

## ROCKY CLOSES



DARIN MCGREGOR/ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

The ticker on the outside of the Denver Newspaper Agency building at the corner of Colfax Avenue and Broadway carries the news of the *Rocky's* demise.

Longtime subscriber Harry Punceck, 68, summed up the feelings of many loyal readers: "It's like losing a relative . . . somebody who's really sort of a wise person."

# To readers, it wasn't just a newspaper

By Gary Massaro, Berny Morson and Jean Torkelson  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

For many subscribers, the *Rocky Mountain News* is more than the daily dose of news — it's an old friend they've turned to for decades.

Now, the old friend isn't around anymore.

Longtime readers, especially, say they will treasure today's final edition — and mourn the passing of a tradition.

Here are some of their stories:

**Helen Marc** has been a *Rocky* subscriber for 40 years. When she heard the paper was closing, the memories began to come.

She and her family learned about an entire war — Vietnam — from the pages of the *Rocky*. In 1976, she read with horrified fascination about the Big Thompson Flood and discovered that an old grade-school teacher of hers survived it.

Then there was the monster blizzard on Christmas Eve, 1982.

"The *Rocky* put out a whole (edition) about the blizzard," she said, "and I sent for it and have it to this day."

Marc and her late husband, Louis, who died a few years ago, have been taking the *Rocky* since the late 1960s.

As for today's paper? Like the Blizzard of '82 edition, "I'm going to keep it," she said.

**Ed Lippert**, who has worked in lighting sales for years, was laid off from his job last week.

On Thursday, he heard about another loss — the newspaper that has turned up on his doorstep virtually every morning since he moved to Denver in 1980.

Lippert, 60, subscribes to the *Rocky* and *The Post*. He is a prolific newspaper letter-writer and estimates 30 to 40 of his letters have been published in the Denver dailies.

He remembers the unforgettable moments, when the *Rocky* was a link to history.

"Obviously, 9/11 was a dumbfounding moment," he said. "But, for me, to be candid, what I remember is when the Broncos won the Super

Bowl (in 1998), and I will never forget opening the paper and seeing John Elway standing there holding the Lombardi Trophy. That was incredible."

He expects completely different emotions when he opens the paper today.

"I'm going to feel terrible. That paper is going to be rolled up and stuck in my safe forever. Twenty years from now, it will be something my kids will stumble on and say, 'Oh, gosh, the last day of the *Rocky Mountain News*.'"

**Doug Hawk**, 60, of Denver, has been a lifelong newspaper reader.

"Since I was old enough to read, I've loved newspapers," Hawk said. "Truly, they're a daily miracle. Not having the *Rocky* on my front lawn every morning is going to be painful."

Hawk, who retired last year as communications manager of the Colorado Community College system, is especially a fan of the *Rocky*.

"I particularly loved the local coverage. I'm a big Drew Litton fan and a big Ed Stein fan," he said of the

paper's cartoonists. "I'm really going to miss it. I get both papers every day. It's going to be sad to have one out there now."

**Harry Punceck** delivered the *Rocky Mountain News* in central Denver in the early 1950s, when he was in sixth, seventh and eighth grades.

In those days, newsboys had to collect from subscribers once a month and turn some of the money over to the paper. One night, Punceck was jumped by older boys and the money was stolen.

"I was scared to death I couldn't make up the money," Punceck said.

But the *Rocky* was understanding. "The *News* took my word for it on everything," Punceck said.

Punceck, 68, began subscribing to the paper himself when he returned from the Army in 1962.

"It's like losing a relative," Punceck said of the closing. "Not a brother or sister, but an uncle — somebody who's really sort of a wise person. When you're sort of wondering about things . . . he sort of lets you think for yourself but, at the same

time, he's a source of great information. I always trusted the *News*. I didn't always agree, but I always trusted."

**Randy Brown** wasn't much of a newspaper reader until he found himself in the middle of the news.

After the killings at Columbine High School, he revealed that police had ignored his warnings about Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold.

"Your newspaper made a heck of a difference in our lives," said Brown, 56. "Reporters Kevin Vaughan and Lynn Bartels were just incredible in the early coverage — getting the truth out."

"If people outside the Columbine tragedy knew how much the *Rocky Mountain News* did . . . they would never let this paper go under," he said. "They don't understand what a difference they made."

"It's the loss of an institution, certainly, but what it is to me — and what I worry about — is the loss of the talent there," he said. "I'm very saddened by this."

Staffwriter Nancy Mitchell contributed this report.


**Below, Doug's successor posted his thoughts on [iwantmyrocky.com](http://www.iwantmyrocky.com) earlier this month.**

I Want My Rocky » Blog Archive » Send us your thoughts - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Home Search Favorites Refresh Print Mail Stop

Address <http://www.iwantmyrocky.com/2008/12/16/send-us-your-thoughts/> Go Links

 **I want my Rocky**

Nearly as long as there has been a Denver, Colorado, there has been a Rocky Mountain News. That ended Friday, Feb. 27, 2009.

HOME OUR NEWSPAPER E-MAIL RSS ABOUT Search the archive... MEET THE ROCKY COMMENT

Home » Comments

## Send us your thoughts

DEC. 16, 2008 199 COMMENTS

Comment in the field below about why you want your *Rocky*.

[Read more comments here.](#)



**199 Comments »**

**Joe Marquez** said:

At age 14 in 1984, the Rocky Mountain News gave me my first job as a paperboy and as a PR professional I've been working with newspapers ever since.

The *Rocky* has meant a lot to me over the years. I love the Nuggets coverage. I love the concise articles that inform me without wasting my time. I have read Dusty Saunders since I was a kid. In 2006, when doing PR for Arapahoe Community College, I was touched how John Temple took the time to get to know me at a one of DNA's philanthropic functions. His brainchild Your Hub.com has been a valuable tool to PR people. Once they post their news on it - their organizations and stories are then conveyed to interested persons not only on the site but in the results of search engine searches.

As a member of the Bathroom Readers Institute . . . I'm in big trouble if this becomes a one newspaper town. Broad sheets are just too cumbersome for my favorite reading place!

The *Rocky* has been an impressive Chronicle of Record for the evolution of Colorado and it will be a major tragedy if it does not live on!

### Thank you

From all of us at I Want My Rocky, thank you doesn't seem to say everything you, our readers, mean to us. We will treasure all the kind words sent in to us via this Web site and the support you've given us by making the *Rocky* your newspaper of choice in Denver.

We are truly sorry for the outcome.

### Testimonials

This is a great newspaper that represents what is so unique about the Colorado front range. If you purchase this company you will not only be serving the greater good you will be buying into an untapped potential of some of the best photographers and writers in the country.

--J. Haynes, Westminster

[More testimonials](#)