PAGES

## CATEGORIES

NEWS..... CRIME/FIRE.....

EDITORIAL..... EDUCATION.....

FAMILY..... GOVERNMENT.....

SPORTS..... WEATHER.....

CLASSIFIED..... SPORTS.....

DISPLAY ADS..... SOCIETY.....

TV..... OTHER.....

COMICS..... \*\*\*\*\*LIST OF BYLINES/BEATS.....

BUSINESS..... ..

FOOD/HOME..... ..

ENTERTAINMENT..... ..

RELIGION..... ..

\*\*\*\*\*

## ARTICLES

## PHOTOS PROMINENCE

LOCAL..... ..

METRO..... ..

STATE..... ..

NATIONAL..... ..

FOREIGN..... ..

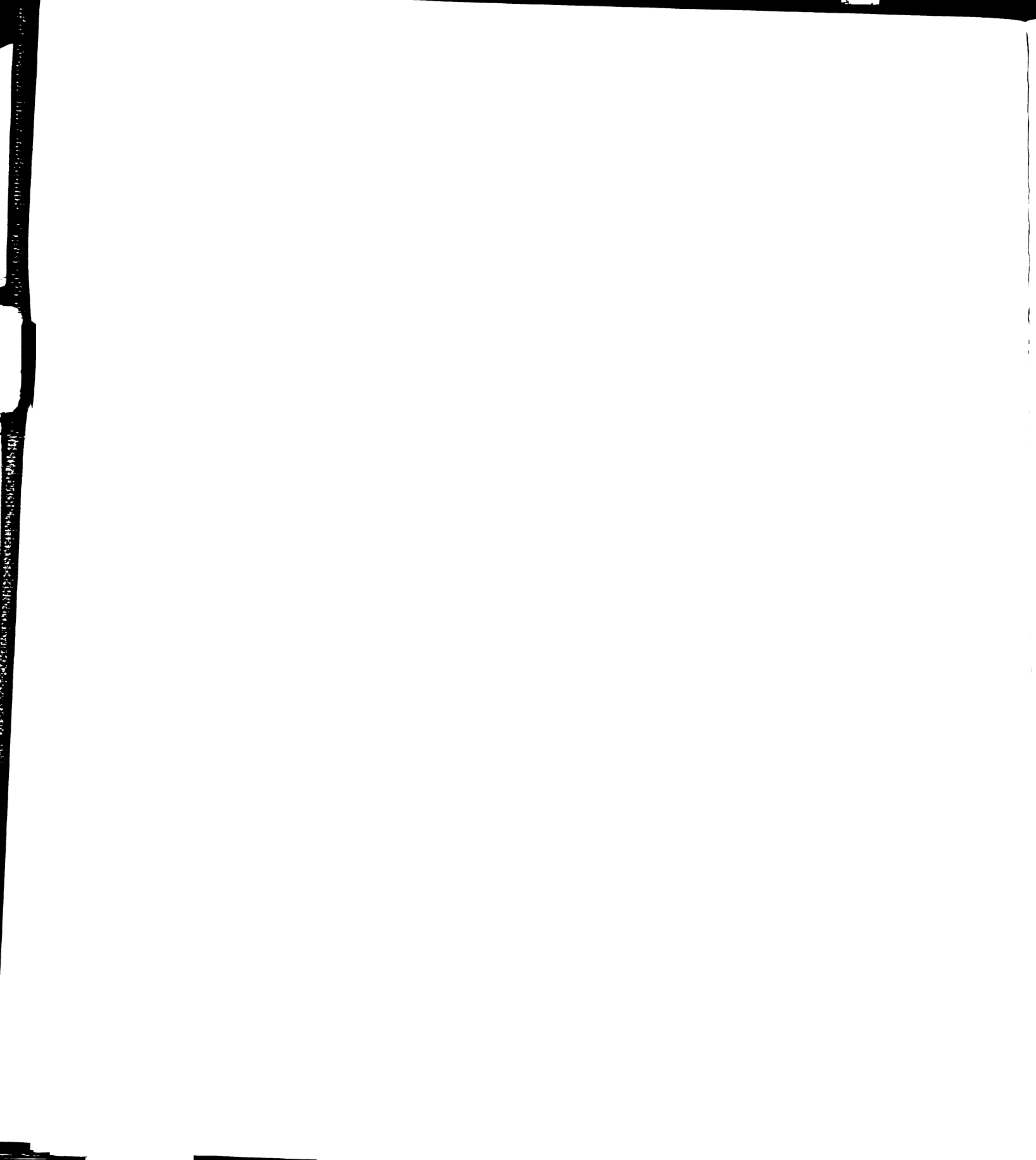
GENERAL..... ..

# COLUMN INCHES IN SECTIONS

## NEWS

## EDITORIAL

.....	WIRE COPY.....
.....	WIRE PHOTOS.....
.....	STAFF COPY.....
.....	STAFF PHOTOS.....
.....	NOID COPY.....
.....	NOID PHOTOS.....
	EDITORIAL.....
	LETTERS TO EDITOR.....
*****	
.....	LOCAL COPY.....
.....	LOCAL PHOTOS.....
.....	METRO COPY.....
.....	METRO PHOTOS.....
.....	STATE COPY.....
.....	STATE PHOTOS.....
.....	NATIONAL COPY.....
.....	NATIONAL PHOTOS.....
.....	FOREIGN COPY.....
.....	FOREIGN PHOTOS.....
.....	GENERAL COPY.....
.....	GENERAL PHOTOS.....
*****	
.....	LIST REPORTERS AND LENGTH OF COPY.....
.....	
.....	



APPENDIX 4  
A 1967 ISSUE



APPENDIX 5  
A 1977 ISSUE





APPENDIX 6  
A 1985 ISSUE

monday

# THE MACOMB DAILY

Maury and his  
'Swami'  
friends  
Page 3-A



New  
friends  
for  
Capricorns  
Page 3-B

January 14, 1983      Circulation: Community Information Center      C. Macomb County, Michigan      20¢ per copy

## Judge denies worker's comp for Daner

I really don't have  
any comment other  
than it's strange  
that the Maury case  
went one way and  
my case went the  
other.

DANER



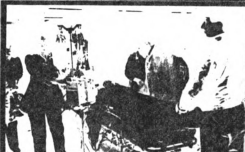
Maury and his 'Swami' friends, who were involved in a similar case, were granted workers' compensation benefits. Daner, however, was denied such benefits by a judge. Daner expressed his frustration with the outcome, stating that it was strange that his case went differently from Maury's.

The judge's decision was based on the specific details of Daner's case, which differed from Maury's. The court found that Daner's situation did not meet the criteria for workers' compensation under the relevant laws.

Maury and his friends, who were involved in a similar case, were granted workers' compensation benefits. Daner, however, was denied such benefits by a judge. Daner expressed his frustration with the outcome, stating that it was strange that his case went differently from Maury's.

## Apartment fire leaves 4 families homeless

A fire in a four-story apartment building in Macomb County last night left four families homeless. The fire started in the third floor and spread rapidly, forcing residents to evacuate. Firefighters arrived within minutes and worked to contain the blaze.



DOCTORS rushed to the aid of a patient who had been hospitalized for 15 years. The patient, a young man, was in critical condition and required immediate medical attention. The doctors worked tirelessly to stabilize him.

## Ill Clinton college student waits for heart transplant

A young man from Clinton College is waiting for a heart transplant. He has been diagnosed with a serious heart condition and has been on a waiting list for some time. His family is hopeful that he will receive the transplant soon.

The young man's condition has worsened, and he is now in a critical state. His doctors are monitoring his health closely and are hopeful that a suitable heart will be found for transplant.

## Roseville eyes millage vote for buildings

The city of Roseville is considering a millage vote for buildings. This would allow the city to raise additional funds for infrastructure projects and public services. The vote is scheduled for a future election.

## Arbitration continues for dispatchers

Arbitration continues for dispatchers. The dispute between the dispatchers' union and the employer has been ongoing for some time. The arbitration process is still in progress, and a final decision has not yet been reached.

## CRACKDOWN! County drunken driving arrests up

Macomb County has seen a significant increase in drunken driving arrests. Law enforcement agencies are conducting a crackdown on this dangerous behavior. The number of arrests has risen sharply in recent months.



Cultural exchange

A cultural exchange program is taking place in Macomb County. The program aims to promote understanding and appreciation of different cultures. Participants are engaged in various activities, including dance and music performances.

## index

- Arbitration continues for dispatchers 3-B
- Cultural exchange 3-A
- Crackdown! County drunken driving arrests up 3-A
- Ill Clinton college student waits for heart transplant 3-A
- Roseville eyes millage vote for buildings 3-B
- Apartment fire leaves 4 families homeless 3-A
- Judge denies worker's comp for Daner 3-A
- Maury and his 'Swami' friends 3-A
- New friends for Capricorns 3-B

**APPENDIX 7**

**MACOMB DAILY MANAGERS**

MACOMB DAILY MANAGERS

- 1964      **Owner: McKee's**  
Mark McKee Jr., Publisher  
Maurice Vincent, City Editor
- 1971      **Owner: Panax**  
Eldon Gensheimer, General Manager  
Richard Borghi, Assistant General Manager  
Mark McKee Jr., Publisher  
Maurice Vincent, City Editor
- 1972      Richard Borghi, General Manager  
(Jan.)      Mark McKee Jr., Publisher  
Maurice Vincent, City Editor
- 1972      Marty Heim, General Manager  
(Nov.)      Mark McKee Jr., Publisher  
Maurice Vincent, City Editor
- 1973      James Brown, General Manager  
Mark McKee Jr., Publisher  
Maurice Vincent, City Editor
- 1974      Gary Blower, General Manager  
Mark McKee Jr., Publisher  
Mitch Kehetian, Managing Editor  
Maurice Vincent, Editor
- 1975      Ronald Hedley, Publisher  
Mitch Kehetian, Managing Editor  
Maurice Vincent, Editor
- 1981      Ronald Hedley, Publisher  
Frank Shepherd, co-publisher  
Mitch Kehetian, Managing Editor  
Maurice Vincent, Editor
- 1982      **Owner: SEM Newspapers**  
J. Gene Chambers, Publisher  
Mitch Kehetian, Managing Editor  
Maurice Vincent, Editor
- 1988      **Owner: Adams Communication Corp.**  
J. Gene Chambers, Publisher  
Mitch Kehetian, Managing Editor  
Maurice Vincent, Editor
- 1989      Benjamin Burns, Publisher  
Mitch Kehetian, Managing Editor  
Maurice Vincent, Editor

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