



CELEBRATING  
55 YEARS

# nerej

## Founder's Message: New Years Message - Time Flies

January 22, 2015 - Front Section

It seems like just the other day that the Journal celebrated its 50th birthday - very big cake with lots of candles. And almost overnight this week the Journal is now 52 years old. Happy Birthday to us. And let's not forget that the New York Real Estate Journal is 25 years old. And the Journal website - the first commercial real estate website in the country, is 20 years old. Recalling all these launchings brings back the memories of those people who I visited, face to face, who allowed me into their offices not knowing who the hell I was or what the Journal was and then they became the Journal foundation.

One Boston mortgage broker, Alvin Miller, had a lovely secretary whose job it was to keep cold callers like me away from the boss. She admitted that he was in but that I would have to make an appointment. Yeah, sure. I had already learned that since no one had heard of "the New England what?" it was impossible to make appointment with busy people. So getting back to Alvin Miller, it was about 3 o'clock and she said that he was too busy to see me, so I politely said that I would wait. At five she smiled and went home. At six Alvin came out of his office, smiled, asked me who I was and invited me to ride down the elevator with him. "I don't advertise anywhere," he said. "But I will try an 1/8 page in your paper just to see what happens." Thirty-five years later his ad still appeared monthly in the same location, and even though he had retired, he still ran it "just in case" he said.

My first profile interview was with a 29 year old Nordblom broker named Bill McCall. He only agreed because I had met him at Wonderland Dog Track when I was still a teenager. We bet on the same dog, Fire Pot, and it won. Bill went on to form a very successful company, Leggat, McCall and Werner, who ran quite a few successful ads in the Journal.

My first weekly advertiser was another cold call. Bob Lewis (my mentor along with Earl Nightingale and Dale Carnegie) and I drove to Cape Cod and cold called on the area's number one brokerage firm, Rene Poyant. He agreed to give us a few minutes of his valuable time and listened to our pitch. After several minutes he invited us to leave the room and I heard him say to one of his employees, "Give those boys whatever they want." Fifty years later that company still runs a weekly ad in the upper left hand corner of the popular Billboard section.

Maybe the moral to the story is patience and persistence. I remember taking a bus to Northern Maine and calling on an industrial development director in Presque Isle. (I did make an appointment for that visit). He bought a monthly ad that ran for many years. On the way back to Boston I stopped in Portland (Gene Martin) and visited the Central Maine Power Company (Dick Wagner) and landed two more loyal regular advertisers. I think I could write a big book naming all the influential people I met. I sat in the offices of CVS (before they had one store,) Dunkin Donuts, Tedeschis, Christmas Tree Shops - all using the Journal to find sites for their ideas. I rubbed elbows with Junior Celluci whose son became governor of Massachusetts, Sam Tamposi who was a stockholder in the Boston Red Sox and allowed me to sit in his owner's box. And maybe one of my most cherished memories,

a dance with beautiful Realtor of the year, Angie Kopka, at a very long time ago weekend business function held in New Hampshire. I made a telephone call a year ago and she picked up. We chatted for a long time and she admitted to being 98. If the Journal had a Hall of Fame (not a bad idea) Angie would be one of the first to be voted in. Oops, I've run out of space or I could go on and on. Maybe the moral of my story is that the Journal survived this recent horrible recession because it was the first to use social media in the industry to reveal who was doing what and what was doing who. It still does that and will continue to successfully do that. And if you have read this far, thanks for your support.

Roland Hopkins is founder of the NEREJ, Norwell, Mass.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540