

Ralph St. Denny

Founder of the Pennysaver

November 14, 1924 - October 18, 1999

Back in 1949 Ralph saw a publication called the Owego Pennysaver Press. That paper was one of the very first free distribution papers in the country and for whatever reason Ralph thought that would be a great business for him to jump into. I guess after serving in World War 2 as a sailor on a submarine he had no fear in getting in over his head and with that confidence the Chenango Valley Pennysaver became a reality in October 1949.

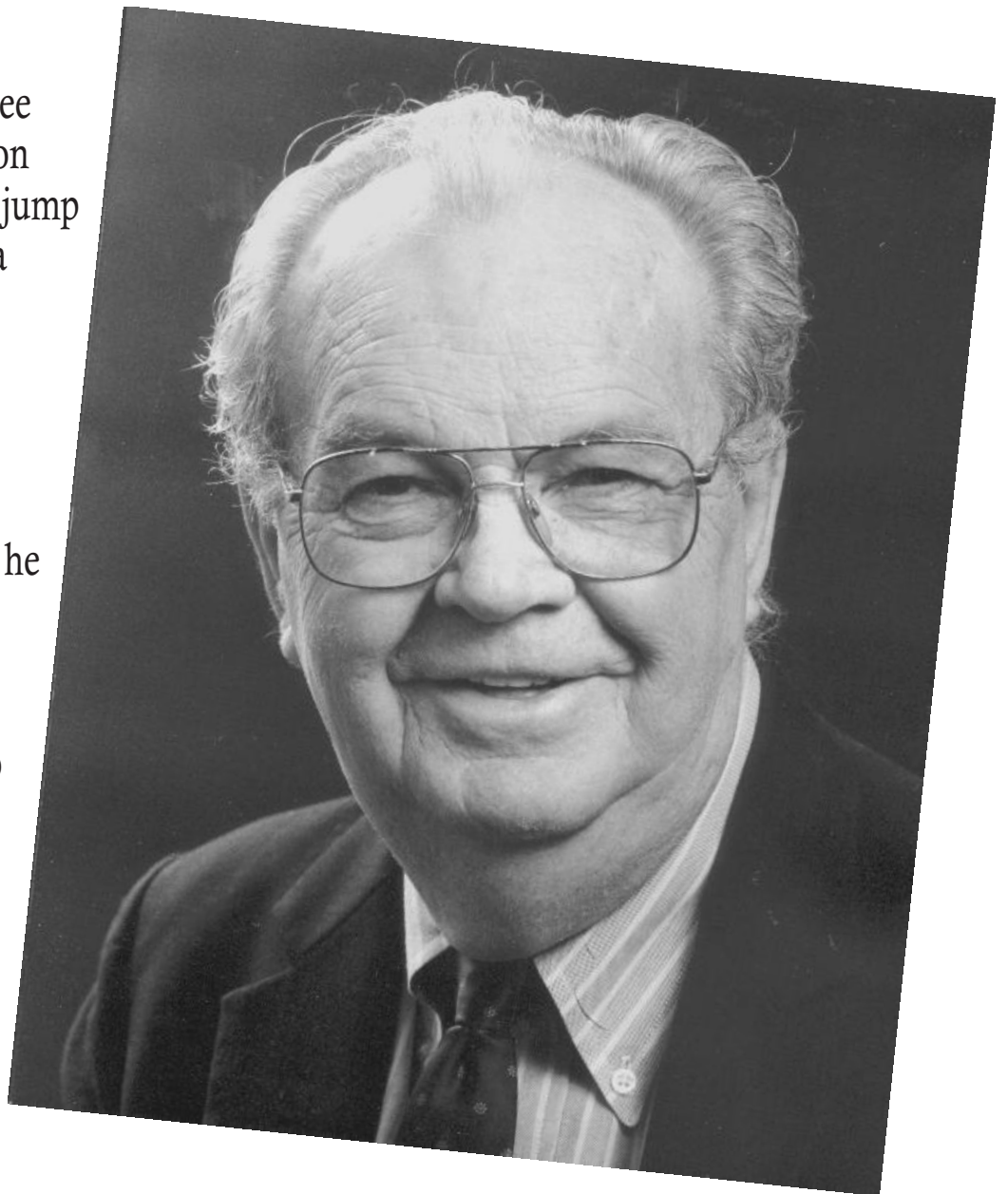
I asked Ralph about the early days and all he could say was that they were brutal. 16-hour days, 6 days a week were the norm. He wanted to get out after two years but he owed the bank two thousand dollars and had no way to pay it back. Thank goodness for us he stayed and eventually his hard work paid off. What you are holding in your hands today is a direct result of his dedication to the concept and his belief in the free paper industry.

His belief not only led to a very successful operation here, it led him to become a major figure in the formation of both the New York State and the National Associations of Free Community papers. His knowledge, leadership, and willingness to share, helped the free paper industry grow and prosper through the 50's, 60's, 70's and 80's.

His wisdom and vision for this new industry also provided some of its key inventions. Back in the 50's, the Pennysaver and other shopping type papers were run on mimeograph machines and put together by hand, stapled, and delivered to households in a very small, but defined area. Unfortunately, because it was basically a hand operation, this industry was limited to small circulations and limited page counts. Ralph and his partners in a new company called Norwich Manufacturing invented the technology and the machinery, which allowed publishers to automatically put together many pages at one time. This technology allowed both page counts and circulations to grow. Now heavily populated areas of the country, such as Long Island, could join the "Shopping Paper Industry."

In the late 70's Ralph sold his interest in the Pennysaver but continued to stay with the company and continued to provide a strong leadership and creative presence. Using his talents and vision, Ralph became involved in the designing of building material advertising circulars for local lumberyards. As with all good things, Ralph's reputation for doing good work spread, and we started doing more circulars for the friends and associates of these local dealers. Eventually a new company was formed in 1987 called Circulars Unlimited. From what was once just Ralph and two others, Circulars Unlimited grew to become one of the largest producers of advertising circulars for the lumber, home center, and pet care industry. Circulars Unlimited has customers throughout the US and even as far away as Guam and Puerto Rico. A sample of their work can be seen with the regular appearance of the "Curtis Lumber" circulars that are inserted in the Pennysaver and the Evening Sun.

Ralph will always be a part of our lives and through our hands, his creativity will be enjoyed by thousand of people all across the country.



Dick Snyder, President
The Norwich & Sidney Pennysavers