



## **The Story . . . A Publisher, An Editor & A Reporter**

by Debra Scifo, ASAC Executive Director

Any successful outcome or happy ending to an endeavor is because a partnership exists between individuals. No industry understands this more than construction. A partnership exists when there is mutual respect for the role and responsibility of each of the partners. No individual is esteemed to be subordinate or superior in a partnership, but each regarded equally to realize a successful outcome.

We intuitively understand a partnership, and we think we know what we want in a partner. But, in truth we spend very little time thinking through and understanding what kind of partner we are. An important question to ask yourself, am I as a person or is my company a good partner?

Most partnerships require money, communication and management. Just because this article will find its way into this publication, let's talk about the partnership that exists between a publisher, editor and reporter to the successful outcome of communicating a story. Each has a responsibility. The publisher is responsible for finance and printing; the editor must focus on format and content and the reporter tells the story.

Understand that this is an oversimplification of the process, but it is a platform for what I want to think through . . . I'd like to talk about the editor because this 'type' of person is someone we all need to seek out as a friend, confidante and well, a partner.

Every story has a plot, but surrounding the plot there is a lot of things going on. The editor keeps the end in mind to ensure that what is being told is relevant and results in a better story.

A story can lose its point of view, go fuzzy or out of focus because the story teller is too close to the subject matter. An Editor keeps the story on track and is a sounding board or trial horse to ensure that what is being communicated is being told true to the plot of the story.

To every story there is a 'bigger picture', a story is a snapshot of an isolated incident. An editor understands that the true story lies in the bigger picture, this requires patience so that the story being told is in fact the story, or as we have heard said . . . the rest of the story.

Gardner Botsford was a well known editor for the New York Times. He said in his book, *A Life of Privilege Mostly*, that "Good editing has saved bad writing more often than bad editing has harmed good writing." But he also said . . . 'a good editor is a mechanic, or craftsman, while a good writer is an artist', the rest of the story.

The communication of a good story requires a publisher, editor and reporter. Whether you are building your personal or professional life or growing a construction business we need to seek out a partner who has the characteristics and skills of an editor. A good story depends on a partner who keeps us on track, focused and will sharpen the pencil to make corrections and revisions where and when necessary to ensure that our story is a good story. In the words of Botsford, you are the artist so with the end in mind, write your story.