

Heckler targets Strib at SME media panel

There's one in every media-related crowd, a critic of the Star Tribune and its supposed lefty slant.

And sure enough, a heckler asked this question of the media panelists assembled in the spring by the Sales & Marketing Executives Minnesota: Why did the "Star and Sickle" cover the day's Northwest Airlines story by leading with the news of 600 mechanic layoffs?

"I don't know why you call it the Star and Sickle. I'm a capitalist," shot back Greg Patterson, a business editor at the Star Tribune in Minneapolis and a panelist.

The Strib has extensively covered Northwest Airlines' problems, Patterson added, and the layoffs were the newest and biggest development that day. News that the questioner said was buried in the story, that Northwest Airlines was also



upgrading its fleet, had been reported before.

Other questions covered the basics of getting stories told in the local media:

Get to know individual publications and what they cover by reading and taking note of bylines. Don't send product samples or other items unless requested, because most are sent to the trash or charities. Other panelists were from Upsize Minnesota (guess who), One Nation News and The Business Journal.

SME news: The Minnesota chapter unveiled its new logo, featuring two connected circles that replace the old generic skyline.

Try to make it to: SME Minnesota's next breakfast event is Aug. 18: 763.746.3400; info@smemn.org; www.smemn.org

Corporate bigwigs display prowess at gorgeous new Walker

Don't go to the new Walker Art Center in Minneapolis if you want to feel the power of being a small-business owner. Huge corporations dominate, with naming rights sold for everything from the Best Buy video kiosks to the General Mills lobby to the Target gallery.

On the opening party for the public April 17, Meredith Monk was among the performers, vocalizing her songs about the North country in an unusual way. Her songs don't use words, but rather pops, sighs and buzzings.

She was showcased in the William and Nadine McGuire Theater, the former of whom runs United HealthGroup. He probably needed a little positive PR about his philanthropy that week, since his annual compensation had just been reported at a cool \$124 million. Included in his and his wife's numerous gifts are \$10 million to the Walker.

(Hmmm. Since the Informer paid for tickets to the Meredith Monk performance, perhaps she could purchase rights to the Upsize Cup Holder halfway down Row 17.)

The hit of the day was the talking robotic dolphin that appears onscreen in the Best Buy gallery. Visitors can type in questions, such as "what's your favorite color." The dolphin answers, "green, like money."



Reached after the event, the Walker's Christopher Stevens said the capital campaign raised \$93.7 million. It had \$2.8 million to go, and he points out that any individual or corporation can still contribute. The Walker sold seven named spaces to corporations, which all cost in the seven figures, and seven to individuals. He said that's not so much named space given that it's a 260,000-square-foot expansion.

Try to make it to: The Walker Art Center is open Tuesday through Sunday, with free Thursday evenings. Those are sponsored, of course: by Target Corp; www.walkerart.org

[10 things] ... employees like best about your company's benefits.

- 1** I like our **health and wellness program**. We're doing a walking challenge, a 16-week program to get up to 10,000 steps a day.
— Christine Harper, Landscape Structures Inc. 763.972.3391
- 2** We pay for their bus passes.
— Suzanne McGann, Voyageur I.T.: 651.292.8838
- 3** We let them **choose their coffee vendor**.
— David Peterson, Voyageur I.T. Colorado office: 866.932.1126
- 4** **Tickets**. We get tickets to the Wolves and the Lynx, to use for family and friends.
— Shelley Brug, Minnesota Lynx: 612.673.8412
- 5** We have corporate **season tickets to the Wolves**, and they draw names and give them away.
— Andrea Preston, Minnesota Lynx: 612.673.8412
- 6** We're downtown so parking is expensive. We subsidize **5 percent of their salary to go toward parking**.
— Kathy Sloper, Johnson, West & Co.: 651.287.6322
- 7** We like a lot of the personal touches. The owners are really giving. **They're always recognizing people**.
— Carol McDonough, Teacher Federal Credit Union: 763.512.6120
- 8** We have a **profit-sharing program**. It's a win-win.
— Joan Siewert-Cardona, Ideal Printers Inc. 651.855.1046
- 9** We're very entrepreneurial, and the employees that have been there a while have **ownership in these new companies**.
— David Carnes, ArcStone : 612.381.9955
- 10** It's very much a team. **To get the training and teaching I need is great**.
— Miralita Elmore, Netbriefings: 651.225.1532, ext. 115