



Roger Rinehart eases a new roll of newsprint into place recently, getting ready for a night's worth of operations in the Arizona Daily Star's press room

KELLY PRESNELL / ARIZONA DAILY STAR

PRESS

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But to keep that up, the press needs expensive upgrades. It makes more economic sense to print on a newer Goss press in Phoenix.

It's the end of an era. And sad for Lundgren.

"I'm definitely attached to it," he says.

Before it goes away and becomes scrap metal, get to know the impressive machine that has printed the Star every day, save one, since Aug. 19, 1973.

In the beginning

The Star and Tucson Citizen were operating out of a crowded building in downtown Tucson when Michael Pulitzer, owner of the Star, and William A. Small Jr., who owned the Citizen, decided it was time for a new home.

Construction of a plant, which would house both papers and the print facilities, began in 1972 at South Park Avenue and East Irvington Road. The decision was also made to upgrade from the seven-unit letterpress in use to the 12-unit offset press, with each unit having its own printing capabilities. The quality is higher and the output greater with the offset presses.

Before the building was completely done, the press was moved, piece by piece, from Chicago, where it had been assembled, tested and dismantled.

Once here, construction continued around the press rooms while experts from Goss put it back together again, and retesting began. That took about a year, says Lundgren.

The first papers on the new press rolled out the night of Aug. 19, 1973; the next morning, the Star was on subscribers' doorsteps to read while they had their morning cup of joe.

A wonder

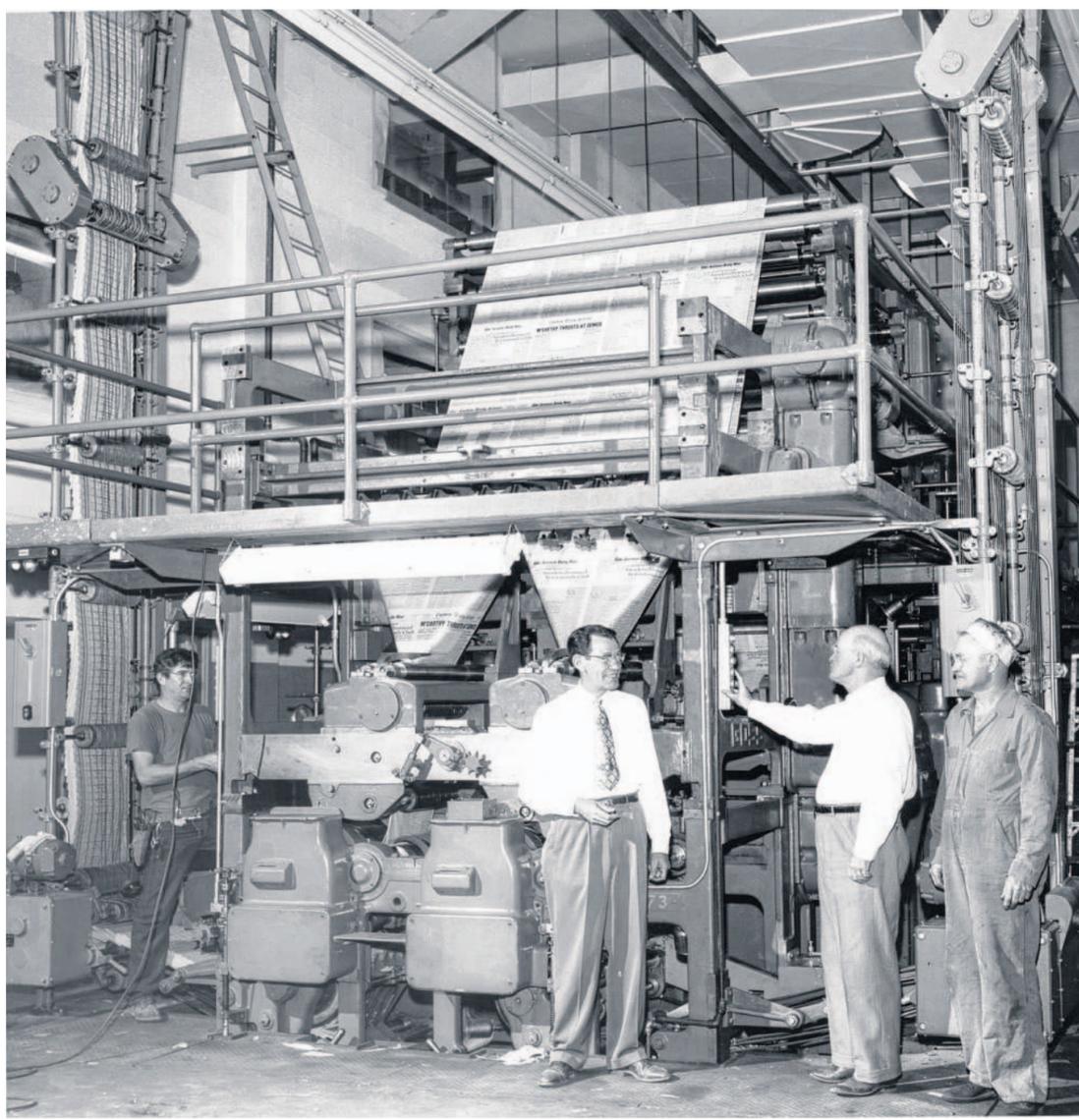
When the press is running, the metal stairs leading to each of the three floors vibrate, the smell of fresh ink fills the air, and the drums move at such a speed that it is shocking a wind isn't created. The rumble fills the whole southwest side of the Star's building.

On the first floor, massive rolls of newsprint are loaded onto the press. As the press begins rolling, the roll starts to unwind, feeding paper to the press through slots in the two upper floors. It is slow at first but quickly picks up speed. When all the pages are printed, they are fed to what Lundgren calls "an engineering marvel": the folder. Without slowing the press, the folder sorts pages, cuts them, and transfers the papers via a gripper conveyor to the mailroom/packaging center, where papers are bundled and readied for pickup by the carriers.

But before that happens, press operators lean over as the first papers come out on the conveyor belt, grab them off the folder and rifle through them to make sure ink is set and color is registering. It isn't unusual for a slight adjustment to be made.

The day the press stopped

On July 22, 1982, a series of transformers that provided electricity to the building were damaged. While they were being inspected, there were several explosions. Seven people were injured, four of them seriously. One of them, Frank Delehanty, the Star's business manager, eventually died from the burns



ARIZONA DAILY STAR

William R. Mathews, editor and publisher of the Arizona Daily Star, pushes the button that starts the new Tucson Newspapers' Goss Metroliner press in the company's new building at 208 N. Stone Ave. on July 4, 1954. The new press units had a capacity of 48,000 papers per hour. The entire Star/Citizen mechanical departments were moved from one building to another in 17 hours.



JOE PATRONITE / ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Tucson firefighters and paramedics converge on the Tucson Newspapers parking lot, where seven people were injured in a transformer explosion July 22, 1982.

to his body.

That day, reporters kept their mourning in check and furiously wrote stories, which were then flown to Phoenix and printed on the press at The Phoenix Gazette, which has since folded.

Technicians worked tirelessly, and the press was ready to go the next day.

Whoops

Lundgren, who started in the press room in 1976, leads the way to a room on the first floor.

"This is the black ink room," he explains.

At the far end are two massive tanks

filled with black ink; each holds 6,000 gallons. Ink pump lines lead from the tanks to the press on the upper floors.

"Notice the stain on the floor here," Lundgren says as he points to a cement floor that appears to be grayish black.

"Two different times, these ink lines blew and filled this room with ink up to here." He points to the wall above the floor board to indicate how high the ink flood was.

"That was a nightmare."

Another time, a roll of tape was put improperly on a hanger in the press. When the presses got up to speed, that steel hanger slipped off and was crushed under the cylinder.

"We had to do a lot of work and money to repair the press," Lundgren says as he points to the flattened hanger in a shadow box and hanging on his wall.

"This is artwork," he says with a smile.

There have been a few fires, as well.

Lundgren admits to being sentimental about the press. For 43 years, that familiar rumble and hum as paper meets ink has been the soundtrack of his career, and he admits he will miss it.

Lucky for him a stroll down memory lane is only 90 minutes away.

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