

WEEKEND LIFE!

The Creation of a Weekend Magazine
for the Ball State University
Daily News

A creative research project
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by

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WEEKEND LIFE!

The Creation of a Weekend Magazine for the Ball State University *Daily News*

Introduction

Ahhh . . . Friday. The weekend has come and there is little for the Ball State student to think about except what to do in the coming days. Without a guide that organizes things to do around campus and the surrounding city, students must rely on bits and pieces of information from different sources to get them through the week ahead. There is a need for a publication that will provide entertainment and organize the events of the week ahead for Ball State students.

In an attempt to fill this need, the '90-'91 *Daily News* staff started *Weekend!*, a more feature and entertainment oriented section to the paper that ran on Fridays. *Weekend!* consisted of a major feature story beginning on page one, with two or three inside pages of feature articles and entertainment news. While *Weekend!* provided students with more of the feature type articles that make for easy weekend reading, it failed in consistency. According to Melissa Mielke, former *Weekend!* editor, the biggest problem with putting together the Friday feature section was lack of space, since the features were constantly competing with the news, and ad sales alone dictated the number of pages the *Daily News* had day to day. Last minute changes often forced the content of the *Weekend!* section to change, or decrease in size.

Response to the section was good. Mielke received much positive feedback for the upbeat articles and lighter reading choices for the Friday paper. According to Mielke, "The *Weekend!* section contained the types of things I'm interested in and as it turned out, that many students were interested in. You have to give [students] an incentive to read—give them something they might enjoy or be interested in."

The section, while good in part, would be more successful as a tabloid insert to the

Friday paper, since a tabloid would give more space to the feature articles students seem interested in reading. And the tabloid, as a separate publication, would guarantee the space to be used for features alone. The advertising potential for a weekend magazine that focuses on entertainment is great—national movie ads as well as advertisements promoting events could be solicited.

The proposed tabloid, *Weekend Life!*, would be an opportunity for magazine and news editorial journalism students to work on a timely publication without the pressures of a daily deadline. According to Mielke, while it was often hard to get good quality features on deadline for the newspaper, she found it easy to solicit articles on a weekly basis for *Weekend!* from journalism faculty members who taught feature and magazine writing. What follows is an explanation of the proposed tabloid with regards to the content, design, advertising potential, and staff of *Weekend Life!*

Content

Weekend Life! will focus on topics of interest to the Ball State student—something the students will enjoy, even look forward to reading. What to do around Muncie, what bands are playing at the local bars, and features on major campus events are examples of the types of “news” *Weekend Life!* will bring to students. There will be several standing features, as well as a cover story each issue that will be a somewhat long feature, about 1,000-1,500 words. These features can be solicited from feature and magazine writing classes, where many journalism students are already writing, but not publishing, stories of this length.

Standing features include:

- *Reflections*—short, personal experience essays
- *Snapshots*—personality profiles
- *Happenings*—a calendar of campus and Muncie events for the week ahead, such as theater productions, comedy nights, lectures, musicals, films shown on campus, as well as Student Center Programming Board and other campus events. Major events around

Indiana that students might consider for a “road trip” will also be included.

- *Sound Scene*—A listing of what bands are playing at the local bars. This should include the band name and type of music played, as well as any cover charges.

Occasionally, the magazine will do a spotlight feature on a band that plays locally that will include a profile of the band and photographs.

- *Now Playing*—movie reviews

- *For the Record*—album reviews

- *Mommm!!!*— A service column that gives students helpful tips like a mom would give . . . it will rotate each week between four topics: health care, cooking, auto maintenance, and financial advice. A small part of this feature will be a quote or tidbit of advice from a student’s mother, called, *Listen to Me When I’m Talking to You!*

- *On Stage*—a monthly listing of major concerts in the tri-state area

- *Around Town*—a once or twice a semester listing of area restaurants, museums, and other attractions

The week’s top albums and singles will be listed. In addition, there will be other features normally found in the Diversions section of the *Daily News*, such as cartoons like The Far Side, Mike Royko’s column, movie listings, and one or two human interest or humor columns written by students. These are things students tend to seek out and look for in a newspaper.

Ideally, every one of the standing features will be used each issue. But as space and availability of articles changes, the editor of the publication can select which features will run. Standing features should run in the same place every issue, to make it easy for the reader to find what they are looking for. Consistency of article type and placement are key factors in keeping readers interested in a publication over time. An example of this is the Top Ten list on the front page of the ‘90-’91 *Daily News*. Whether or not it had enough news value or credibility for the front page, there is no doubt that many people picked up the paper every day to read that list. This was evident from the response received, good and bad, by the staff.

Design

Included with this paper are sample designs for *Weekend Life!* The cover and two interior spreads, one with standing features, and one with a specialty feature, have been designed. The format of the publication will be 10" x 11 1/2", and will normally be 18-24 pages in length. To save on printing costs, *Weekend Life!* was designed to be printed in black and white, with the use of one spot color on the cover, preferably on the word *life!* as shown on the cover design included with this paper. As budget allows, color could also be used on interior spreads. The magazine would be printed on the same newsprint as the *Daily News*.

Weekend Life! will be designed using computer pagination software available in the Department of Journalism Publications Computer Lab. A magazine template can easily be set up with all of the standing feature headlines in place, so the *Weekend Life!* staff would only have to insert headline and body copy in the various locations week to week.

The main typeface used is Franklin Gothic. The body copy on all stories is 10 pt. Franklin Gothic Book, on 11 pt. leading. Franklin Gothic Demi and Oblique are used in headlines as well as the nameplate and all standing headlines on special columns. For special features, typefaces for headlines, pulled quotes, and other typographic elements may be chosen as are appropriate to the special article. All typefaces used can be

WEEKEND
life!

accessed in the Publications Lab.

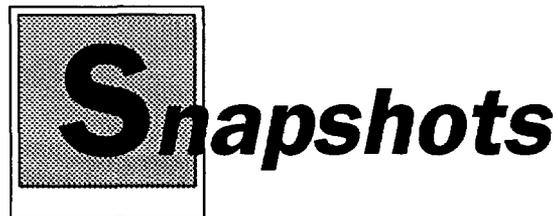
The nameplate uses Franklin Gothic Oblique for the word *WEEKEND*, for a bold look, and Freestyle Script for the word *life!* The combination of the two faces sets the tone for the publication in an upbeat style, suggesting easy, entertainment-oriented reading. On the cover of the publication (see example included), the space below the word *WEEKEND* and to the left of the word *life!* provides an area for teasers of stories inside the publication.

The nameplate as well as the following standing feature heads were created using the following software: Tylestyler, Aldus Freehand, MacDraw II, and Aldus Pagemaker. The standing headlines can be saved on the magazine template and would not have to be reconstructed week to week. What follows are designs for all of the standing heads. Two of the designs are utilized on the enclosed example of an interior spread.

The subhead "cooking" under the *Mommm!* headline will change each week depending on the topic of the column: health care, auto maintenance, or finances.



Reflections



Now Playing

MOVIE REVIEWS

Advertising

As was noted earlier, the advertising potential for *Weekend Life!* would be good. Since the magazine focuses on entertainment and has the ability to spotlight more events and run more feature/entertainment articles than the small Diversions section of the *Daily News*, there would be more opportunity to increase the ad clientele of the *Daily News*. According to Bob Meeds, advertising manager of the *Daily News*, the newspaper's former tabloid, *Weekend*, generated enough money in ad sales to continue to run the publication. Lack of student interest in working on the publication contributed to its failure more than anything.

Possible avenues to be explored for advertising in *Weekend Life!* include: campus groups sponsoring events such as the Student Center Programming Board and sororities and fraternities, major movie production companies as well as local theaters, and local bars

and restaurants to announce specials and entertainment.

Weekend Life! would not detract advertisers from running ads in the *Daily News*, thus drawing money away from the daily paper. This was a concern expressed by former *Daily News* editor Mark Harper. He suggested that the ad potential for the magazine would be great enough to make advertisers pull their ads from the daily paper to run them in the weekend magazine. While this may be true of some ads, there are many advertisers, such as liquor stores who advertise on Thursdays, who will continue to run ads in the daily paper. In addition, *Weekend Life!* will be handled as an extension of the *Daily News*, not a separate competing publication. If anything, *Weekend Life!* will draw more attention to the *Daily News* for advertising potential.

Staff

One of the main reasons the former *Weekend* magazine failed was lack of student involvement. A solution to this problem for *Weekend Life* is to have only a handful of dedicated staff members responsible for the organization of the publication, and seek writers and photographers on an individual need basis. The organization and production of the magazine can be handled easily by a five member staff, since the types of articles and design of the magazine are consistent week to week. Because the newspaper magazine is a combination of two disciplines from the journalism department, staff members should be solicited from both the magazine and news/editorial sequences. The staff and their duties are as follows:

- Editor—overall supervisor and in charge of design and production/paste up
- On Campus Editor—responsible for coordinating the gathering of campus events for the weekly calendar. This person will be key in determining upcoming major feature stories since he or she is constantly in touch with the different organizations on campus.
- Service Editor—responsible for the weekly *Mommm!!!* column; solicits the writer/articles for each week's rotating column, and finds a student's mother's advice for the *Listen to Me* quote.

• Articles Coordinator—responsible for working with journalism faculty members to solicit good articles each week from within the feature and magazine writing courses.

• Art Director—Makes sure all photos, art, infographics and cartoons are ready for paste-up. Works with Editor to design and paste-up the magazine.

Writers, photographers, and artists will be solicited on an individual basis from the *Daily News* staff members, journalism students in feature and magazine writing classes, and from other departments such as art (for illustrations), and home economics and business (for service articles).

The *Weekend Life!* editor should be present at major organizational meetings of the *Daily News* editorial board, and should work closely with the Diversions editor to be sure there is not duplication of articles.

Conclusion

This creative project is intended to be a design of *Weekend Life!*, with an exploration of the content and organization of the magazine. As editor of *expo* magazine this past year, I was met with many more students willing to write and work for a magazine than I could give work to. Of the 25 students that expressed interest in working for *expo* magazine, I was only able to give actual staff positions to six. The writers whose work appeared in *expo* represented only a small number of the students interested in writing features for a magazine. It seemed these students were interested in the feature tone a magazine offers, and also liked the idea of not having the pressure of daily deadlines that working for the *Daily News* has. In addition, the positive feedback to this year's *Weekend!* section and the success in putting it together every week (the pages were often complete before deadline, according to Mielke), are also evidence that the articles as well as the interest of readers are there. *Weekend Life!* is an opportunity waiting to happen.