PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

Design should not be confused with decoration. The graphics selected for a story and the display of that story must be functional; must in some way improve the readership of that story, either by helping to explain its content or by making it more inviting to the reader. Besides being functional, page designs generally should be simple, clean and consistent. The goal is to provide an attractive newspaper that is as easy to read as possible.

ORGANIZATION

1. Pages should not appear cluttered. Page elements (headlines, photos, graphics, logos, etc.) should not compete with each other for the reader's attention.

2. Intended relationships between elements should be clear and easily determined. Conversely, unrelated elements should be clearly distinguished from one another.

3. Editorial elements should be displayed in such a way as not to be confused with advertising. In general, pictures and graphics should not touch advertising.

4. Stories and their sidebars and related stories, photos and graphics should be packaged together.

READABILITY

Readers should be guided smoothly and as quickly as possible through each story and through each page as a whole. The reading process (path of the reader's eye) should be interrupted as infrequently as possible.

ACCURACY/CLARITY

1. The design of a page should reflect the relative importance of each story on the page.

2. The layout devices used must be appropriate for the story's content. For example, techniques such as hammer heds, which generally are associated with features, should not be used on routine news stories.

3. All pages should be dummied completely and precisely -- to the line, whenever possible. Any pertinent instructions and variances from the norm should be included with the page dummy.

MODULAR DESIGN

1. The Bee follows a modular format for the design of its pages. Stories (and accompanying photos and graphics) should be displayed in rectangular shapes. (An imaginary line drawn around a story and related art should form a rectangle.)

2. Effective modular makeup is a combination of vertical and horizontal display; neither should be used exclusively and neither should be forced upon a page.

3. Modular design breaks up a broadsheet page into smaller areas, allowing the reader a more efficient way of dealing with individual units rather than the page as a whole.

4. Frequently, the length of a story recommends the type of display.
    a) Longer stories are generally better displayed horizontally. Horizontal display gives the reader the optical illusion that the copy is shorter than it really is; as such, the reader is less likely to be turned off by an imposing mass of gray type. Ideally, the depth of a horizontally displayed story (without art) should not exceed five inches.
    b) Shorter stories can be better organized vertically. It is also better to group short stories together in a digest rather than scatter them across a page. Short stories should have a purpose on the page. Shorts as fillers are the result of imprecise dummying and should be avoided.

SECTION FRONTS

1. Every section front must have a dominant photo or graphic. The lede art should be at least 50 percent larger than the next largest piece of art on the page. Generally speaking, on an open page a piece of art should cover at least 30 column inches to be considered dominant.

2. Every page must have a dominant headline to give the reader a starting point on the page. As a general rule, to be dominant a headline must be at least one column wider and 12 points larger than the next largest headline. (Six points larger on pages with ads).

3. The headline on a lede story should be placed in the upper right hand corner of the page or stripped across the top of the page. Generally, the minimum width of a lede headline should be 18.9 picas.

4. There should be a variety of headline sizes and weights (light, medium and bold on a page.

5. Getting the reader down the page
    a) Generally, headline sizes decrease from top to bottom on a page. However, on an open page it may be necessary to use larger heds at the bottom in order to attract the reader's attention.
    b) In order to guide the reader's eye down a page, it is essential that a combination of horizontal and vertical makeup be used.