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2009
creative arts competition

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Jan. 14, 2009

Steal This Idea

Somewhere beneath our speeding 737 is the beautiful state of Missouri—or maybe Kansas or Oklahoma—they all look about the same from 40,000 feet in the dead of night. But it occurs to me as I write and gaze into the inky darkness, maybe somewhere far beneath us, in a small town or big city, there is a person writing and editing for her own magazine—and maybe she's late filing her column, too.

But I write aloft not (merely) because of editorial dereliction. No, I delayed so that I could convey some of what I learned this week at a **Gigantor magazine management conference** in Chicago—broad shoulders, indeed.

Seminar topics included those that were so terribly mundane they hurt your head: analysis of metrics like page count, Web views, revenue migration, user forums. And like every profession, magazines have their own off-putting jargon: Writers inserting *char-ticles*; editors *chunkifying* stories; readers *info snack-ing*—grazing the vastly broadened horizons of news and data.

But beneath all that were messages of competition and quality that could inspire any profession:

- Be willing to fail boldly.
- Don't play for the tie: Inspire yourself to serve readers better.
- Feed your head.
- Aim for wit, style and beauty.


And, oh yes: **"Try new things.** No one else knows what they're doing either." Cheers.

In that spirit, I am asking readers and magazine staff to indulge their felonious side. Let's steal some ideas.

Sure, sure, we'll transform them, not hijack them wholesale. But I'd like to hear:

- **What do you like best in your favorite magazines?**
- **What elements in print or on the Web get your blood moving?**

Look over your coffee table and your bookmarks: *Esquire*, *Mother Jones*, *Us Weekly*, *New Yorker*, *Bass Fishing*. Every idea may not translate to ARIZONA ATTORNEY, but do you enjoy: news briefs, more photos and charts, shorter profiles, no profiles, how-to stories, Web story follow-up? **More bass fishing?**

2009's almost here. Let's get jiggy with it. Write me at arizona.attorney@azbar.org. 



Creativity in pubs is hard work: A previous passenger's in-flight magazine.



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A Publication of the State Bar of Arizona

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Periodicals Postage paid in Phoenix, Arizona, and additional mailing offices. Subscription price: \$50 per year; all members except retired: included in dues; \$5.00 per copy. Copyright 2008 by the State Bar of Arizona. All rights reserved. Any copying of material herein, in whole or in part, and by any means, without written permission, is prohibited.

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VOLUME 45, NO. 3

