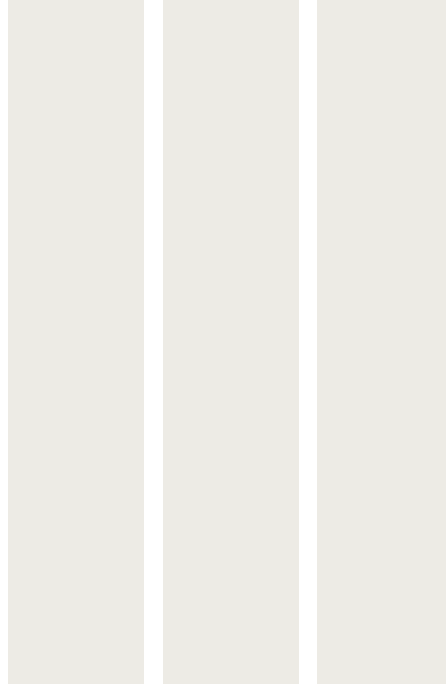# PREFACE

long, long time ago, people actually loved reading newspapers. Imagine.

They'd flip a nickel to the newsboy, grab a paper from the stack and gawk at headlines that screamed:

SOLONS MULL LEVY HIKE BID!

They'd gaze lovingly at long, gray columns of type that looked like this —

— and they'd say: "*Wow!* What a lot of news!"

Today, we're different. We've got color TVs, home computers, portable CD players, glitzy magazines. We collect data in a dizzying array of ways. We don't need long, gray columns of type anymore. We won't *read* long, gray columns of type anymore.

In fact, when we look at newspapers and see those long, gray columns of type, we say: "*Yow!* What a waste of time!"

Today's readers want something different. Something snappy. Something easy to grasp and instantly informative.

And that's where you come in.

If you can design a newspaper that's inviting, informative and easy to read, you can — for a few minutes each day — successfully compete with all those TVs, CDs, computers and magazines. You can keep a noble old American institution — the newspaper — alive for another day.

Because let's face it: To many people, newspapers are dinosaurs. They're big, clumsy and slow. And though they've endured for eons, it may be only a matter of time before newspapers either:

◆ become extinct (this has happened to other famous forms of communication — remember smoke signals? The telegraph?). Or else they'll:

◆ evolve into a new species (imagine a portable video newspaper/TV shopping network that lets you surf the sports highlights, scan some comics, then view the hottest fashions on sale at the TechnoMall).

PREFACE

Those days are still a ways off. For now, we just do our best with what we have: Ink. Paper. Lots of images, letters, lines and dots. A good designer can arrange them all quickly and smoothly, so that today's news feels familiar and . . . new.

But where do newspaper designers come from, anyway? Face it: You never hear children saying, "When I grow up, my dream is to *lay out the Opinion page.*" You never hear college students saying, "I've got a major in rocket science and a minor in *sports infographics.*"

No, most journalists stumble into design by accident. Without warning.

Maybe you're a reporter on a small weekly, and one day your editor says to you, "Congratulations! I'm promoting you to assistant editor. You'll start Monday. Oh, and . . . you know how to lay out pages, don't you?"

Or maybe you've just joined a student newspaper. You want to be a reporter, a movie critic, a sports columnist. So you write your first story. When you finish, the adviser says to you, "Uh, we're a little short-handed in production right now. It'd really help us if you'd design that page your story's on, OK?"

Now, traditional journalism textbooks discuss design in broad terms. They ponder vague concepts like *balance* and *harmony* and *rhythm*. They show award-winning pages from The New York Times or The Wall Street Journal.

"Nice pages," you think. But meanwhile, you're in a hurry. And you're still confused: "How do I connect *this* picture to *this* headline?"

That's where this book comes in.

This book assumes you need to learn the rules of newspaper design as quickly as you can. It assumes you've been reading a newspaper for a while, but you've never really paid attention to things like headline sizes. Or column logos. Or whether pages use five columns of text instead of six.

This book will introduce you to the building blocks of newspaper design: headlines, text, photos, cutlines. We'll show you how to shape them into a story — and how to shape stories into pages.

After that, we'll look at the small stuff (logos, teasers, charts and graphs, type trickery) that makes more complicated pages work. We'll even show you a few reader-grabbing gimmicks, like subheads, to break up gray columns of type:

YO! CHECK OUT THIS ATTENTION-GRABBING SUBHEAD

And bullets, to make short lists "pop" off the page:
- ◆ This is a bullet item.
- ◆ And so is this.
- ◆ Ditto here.

We'll even explore liftout quotes, which let you dress up a quote from somebody famous — say, Mark Twain — to catch your reader's eye.

Yes, some writers will do *anything* to get you to read their prefaces. So if you made it all this way, ask yourself: Did design have anything to do with it?

> " I AM NOT THE EDITOR OF A NEWSPAPER AND SHALL ALWAYS TRY TO DO RIGHT AND BE GOOD, SO THAT GOD WILL NOT MAKE ME ONE.
>
> **Mark Twain** "

A BRIEF WORD OR TWO ABOUT THIS FIFTH EDITION

For this edition, we've added a chapter on Web design, a CD-ROM of exercises, new "Troubleshooting" Q&A's at the end of each chapter. And we've added color — lots of spiffy new examples of color pages, photos and graphics.

Now, most pages at most newspapers, we realize, are still black and white. And we certainly didn't want a lot of readers *honked off* at us for going overboard with this color thing. So we deliberately held back, keeping a large proportion of black-and-white images throughout the book.

Whether you're a big daily or a tiny weekly, a tab or a broadsheet, color or black and white — you'll find plenty of helpful answers in the pages ahead. Enjoy!

— Tim Harrower