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The Tennessee Press

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Courier News news racks are works of art

KEN LEINART
The Courier News, Clinton
December 15, 2020

Our newspaper coin racks at The Courier News, Clinton, are getting a new look.

Art students from Anderson County and Clinton high schools were asked to help us in this undertaking.

The teachers were willing — enthusiastically so — and the students were, too.

Once they got it into it.

"We weren't sure what we were going to do at first," said Jordan Fall, one of four Anderson County High School students who did the actual painting on the boxes. "There were a lot of things to consider."

Such as color, presentation, and how to do something that looked "really cool."

Daeci King, another artist who took part in the project, said it was a collective effort from the four to come up with, "something that would catch the eye."

"I think it was Jordan's idea," said King. "But it was like, 'Yeah,



Photo submitted by The Courier News, Clinton

Anderson County High School art students, from left, Rheagan Bannach, Jordan Fall, and Daeci King, stand by their work. In this case a coin box they and fellow student Shelly Spradlin (not pictured) designed and painted for The Courier News, Clinton.

that would work."

What the ACHS students chose was a collection of "famous" paintings — ones that had touched them in some way.

Some of the images are easily

recognizable, even to uninformed art lovers like me. Others, not so much — or at least to some of us.

"Do you recognize this," King

See **NEWS RACKS** Page 2

Crawford, long-time TPAF trustee, passes away at 84

SUBMITTED
January 8, 2021

Nathan Lynn "Nate" Crawford, Sr. died January 6, 2021 in Nashville, Tenn. He was 84. A private family funeral service was to be held in Lawrenceburg on January 16, 2021 followed by the burial service in Calvary Cemetery with full military honors.

He is survived by his wife of 32 years; a step-daughter; two sons; one daughter; three grandchildren; and one great-grandchild. Surviving also is faithful Beagle companion, "Bristol Peyton." Also surviving is his brother, W.T. Crawford.

Mr. Crawford was preceded in death by his brother, Jim, and



Crawford

he was editor and co-owner of The Democrat-Union in Lawrenceburg for 22 years.

Although living in Nashville since 1985, he maintained many close friendships in Lawrenceburg and Lawrence County. He was a third-generation newspaperman and graduated from the University

of Tennessee-Knoxville, where he studied journalism. At UT he was a letterman on the UT varsity swimming team and was a member of Kappa Alpha fraternity.

Upon graduating, he returned to Lawrenceburg to join his father and uncle in the newspaper business. His grandfather was legendary newspaperman C.T. Crawford from Paris, Tenn.

Together with his brother he purchased The Democrat-Union from his father and uncle in the early 1960's. Except for a two-year stint as Information Coordinator in General Electric's Aerospace Division

See **CRAWFORD** Page 2

Deadlines for TPA State Contests are almost here!

The entry deadline for the 2021 Tennessee State Press Contests is Friday, Feb. 26. Once again, the Contests will utilize the BetterBNC online contests entry and judging platform.

There have been a few changes to categories for 2021. Community Lifestyles and Best Web Site were eliminated. Added for 2021 are the categories of Best Digital Presentation, Best Covid Feature and Best Covid News.

Entries will be submitted as PDFs in all but three categories. Those remaining in print are Make-Up and Appearance, Best Special Issue or Section, and Sunday Editions.

The entry fee remains \$10 per entry. Please call TPA at (865) 584-5761, ext. 105 with any questions.

Ad/Circ Ideas Contest

The deadline for the TPA Ad/Circ Ideas Contest is Friday, March 5. There are no changes or additions to the categories for 2021.

Fees are \$7 per entry.

First through third places are awarded in five divisions of each category, and there is an overall Best of Show Award. The contest has 29 categories and five divisions based on circulation. A determination on when the awards will be presented will be made by the TPA Board of Directors.

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TPAers with suggestions, questions or comments about items in The Tennessee Press are welcome to contact the managing editor. Call Mike Towle, (615) 293-5771; or email editor@tnpress.com. The deadline for the April 2021 issue is March 9, 2021.

Happy 2021! Let's see what it brings

This year has been an interesting one so far to say the least, and shows promise to be a big year for news, both good and bad. With a new president and new legislators in place, there is sure to be plenty to cover both nationwide and locally as our readers respond both positively and negatively to policy change.

One small-town mayor in West Tennessee went public with his grievances with a post on the town's official Facebook page saying:

"The Town of Bruceton grieves for our Republic and our loss of freedoms. We mourn the victims of the Chinese plague and those that have suffered its depredations. We pray that God delivers and restores us and that we do not fall to the clutches of communism."

Yes, tensions are running high for sure, and are only getting worse from here. At our community newspapers, we've already had people on both sides calling threatening to cancel their subscription based on editorial content – liberals accuse us of being too conservative, conservatives think we are



**YOUR
PRESIDING
REPORTER**

DANIEL RICHARDSON

liberal. That is the downside of balanced reporting – no one is on your side and there are plenty against you. And we're not even covering national news except for how it affects our communities and the people we write about.

For example, one article on a local alderwoman from Camden attended the "insurrection" at the Capitol with her grandchildren. We had an article in the Camden Chronicle about her experience and perspective, no political commentary whatsoever. Several local Democrats said they will not renew their subscription. Then a regular opinion columnist who is a Democrat writes about her take on the inauguration. And the Republicans are canceling. I've taken a few of these calls myself and

some of the callers have actually been in tears.

I know this sentiment is not isolated to our area but is happening across the nation and everyone adjusts emotionally to the shift of power over the next few months or even years. As newspapers, I don't know what we can do but continue to cover things as they unfold. In the past, I have thought that community newspapers are somewhat shielded from the sensationalism of Washington politics because our focus is only on our communities. But emotions are running so high right now that it seems nearly everyone reads political bias into everything.

Only time will tell how the situation unfolds. As for us, I hope those that have called will change their minds and continue to stay involved with local news.

Daniel Richardson, publisher of the Carroll County News Leader, Huntingdon, and group publisher of the eastern division of Music Valley Publishing, is president of the TPA for the 2020-2021 term.

NEWS RACKS from Page 1

said as she touched a piece of work on the top of the coin box, near the coin mechanism.

Let's see ... Isn't that ...

"No," came the reply.

"That's from SpongeBob SquarePants!" she said, laughing. "We wanted something fun."

King said that idea came from Shelly Spradlin, another of the artists. While ACHS art teacher Kevin Tucker worried about how to get 20-something art students involved in one project that was, to be honest, limited in scope, he said he chose four students and

put them at it.

But nobody in the class, it seems, felt left out. The project seemed to draw the interest of everyone. And it was a learning experience.

"It really helped with my technique," Fall said. "I learned a lot about my painting."

As for King, her knowledge gained was less "art" and more "curiosity," she said. "I learned how a coin box works. I never really used one before, so that was neat."

King also learned that there is ample space in a newspaper coin box to hide, in case you ever want to hide in a newspaper coin box.

Clinton High School also received

a box to do with what the art students wanted. But in 2020, nothing has been easy, and COVID often-times derails plans and timetables.

When Clinton students have their work ready, we hope they will be as excited about it as we will be.

The ACHS box will be placed in a prominent location in Clinton — as will the box from Clinton High School.

The Courier News likes to report on athletic and academic achievements in the community, and now we get the chance to not just report on the artistic achievements of students, but give them a chance to show off their work to everybody.

CRAWFORD from Page 1

in Huntsville, Ala., he was editor of the D-U until he sold it in 1984.

During his tenure as editor, the newspaper grew to be the largest non-daily newspaper in Tennessee. It was eight-time winner of the Tennessee Education Association's prestigious "School Bell Award" for outstanding coverage of education in Lawrence County. The newspaper received numerous TPA awards including Best Editorial, Best Local

Features, Best Local Pictures, Best Picture Story, and Most Improved Make-up and Appearance.

At the time of his death he was on the Board of Trustees of the Tennessee Press Association Foundation. Earlier he served on the TPA Board of Directors and was a member of the TPA committee which crafted the Open Meetings Law (Sunshine Law) that continues in existence today.

During his years in Lawrenceburg, he was active in community affairs.

He was president of the Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce when they constructed new Chamber offices on from a 100-year-old log home, which was moved from south Lawrence County and rebuilt in Lawrenceburg. This was done with all-volunteer labor throughout the entire reconstruction.

After selling the newspaper in 1984, he resumed a full-time career in the military, re-entering active duty with the Tennessee Army National Guard in Nashville at 48.

112th General Assembly, new Public Notice website are launched

Last year was a unique year, and it looks like 2021 is going to present its own challenges. The legislature is one of those challenges. I will keep you up to date on bills and what we need to be working on together throughout this session.

Another challenge is obviously dealing with the pandemic. I know some of you have had to work with a skeleton staff, create new routines for covering local and state government, sports and general news. I never get tired of bragging about how you have “pivoted” to these new routines. I have heard from several press associations that have lost members. I am proud that TPA actually grew membership in 2020.

February 2021 is going to be a different experience for our members. Tennessee Press Association will not hold its annual Winter Convention because of the continuing concerns and issues caused by COVID-19. We will miss seeing you, and we look forward to when we can all meet



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CAROL DANIELS

together in person!

The 112th General Assembly convened Jan. 12, and immediately was going into a special session to focus on education. We are watching bill filing but don't expect to see anything that is of concern for our members within the special session. The regular session is scheduled to begin Feb. 8, and the bill-filing deadline is Feb. 11.

As you all know, Tennessee Press Service upgraded our state Public Notice website last month, and you have all been through training on uploading notices to the new site. I appreciate the time your teams invested in training on the new site and the work of putting a new link on your

homepages. The new site is more user-friendly and mobile friendly, and it looks and feels like a modern web design. Please remember each newspaper website needs to have a link to the public notice site on their homepages. The new public notice website will be a great talking point during meetings with members of the legislature.

Working bills during the session will be an adventure for everyone. The Senate will not be doing any in-person meetings. House members have decided not to be as “locked down,” but for the time being any meetings will be held on the phone or Zoom calls. Sessions are being recorded and livestreamed, but interaction with our legislators will be much more difficult. The lack of in-person meetings means our “grassroots” communication will be more important as we navigate through session, especially your relationships with legislators from your community.

On a different note, I am

thrilled to introduce Mary Ella Hazelwood. Mary Ella joined TPS Jan. 4 as our new National Sales Executive. You may already know Mary Ella; she has been involved with newspapers for a long time and is very familiar with community newspapers and their importance in the local markets. I know Mary Ella will be a great resource for adding revenue to your papers, and she also is a great advocate for newspapers.

And this year is unique, too. It is TPA's 150th anniversary! On Dec. 11, we enjoyed having all of you for virtual coffee to celebrate the anniversary of like-minded newspaper professionals gathering to discuss the concept of the Tennessee Press Association, and we are looking forward to having more celebratory ‘moments’ throughout the year.

Happy 150th Anniversary TPA!

Carol Daniels is executive director of the Tennessee Press Association.

NEWS & MOVES

New TN Public Notice website has launched

The new Tennessee Public Notice website, tnpublicnotice.com, went live on Jan. 11.

All members are encouraged to upload their newspaper flag and website URL to the publication information record for their newspaper.

A newspaper can also embed a code on its website that will bring up its notices drawing from tnpublicnotice.com to display on its site. Contact TPA for details on how to set that up.

Any newspaper with questions about posting notices should contact Robyn Gentile, TPA member services manager, at rgentile@tnpress.com or (865) 584-5761, ext. 105.

*Staff reports
Jan. 11, 2021*

Jackson Sun, Commercial Appeal move print operations to Mississippi

January 31 was to mark the last time The Jackson Sun newspaper

would be printed at its home press in the publication's more than 150-year tenure in Jackson, Tenn.

The Jackson Sun and its sister paper, the Memphis Commercial Appeal, were to shift printing and packaging operations to the Clarion-Ledger facility in Jackson, Miss. starting Feb. 1.

News and advertising teams at Sun and Commercial Appeal will remain in Jackson, Tenn. and Memphis, respectively. Daily delivery times for print readers of both newspapers will remain the same.

The move is the latest step in parent company Gannett, Co.'s ongoing effort to consolidate production operations across its sweeping collection of United States newspapers. It will impact about 23 employees at the Jackson, Tenn. plant, who were to continue work as usual through Jan. 31.

After Feb. 1, all printing and packaging operations at The Jackson Sun's West Lafayette Street building were to cease, and a small group of employees remained to decommission the press, move equipment and clean the production area. The company has not yet determined what will

happen to the press.

The Jackson, Miss. plant will print seven daily newspapers (not all of which are owned by Gannett, Co.) once it assumes printing operations for The Jackson Sun and the Commercial Appeal.

The Jackson Sun moved into the West Lafayette facility in 1957. The press became a printing hub for several publications — some owned by Gannett, Co. and some not — in Tennessee and surrounding areas.

The Commercial Appeal retired its decades-old presses in April 2017, adding its print production to the Jackson, Tenn. press' roster.

Two years after the Commercial Appeal's presses went quiet, the newspaper moved from its longtime 495 Union Avenue home to its current downtown Memphis location on South Main Street.

The Tennessean, Nashville, the state's flagship newspaper, shifted its printing operations to Gannett, Co.-owned Knoxville News Sentinel in 2019.

*The Tennessean, Nashville
Jan. 6, 2021*

TPA continues to make Online Media Campus free to members

Tennessee Press Association has again purchased access to the Online Media Campus to provide TPA members with free access to all webinars and archived training sessions through 2021.

Through a partnership with America's Newspapers, press associations may subscribe to Online Media Campus and provide free access to their membership. In addition to the live webinars, there are currently 165 webinars in the archive. View the list and register for training at www.onlinemediacampus.com.

Employees of TPA member newspapers may register for webinars free of charge with a code number from TPA.

Members may obtain the code by contacting Robyn Gentile, member services manager, at rgentile@tnpress.com or (865) 584-5761, ext. 105.

*Staff reports
December 10, 2020*

See **NEWS & MOVES** Page 4

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

February 2021

- 11-25: 2021 International News Media Association (INMA) Subscription Summit. <https://www.inma.org/>
- 18: TPA Concurrent Board of Directors Meeting & Business Session via Zoom at 10:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time.
- 26: TPA State Press Contests submissions deadline

March 2021

- 5: TPA Ad/Circ Ideas Contest submissions deadline
- 9-14: Spring National College Media Convention 2021. Virtual event.

April 2021

- 5-9: Women in Journalism Workshop 2021 (virtual), presented by Reynolds Journalism Institute. Focuses on challenges, accomplishments and issues specific to women in the journalism industry today, www.rjionline.org/events/women-in-journalism-workshop

May 2021

- 11-27: 2021 International News Media Association (INMA) 91st Annual World Congress of News Media. Zoom meeting will feature 15 hours of programming spread over six modules. <https://www.inma.org/>

September 2021

- Sept. 30-Oct. 2: National Newspaper Association's 135th Annual Convention and Trade Show, Hyatt Regency, Jacksonville, Fla.

October 2021

- 14-17: Fall National College Media Association Convention 2021, offered in conjunction with Associated Collegiate Press, New Orleans, LA, Sheraton New Orleans

12 tips to help get (and keep) more eyes on your ads

Let's take a quick look at some ad design tips:

1. Keep things simple and uncluttered. The four basic elements of a print ad are (1) headline, (2) illustrative element, (3) body copy and (4) logo. When they are arranged in a way that is easy to follow – and when there are no unnecessary images – the ad is more likely to be noticed.

2. Use a graphic hook. A dominant visual element stands out on the page or on the screen. If an ad features a number of illustrations or photos, make one considerably larger than the others. Don't hesitate to make the image so large that it bleeds off the edge.

3. Use easy-to-read line breaks in headlines. A line break is where one line ends and the next line begins. Since readers naturally pause for a split second at the



AD-LIBS®

JOHN FOUST

end of a line, the break should be placed to look visually correct -- and sound right in the mind. Here are two headlines. The second one works better.

Save big on ceiling fans

Save big on ceiling fans

4. Use white space. Like a room with furniture which is placed too close together, a crowded ad doesn't provide enough room to navigate. In addition to giving readers some walking room, white space can be a powerful graphic hook.

5. Don't use distracting borders. It's what's inside the border that counts. The border shouldn't become an extra element.

6. Use all-caps sparingly. There are two times to use all upper-case characters: (1) in short words in a short headline or (2) in a proper name, like IBM, BMW or NHL.

7. Use readable fonts. Trendy styles can be difficult to read. It's best to stick with traditional fonts. Generally speaking, serif fonts are more legible in lengthy body copy and bolder sans serif fonts are fine for headlines.

8. Put the logo at the bottom

right or bottom center. Resist the temptation to place the logo at the top. Because we read from top to bottom and from left to right, an ad's logical ending point – the spot for the logo – is at the bottom right or center.

9. Use relevant illustrations and photos. Pictures must be meaningful and should clarify the headline. The best illustrations show the advertised product in use or demonstrate a benefit.

10. Set body copy flush left. Ragged left text is nearly impossible to read, because readers are accustomed to starting each line at a consistent left margin. Justified copy blocks are problematic, as well, because they create wide spaces between some words.

11. Use color with restraint. Research shows that color helps ads stand out. But don't overdo

it. Too much color creates clutter. You've probably seen ads that look like an accident in a crayon factory. That's no way to appeal to readers.

12. Stay away from reverses. It's not a good idea to use white images and words on a dark background. Readers are accustomed to dark print on a light background. Make it easy for them.

(c) Copyright 2021 by John Foust. All rights reserved. Foust has conducted training programs for thousands of newspaper advertising professionals. Many ad departments are using his training videos to save time and get quick results from in-house training. E-mail for information: john@johnfoust.com

NEWS & MOVES from Page 3

McClellan joins Press as editor

Six Rivers Media group announced Monday a new editor for the Johnson City Press.

Stephanie McClellan, a lifelong Johnson City resident, will assume the duties immediately. McClellan, a journalist for more than 25 years, was most recently the editor at the Kingsport Times News, which is also owned by Six Rivers Media.

Most of McClellan's career has been at the Times News, where she was a beat reporter who covered a wide range of topics before being promoted to the editor's position there.

"I'm really excited about the opportunity to be here," she said. "We have a strong and dedicated newsroom team in Johnson City."

Rick Thomason, publisher at both papers, said McClellan was the obvious choice to fill the position.

"Stephanie lives in Johnson City, knows the city and so many people there that it just makes sense that she has the opportunity to bring her love of the city to the Johnson City Press," Thomason said.

"The Johnson City Press has a long history of being an integral part of the fabric of both the city and of Northeast Tennessee.



McClellan

Stephanie's leadership in this newspaper's newsroom and how it interacts with and communicates with the community will be fresh and inviting, traits that allow more open engagement with the public."

As a Science Hill High School and East Tennessee State University graduate, McClellan's roots in Johnson City run deep. Her parents, David and Emily McClellan, were both teachers in Johnson City. Her father was an ETSU professor and her mother a city school teacher.

"My roots are in this community," McClellan said. "I want this news organization to represent and serve Johnson City and to provide strong community journalism."

*Johnson City Press
Jan. 11, 2021*

Revill joins Mirror-Exchange as reporter

The Mirror-Exchange, Milan, is proud to announce the addition of Caleb Revill to its newspaper staff. Revill joined the staff on Nov. 2 and will cover Milan city and school news. Additionally, he will cover Milan High School basketball and



Revill

write feature stories for the paper.

"We are excited to have Caleb on our staff," said Mirror-Exchange Editor Victor Parkins. "He is eager and excited to report

on the events of our city and county. Caleb is an excellent features writer and is looking forward to capturing the awesome stories our community has to tell."

Revill, 25, is a native of Franklin and a graduate of Middle Tennessee State University, where he earned a bachelor of science degree in the college of mass communications as well as a minor in political science.

"I'm extremely happy to have the opportunity to pursue journalism across such a unique county," said Revill. "Every day feels like an adventure meeting with new folks and covering events that matter in our community.

"I believe that everyone's got a story to tell. I want my writing to act as a bridge that can bring people together. You never know what tales someone may be stowing away, waiting for someone to ask the right questions."

At MTSU Revill worked on the staff of the school newspaper, Sidelines, where he served as a reporter,

assistant news editor and finally, news editor.

Revill was the recipient of the 2018 Pinckney Keel Memorial Scholarship at MTSU. His work with Sidelines earned him the award of Best Feature Writer in the 2018 South Eastern Journalism Conference. He and his peers at

the newspaper also garnered 1st place in the category of Best Online Student News Outlet at the same conference.

Aside from work, Caleb enjoys playing video games, creative writing and the occasional workout.

*The Mirror-Exchange, Milan
Jan. 13, 2021*

OBITUARIES

Philip Haywood Ivey

Philip Haywood Ivey, age 70, of Mt. Juliet, Tennessee, passed due to complications from Covid-19 on Sunday, Dec. 20, 2020.

Philip Haywood Ivey was born at home on May 22, 1950 in Decatur County, Tenn., the son of the late Haywood and Vannie Tennessee Cole Ivey.



Ivey

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by brother, Leon Enlo Ivey. He is survived by his loving wife of 49 years, Katherine Jo Williams Ivey; son, Jeffrey Haywood Ivey of Knoxville, Tenn.; daughter, Lucie Kate (Scott) Proffitt of Mt. Juliet, Tenn.; grandson, Dillon Cole Hicks; sister, Edna Marie Ivey Duke of Spring Hill, Tenn.

Mr. Ivey attended Hardin County High School in Savannah, Tenn. and went on to continue his education at the University of Tennessee at Martin. He served as a communications coordinator for the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) for 28 years.

Prior to his retirement from TVA in 2006, Mr. Ivey was an associate editor at the Savannah Courier newspaper in Savannah, Tenn. in the 1970's, and then joined the Hartsville Vidette newspaper in Hartsville, Tenn. as editor-in-chief.

Phil was a voracious reader, and enjoyed cooking and home improvement projects. Anyone who knew Phil will remember his wisecracking personality, good-naturedly irreverent sense of humor, and generous spirit. The family was to hold a memorial service at a later date.

*Submitted
Jan. 2, 2021*

Invest the effort to make public affairs coverage relevant and timely

How many newsrooms have received complaints about coverage of local public affairs – specifically meetings? It might be the city council, school board, county board or one of the numerous other government bodies under your microscope.

From an elected official: “You didn’t give the full story. Where was my quote?”

From a person who spoke during a contentious hearing: “How come the other side received more attention? Again, how come you didn’t quote me?”

From a reader who did not attend the meeting: “Why was the decision made without public input? We’re always kept in the dark.”

Editors and reporters constantly evaluate how they deliver the news, especially when it comes to public affairs. The most meaningful stories are those that interpret the practical impact of policy-making. The need to communicate those decisions looms even more important as access to local government is diminished during the pandemic.

Newspapers can no longer simply regurgitate a body’s proceedings from beginning to end. Newsrooms also must look at the continuum of coverage, going beyond the blow-by-blow reports of meetings.



COMMUNITY NEWSROOM SUCCESS

JIM PUMARLO

Here is one list of ideas to enhance coverage of public affairs.

Tour the town. Familiarize yourself with the agenda – at least the major items – prior to a meeting. Names and places are at the heart of most decisions. Connect with the subjects firsthand.

Identify the news. Write the headline and a summary paragraph. It will help focus your writing. If you don’t know where you’re going with a story, your readers will be lost as well.

Rate the news: Some stories warrant front page. Some belong on inside pages. Other actions can be mentioned in a package of briefs or in bulleted items. Some agenda items, even if they prompted discussion, should never see the light of day in your publications.

Avoid chronological reports. Announcing that a group met is not the lead, especially when a story appears two or three days after the meeting.

Put items in descriptive terms. Brighten writing by making the content more understandable. For example, which sentence are more readers likely to connect with: “The city is looking to develop a three-acre parcel of land” or “The city is looking to develop a parcel of land about the size of three football fields.”

Translate statistics. Reports are often filled with numbers, and percentages can be meaningless. For example, a 5-percent increase in garbage fees is better reported as the specific dollar impact on households, retailers, manufacturers.

Include the voices of those affected.

At the meeting: As one editor smartly phrases it, write for those at the back of the room and not the front of the room. Be selective when quoting the officials around the table. Pay attention to what the audience says.

After the meeting: Deadlines might dictate reporting only the actions taken by a body. Provide follow-up stories on the impact of decisions. How will families be affected by higher school extra-curricular fees? What’s the impact of an ordinance to eliminate all neon lights on storefronts? How will rezoning affect agricultural properties?

Pay attention to committee action: You may not cover every meeting, but be aware of key discussions. Certain committee decisions may foreshadow what likely will be the final vote on a topic.

Track issues. Prepare a summary paragraph of an issue that can be inserted in all stories. Track key dates and votes on the issue to insert as a sidebar, where appropriate.

Providing accurate and meaningful reports is the primary task. But words may well go unread unless equal attention is given to presentation. Editors and reporters should review agendas to brainstorm ideas for graphics and photos.

And don’t stop with the print edition. Coverage should span the range of digital platforms at your disposal. Are you tweeting meetings? Are there opportunities to post video? What about creating a hash tag to convene and enhance a communitywide conversation on topics of particular importance?

The web is useful on two fronts. It allows for immediate reports and places nondaily media on equal footing with daily competition. It has no space constraints and therefore allows for publication of variety of reports, speeches and detailed statistics.

The strongest coverage of public affairs is two-pronged: solid advances to inform readers and promote robust community discussion, and follow-up reports that provide meaningful interpretation of actions taken by elected bodies. As part of any beat, reporters should have regular dialogue with elected and appointed officials. Some of the most important stories can occur between meetings.

Make no mistake: Producing solid coverage of public affairs demands hard work – and the effort will reap dividends for everyone. Citizens will be more engaged in policy-making. Elected bodies will appreciate the additional attention to and participation in their decisions. And newspapers will increase their relevancy to readers.

Jim Pumarlo writes, speaks and provides training on community newsroom success strategies. He is author of “Journalism Primer: A Guide to Community News Coverage,” “Votes and Quotes: A Guide to Outstanding Election Coverage” and “Bad News and Good Judgment: A Guide to Reporting on Sensitive Issues in Small-Town Newspapers.” He can be reached at www.pumarlo.com and welcomes comments and questions at jim@pumarlo.com.

Revised bill aims to stop harassment from public records requesters

A bill to give government officials tools to stop what they view as harassment through public records requests was filed in mid-January by state Sen. Ferrell Haile, R-Gallatin.

The bill is similar to a version that failed in the Senate Judiciary Committee in 2020 on a 5-4 vote, but has some key changes.

After the bill failed last year, Haile asked the Advisory Committee on Open Government to review it and give suggestions.

State Rep. Jason Zachary, R-Knoxville, is carrying the House version.

Haile plans more changes to bill

Haile recently told TCOG that he still planned to make some changes to the bill, S.B. 135/H.B. 197.

The bill as filed is different from



TN COALITION FOR OPEN GOVERNMENT

DEBORAH FISHER

last year’s bill in that it requires mediation by a “certified mediator” before a government entity may petition a court for an order to prevent a citizen from making additional public records requests.

If the requester and the government entity cannot resolve their dispute in mediation, the government entity can then go to court.

Harassment definition has 3 criteria

Under the bill, a judge could find by a “preponderance of evidence

that a records request constitutes harassment” and “enjoin the person who made the request from making a public records request for a period of up to one (1) year...”

The records request can be considered harassment if it meets three requirements:

- It is made in a manner that would cause a reasonable person, including a records custodian or any staff of the public entity in control of the public records, to be seriously abused, intimidated, threatened, or harassed;
- The conduct in fact seriously abuses, intimidates, threatens or harasses the person; and
- The request is not made for any legitimate purpose.

Legitimate purpose provides safe harbor

A definition of legitimate pur-



Haile

pose is included in the bill, effectively providing a safe harbor to requesters who meet the definition.

The bill states that “ ‘Legitimate purpose’ includes, but is not limited to, gathering information for the purpose of:

(1) Publication or broadcast by a person engaged in gathering information for publication or broadcast connected with or employed by the news media or press, or who is independently engaged in gathering information for publication or broadcast, excluding the gathering of information for publication or broadcast only on a social media platform;

(2) Using the information for a commercial purpose or for academic research; and

(3) Investigating or evaluating government operations for a public purpose.”

The definition of legitimate purpose differs from last year’s bill in that it excludes the activity of posting to social media as an automatic safe harbor.

Volume of requests no longer a trigger

Another difference from last year’s bill is that the harassment definition is no longer triggered by the number of public records requests. The previous bill required six or more requests that met the definition of harassment before a government entity could take action. Last year’s

TPA MEMBER COVERAGE SHOWCASE I: The Greeneville Sun

Chainsaw sculptor always 'bruin' something up

CAMERON JUDD
The Greeneville Sun
October 9, 2020

Mark Asprogianis of Greeneville works daily toward the goal of turning his hobby and sideline into a full-time job.

He “bears” down constantly on making that happen. That’s a weak joke that will become more clear (but no less weak) if you read on.

To help keep the bills paid, he works in the grocery business in Greeneville. When he’s not in the store, he can be found up 11E with his chainsaws, skillfully turning logs or random big hunks of wood into critters . . . usually bears, but sometimes eagles, alligators, birds, turtles, owls, squirrels and the occasional dog.

The Asprogianis name (pronounced az-pro-jee-ah-niss) is Greek. Mark’s father, who now lives in Statesville, N.C., is a native of Greece. Among Mark’s mix of finished and in-progress chainsaw sculptures, even a nervous-looking hedgehog peeps out across the sawdust layer that covers the ground inside his open-sided shelter where most of the work is done.

Eventually, Mark swears, there’s going to be a big wooden gorilla in his menagerie. He plans to paint it purple or blue just to grab attention.

How did a 48-year-old who grew up in the Charlotte, N.C. area and drifted over to Tennessee get into sculpting with a chainsaw? That’s one of the things we talked about when I visited him Monday morning at his Chuckey worksite on 11E, where he has been pursuing his craft about two-and-a-half years.

If you’ve driven from Greeneville to Johnson City on 11E, you’ve passed and maybe noticed Mark’s workplace to the right. It’s on the far end of the row of metal flea market buildings on past the Chuckey Post Office, Dollar General Store and Handlebar Grill. You’ll know Mark’s from the wooden bear standing out front, facing the highway, and a sign made on a split log.

Mark’s critter factory is no-frills, with just a covered work area filled with sawdust and wooden animals, and a table or two. He gets power from a nearby building owned by the landlord who rents him his site.

Mark learned how to handle a chainsaw through an earlier time of



The Greeneville Sun photos/Cameron Judd

Mark Asprogianis makes friends easily, and literally, such as this bear friend of his he stands beside here at Mark’s Chainsaw Sculptures in Chuckey on 11E. As a chainsaw sculptor, the Greeneville resident uses chainsaws to carve out bears and other creatures from log sections. Though he works another job as well, he says he hopes to make a full-time business of his craft someday.

working in the tree-trimming and removal business. During that time he happened to see a man, working on a tree, who took a few moments to skillfully saw out a bear’s head on some of the wood. Mark was impressed, and it set him to thinking how something like that could maybe be turned into a business, and also be a fun pastime.

Though he does sell his creations, he still thinks of his sculpting as a sideline and hobby, albeit one slowly evolving into a business he hopes

can someday be his full-time job.

He uses multiple chainsaws as sculpting tools; different sizes of bars allow for different levels of detail. Some are used for bigger cuts such as those that shape the head and shoulders of a sculpted bear; other, smaller ones come into play to craft the trickier wooden snouts, ears and surprisingly real-looking eyes of his carved creatures. He uses terms such as “dime tip” and “quarter tip” in describing the different saws and bars he uses.



This bench features three chainsaw sculptures by Mark Asprogianis: the small bear lying atop the bench, the blue squirrel in the center, and the larger bear providing support at the right.

“People have asked me why I don’t go to Gatlinburg to do this. But there’s a lot of people doing this there already, and I don’t want to have to fight the competition and all the drama that goes with it. I like being out here by myself and doing my work.” Looking around at his little private world of creativity, he says, “This is my hobby and my 401-K, right here.”

Sculptures can be left in a natural wood color for those who prefer that, but most of Mark’s bears are black. This is achieved not by painting the wood, but by burning it with a blowtorch to blacken it, then sealing in the black under a protective varnish.

Mark is mostly self-taught, but has learned much from several other people, chiefly Johnson City’s Pete Tucker, a friend he considers his mentor. Mark also is in a carver’s organization in Greeneville, EverGreene Woodcarvers, but has been less active in it since COVID-19 came along.

Usually, Mark says, the facial features of a sculpture are the hardest to do well because of the close, small nature of the work.

As a general rule, the larger the piece of wood being worked, the more forgiving it is of errors, according to Mark.

There are fixes and workarounds that can be employed when essential, such as gluing together damaged portions to be reshaped. The declared ideal for Mark, though, is

to do it right the first time so as not to need any sneaky fixes.

Asked if he angrily kicks sculptures that go wrong due to a large bad cut or other irreparable error, Mark replied that he typically does not kick. He simply cuts the head off the failed sculpture and starts over.

The biggest sculpture Mark has created to date is a seven-foot sculpted bear in Dandridge. Whenever his planned blue/purple ape is made, he anticipates that will be larger yet.

The size of a sculpture is limited only by the size of the original wood piece and the skill of the craftsman running the chainsaw. Mark knows another chainsaw sculptor who created a life-sized nativity scene for a church. He hasn’t tackled any projects that large just yet, but he’s open to any ideas. Much of the wood Mark uses is obtained from his friend Art Fall, of Affordable Tree Service, with a few other sources.

Mark welcomes visitors who stop by his site when he is there working, and also is glad to take phone calls for information or orders. He may be reached at 865-973-7028. He requests that messages be left in that he often fails to hear phone calls ringing in when he is working with saws, power sanders or other loud equipment.

As he pursues his full-time carver dream, Mark plans to keep on one-man crewin’ and making those bruins.

TPA MEMBER COVERAGE SHOWCASE II: The Jackson Sun

First-year teacher, new to cyber instruction, connects with students while teaching to an empty classroom

LASHERICA THORNTON
& STEPHANIE AMADOR
The Jackson Sun
October 4, 2020

This past May, Jamie Crum secured her degree so that she could start her dream career as an educator. It was unbeknownst to her at the time that she'd be teaching to an empty classroom.

Even after in-person learning started in late-September, her class desks were still empty because the first-year teacher is one of the district's new CyberSchool teachers for students who'd chosen to do online learning for the school year.

Knowing that she, as a teacher, is making a difference in her students' lives is the most rewarding part of her job, she said even if no one is in her classroom.

Teaching was always the goal

Growing up, Crum's dream job was always to be a teacher.

In preschool, the tender-aged Crum told her teacher that's the job she wanted. While playing pretend, she was a teacher.

"I always loved learning," she said. "I had many great teachers in school, and I wanted to be like them."

She remembers the excitement and nervousness of attending elementary school. Even with first-day jitters, she said she looked forward to that day, the moment she'd meet her teacher and classmates and get to use her new supplies.

She pursued that lifelong aspiration by getting an education degree from Freed-Hardeman University and becoming a first-grade teacher in Jackson-Madison County School System.

Meeting her students

At first, Crum didn't know what to expect when asked to be a CyberSchool teacher. More than 2,500 students signed up for the district's CyberSchool, a year-round online option offered in light of the coronavirus pandemic.

So, she collaborates with Cy-



Jackson Sun photos/Stephanie Amador

berSchool teachers to make online learning work for their students. Top left: Jamie Crum, first-year virtual teacher at Lincoln Elementary, doesn't get to meet or see all of her students because they are required to do virtual learning and all her lessons are pre-recorded. Top right: Crum goes over a testing with one of her students. Bottom left: Crum talks to her students during a morning meeting. Bottom right: Crum celebrates after seeing her students during one of their morning meetings.

berSchool teachers to make online learning work for their students.

Crum and six other first-grade teachers across JMCSS are split into three teams to teach a designated subject, then share that content with each other and their students.

Crum has met most of her 22 students. Either they've come to Lincoln Elementary or she's gone to Pope or Issac Lane Elementary to conduct an in-person benchmark assessment.

But, that's the only way she'll get to see them in-person. Crum records the lessons for the CyberSchool program.

Any other time she sees them will be through optional live, online classes, in which about seven students usually attend. During

the live class, students answer questions, go over the calendar, count on number charts, do a weather report when Crum sends them to their windows, review sight words and have share time to get to know each other.

They love engaging with each other, especially during share time, Crum said. One student shared that he loved the CyberSchool and has the best teacher and classmates although he's only met Crum once and has never met his classmates.

"I also love the live classes," Crum said. "I get to see my students."

Seeing them in-person for testing wasn't like strangers meeting but like a family connecting.

Last week, two students

screamed her name and hugged her even though that was their first time meeting in person.

"I didn't think I was going to get to meet them at all," Crum said.

In early September, she didn't know they'd be able to do the testing in-person.

When first interviewed around that time, she placed her hand over her heart and said she may never meet her children – her students.

"I got very excited, knowing I would get to meet them face-to-face," she said about learning of in-person testing.

Cyber, virtual or in-person: 'Everyone's a first-year teacher'

"We're all first-year teachers," Crum said about navigating education during the pandemic. "We're all learning how to teach again."

Even for teachers who aren't CyberSchool teachers, they've had to learn a new way of teaching because the district didn't have in-person learning for a few weeks and because of the district's nine-week virtual option that's aligned with in-person learning.

"It's a learning process," Rose Hill Middle School fifth grade reading teacher Valinda Clarke said. "This is so new."

Clarke has been teaching for about 14 years.

When JMCSS informed teachers about virtual learning options, she

See **TEACHER** Page 11

Biden Presidency aims to roll back NLRB's employer-favorable decisions

With the Biden Presidency now a reality, I want to focus this column on the new Administration's open and notorious goals to fulfill promises made to organized labor by rolling back the many employer-favorable NLRB decisions made in recent years by President Trump's appointees. What I am about to share with you is not speculation. In a campaign position paper, Biden made clear he will push for adoption of pro-union elements within the PRO Act passed by the House in early 2020. That legislation was dead on arrival in the Senate which had a Republican majority in 2020. With the Senate now split 50/50, liberal Democrats can forge a majority using Vice President Kamala Harris as the tiebreaker.



LEGAL UPDATE

L. MICHAEL ZINSER

Super Shuttle specifically recognized the importance of entrepreneurial opportunity. The Super Shuttle opinion favorably highlighted a newspaper industry case, St. Joseph News-Press, holding that home delivery, single-copy and bundle hauler newspaper carriers were all independent contractors. St. Joseph News-Press recognized the importance of entrepreneurial opportunity, which was built into the written contracts in that case.

A Biden board with a Democrat majority can be expected to reverse Super Shuttle and go back to a looser standard. In addition, you can expect a Biden Administration to attempt to enact legislation replacing the common law test with a test similar to the "ABC" test imposed by the California Legislature. Such a test would make it very difficult to achieve independent contractor status and make it much easier for labor unions to organize them.

2. Respect for private property rights: Biden is on record stating that he wants to make it easier for unions to organize workers. Therefore, expect the Biden NLRB and General Counsel to attempt to overturn recent decisions that limit union access to employer property. Recent Trump NLRB decisions have respected private property rights of employers.

- In 2019, the Board ruled that non-employee union organizers have no right to be on employer property. An employer may prevent this even though employer allows charitable groups or other community members access because "protest and boycott activities are not sufficiently similar in nature to charitable, civic, or commercial activities to warrant a finding of discrimination based on different treatment of such conduct."

- In the Caesar's Entertainment case, the Trump Board overruled the 2014 Obama-era case, Purple Communications. Caesar's Entertainment returned to the 2007 Register-Guard standard that employ-

ees have no statutory right to use employer equipment — including your email system — for Section 7 purposes on non-working time.

A Biden NLRB will seek to reverse these decisions respectful of your private property rights.

3. NLRB elections: With a new pro-union majority, expect the NLRB to use Rulemaking to rescind recent rules that were more respectful of an employer's First Amendment right to communicate with employees during organizing campaigns. Expect a return to the so-called "Quickie Election" rules. Legislatively, expect a Biden Administration to seek a change to eliminate elections and allow unions to be recognized merely by collecting a majority of signatures on cards.

Expect the NLRB to expand the use of mail ballots in union elections. The potential for fraud and coercion with mail ballots is tremendous. Right now, it is limited. Expect the NLRB to expand this once a Biden Administration has a pro-union majority on the Board.

4. Joint Employer Status: In February 2020, the NLRB adopted a final rule defining joint employer status. Under the new rule, an employer is considered a joint employer only if it shares or co-determines essential terms and conditions of employment including wages, benefits, hours of work, hiring, discharge, discipline, supervision and direction. This test requires that a joint employer actually exercise direct, immediate and irregular control over those terms and conditions for employment.

This Rule overruled the 2015 NLRB decision Browning-Ferris. The Browning-Ferris decision would impose joint employer status if there was only indirect control, whether or not that control was ever exercised. Expect a Biden NLRB to look for vehicles to return to the Browning-Ferris standard. Legislatively, expect a Biden Administration to push legislation that would codify the old Browning-Ferris decision.

A Biden Administration promises to seek drastic legislative change to help unions. Among those changes:

1. Permanent Replacements: A

Biden Administration will seek legislation that prohibits employers from hiring permanent replacements during a strike. This right has long been recognized under Supreme Court precedent. If employees have the right to strike, the employer has the right to hire permanent replacements. Without the right to hire permanent replacements, the employees who go on strike will always be entitled to their jobs back when the strike is over. Employers lose all their leverage without the right to hire permanent replacements.

2. Right to Work Laws: Legislation will be sought to eliminate all right to work laws. Right to work laws make it illegal for unions to propose clauses in contracts that require employees to join unions and

pay dues. This preserves employee free choice. A majority of the states have right to work laws which have been permitted since the Taft Hartley Amendments to the National Labor Relations Act in 1947.

3. Forced Contracts: A Biden Administration will seek a law that imposes Collective Bargaining Agreements when the parties fail to reach agreement during negotiations for a first-time contract. This will be a drastic change in existing law. Currently, the law provides that neither the union nor the company can be compelled to agree to a particular proposal or make a concession. If the parties cannot reach agreement, there is no contract.

4. Enhanced striking rights:

See ZINSER Page 9

When — not if — it will happen

The NLRB is currently composed of three (3) Republican appointees and lone Democrat board member Lauren McFerran. The new president can probably be expected to appoint Lauren McFerran to serve as the new chairman of the NLRB upon taking office. However, she would still be outnumbered 3-to-1 by the Republican majority. There is one (1) vacancy that President Biden can fill immediately. Republican member Emanuel's term expires on August 27, 2021. It will be at that point that President Biden could appoint a third Democrat to achieve a pro-union majority.

NLRB General Counsel Peter Robb's four (4)-year term does not expire until November 20, 2021. Thus, by next December, the NLRB will be composed of a pro-union, Democrat majority. The General Counsel's position will also be occupied by a pro-union Democrat.

Anticipated Changes

1. Independent contractor status: In a January 2019 case called Super Shuttle, the NLRB issued a ruling reaffirming its adherence to traditional common law factors to determine whether one is an employee or independent contractor. This case reversed a 2014 Obama Board decision that had modified the test to "severely limit the significance of a worker's entrepreneurial opportunity for economic gain."

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'All Roads Lead to' is great promotion for winter or any season

PETER W. WAGNER
N'West Iowa REVIEW
January 1, 2021

"All Roads Lead to" is an easy-to-produce alternative to the traditional progress sections many newspapers publish sometime during the year. But the traditional large, all-inclusive progress sections of the past can often be difficult to produce. The huge size of the finished piece can quickly consume the time of the newsroom and advertising department and the section revenue doesn't always offset the dollars lost from normal sales during the weeks it takes to write and sell it.

Plus, in many markets, COVID-19 has eliminated, or at least reduced, the amount of any real community progress in 2020.

We replaced our annual progress sections over a decade ago with a series of early winter sections dedicated to a different community each week. The 6- to 10-page sections feature positive pieces about changes taking place in the community with occasional material written by contributors living in the featured community. The winter reflection series often

kicks off in mid-December when holiday advertising is drawing to a close. Since we randomly preselect 12 to 15 communities in our five-county circulation area to feature each year, the series often runs through the end of March or even early April.

"All Roads Lead to" was one of our more recent themes. It concentrated on "good news" about the city, the school, the business district, the financial community, local manufacturing firms, recreational opportunities and new construction.

Advertising was sold to both the city and the economic development director as well as local banks, insurance agencies, hospitals, manufacturing firms, cable provider, construction companies, farm equipment and supply firms and the retail district.

By the end of the series the sections gave us exceptional presence in many of the communities in our circulation area. But beyond that, there were three truly unique benefits to doing multiple weeks:

First, the smaller weekly sections weren't the drudgery for our newsroom that earlier progress sections had been.



Second, the weekly sections added size and additional value to numerous editions of our N'West Iowa REVIEW.

Third, the accumulated income from the many sections was



greater than that produced by the old-fashioned progress sections.

Some sample pages from one of the "All Roads Lead to" sections are included above. If you don't have enough outside circulation



to sell the project in surrounding communities you might consider weekly targeting various topics — business, construction, health, recreation, faith, etc. — in your community instead.

ZINSER from Page 8

Current law prohibits intermittent strikes or strikes for recognition. Expect a Biden Administration to seek to amend the National Labor Relations Act to authorize strikes regardless of their duration, scope, frequency or intermittence.

U.S. Department of Labor

Biden has nominated Boston Mayor Marty Walsh to be Secretary of Labor. Prior to being Boston's Mayor, Walsh spent decades as a Union Member Leader, most recently as Head of Boston's Building and Construction Trades Council. AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka supported Walsh's selection to be Labor Secretary. Walsh and Biden are said to have had a long, personal relationship.

Like the NLRB, expect the Department of Labor to attack independent contractor status and to seek a union-friendly joint employer rule.

The Trump Administration on January 7, 2021, finalized a new

rule to make it easier for employers to classify workers as independent contractors. The rule adopts a simpler, shorter test for when a worker may be legally classified as an independent contractor rather than an employee who is subject to minimum wage and overtime protections.

Joe Biden's incoming press secretary, Jen Psaki, cited the new independent contractor rule as one of the "midnight" rules that would be potentially frozen from taking effect in a memo on Inauguration Day. It is reported that business groups stand ready to file suit to force the Department of Labor to implement the new independent contractor test.

Expect the Biden Administration to push for a legislation to increase the minimum wage from \$7.25 per hour to \$15.00 per hour. This is a key union goal which Biden has embraced.

OSHA

Expect more active safety enforcement in a Biden Admin-

istration. In particular, expect increased claims of unsafe workplaces due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. Biden is expected to work with unions to develop a COVID-19 Standard. During the election campaign, Biden stated he would "double the number of OSHA investigators to enforce law and existing standards and guidelines." OSHA under a Biden Administration may begin to issue more General Duty Clause citations if employers violate CDC guidelines for health and safety concerns related to the Coronavirus Pandemic.

EEOC

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission will have a Republican majority until July 20, 2022. Thus, changes at this agency will be less immediate than at the National Labor Relations Board. Once the agency's composition changes to a Democrat majority, expect it to focus on aggressive enforcement of employment discrimination laws against employers focused on workplace harassment

and LGBT discrimination/harassment claims in light of the June 2020 U.S. Supreme Court decision holding that Title VII of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 covers sexual preference and transgender.

Conclusion

Management prepare for battle! Support your trade organizations and lobbyists in their efforts to fight bad legislation. Make your elected representatives aware of your opposition to such legislation. Be prepared in 2022 to do battle

with an emboldened National Labor Relations Board, NLRB General Counsel, Secretary of Labor and EEOC.

Editor's Note: L. Michael Zinser was lead counsel in NLRB cases St. Joseph News-Press and The Register-Guard referenced in the above column.

L. Michael Zinser is president of The Zinser Law Firm, P.C., in Nashville. He can be reached at 615.244.9700 and mzinser@zinslaw.com.



Tennessee Press Service Advertising Placement Snapshot

	ROP:	Networks:
December 2020	\$127,671	\$12,975
Year* as of Dec. 31	\$127,671	\$12,975

* The TPS Fiscal Year runs Dec. 1 through Nov. 30

A streamlined unublishing process is as important as thoughtful policy

If I asked you to give me the basics of your last five unublishing requests, could you do it? What about the last 10? Twenty? Fifty?

Do you have history about the requests that were received by the previous editor? If you were to leave, is there a record for the next one?

If you can't answer these questions, you are in good company. When I surveyed 109 news editors, only four — FOUR! — said they had a system for tracking requests to unublish. What a lack of documentation really means for you and for journalism as a whole:

1. First, it means you don't have a streamlined, standardized process for requests. If you don't have a formal request mechanism like an online form, it's likely requests creep in via telephone and email to a variety of personnel. (Does your front desk know how to route a call about unublishing?) Many editors I talk to say they are "pretty sure" they receive all the requests that come in for their news organization, but they can't be sure some aren't handled without their knowledge. Even if they did receive them all, they



BEST PRACTICES How-To

DEBORAH DWYER

don't keep track of requests in any standardized way. I hear a lot of "Well, I guess I could go through my old emails."

Efficiency can be gained by streamlining your request process. If a potential requestor knew your general stance and requirements to consider a request, could you potentially stave off some of them? Think of the time it can take to go back and forth with a person making a request, especially if it concerns a crime. Is there more information you need, such as a charge being reduced or a conviction expunged? Did they give you the exact URL of the content in question, or at least the date of publication?

2. Second, no documentation means no history from which to review your unublishing decisions as a whole. Are you

making consistent decisions when faced with requests concerning the same criminal charges, for example? Is there a category of request that you're dealing with consistently that might need to be investigated further? How might having that documentation inform future decisions, making them more consistent and equitable? Better yet, how might it hold the news organization accountable regardless of who sits in the editor's office? You also never know if legal might need this type of documentation one day.

3. Last, how might some basic data about what your newsroom encounters with unublishing help the industry as a whole? To date, unublishing has stumped the industry when it comes to developing consistent standards. I believe one reason for that is that we only have anecdotal reports from which to consider all of the issues.

Think about what we could do if we knew just these basics:

- Total number of requests
- Type of requests (e.g. crime, safety, source remorse)
- Type of content (article text,

photos, videos, audio, captions, etc.)

- Number of requests approved
- Resolution (Was an article totally removed? Someone's name anonymized? A follow-up story written?)

Partnering with a team from The Chattanooga Times Free Press, we are building a request form and back-end tracking system to streamline the process and provide a historical document for future review and decision-making. Although each newsroom may have specifics that need to be customized, the simple Google form will be easy for any newsroom to implement or alter. The form will feed a file on the back end in which newsrooms can add information to the request form data to further track and document actions related to that decision, including how they were resolved. Both resources will be made available to news organizations once they are tested and refined.

I know what you're thinking: A form will just invite more requests! Perhaps, but I suspect, what you will gain in efficiency will more than make up for that.

We won't be the first to develop a form. Some organizations, including Cleveland.com, The Gazette in Iowa, and the Southeast Missourian, have formalized their request processes. Here are just a few of the multitude of factors we know we must thoughtfully consider:

- Ensuring the request process is secure and identities of those making the requests are protected
- Securing the back-end tracking document, including limiting access and storing sensitive information about the nature of the request
- How to balance our requirements, such as what basic documentation we expect related to criminal charges, to ensure we are not discriminating against those without the means or agency to provide it.

Deborah Dwyer is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. For her 2020-2021 Reynolds Journalism Institute (RJI) fellowship, she is working with newsrooms to examine the ethics of unublishing. This column was written Jan. 5, 2021.

FISHER from Page 5

bill also included in the harassment definition that the request had to be "made maliciously."

The new bill, as before, requires a government entity who goes to court to provide written reports to the Office of Open Records Counsel that include the petition and any orders issued by the court. It also requires the Office of Open Records Counsel to provide a summary of the reports as part of its annual report to the General Assembly and to provide a summary to the Advisory Committee on Open Government.

Automatic repeal date included

As before, the statute would be repealed in four years (July 1, 2025), allowing a new General Assembly to consider its effectiveness.

TCOG's Deborah Fisher provided testimony on last year's public records harassment bill to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

TCOG supported last year's bill, mainly because of the safe harbor provisions, the high bar for proving

harassment and the requirement of reports to the Office of Open Records Counsel that would help monitor how government entities were using the statute.

Last year's discussion on the bill by the Senate Judiciary Committee includes TCOG's comments on the bill and answers to the judiciary committee. It also includes testimony by Lee Pope, the state's open

records counsel.

TCOG to monitor and study bill

TCOG is still studying this year's bill, as will monitor potential changes. TCOG will release an assessment of the bill's protections for requesters later.

The main concern of TCOG is

that the bill not provide a way for government officials to use the process as a club or threat against requesters they don't like or to delay or prevent access to public records that they don't want to release.

Email TCOG with feedback

As TCOG continues to monitor the bill and work with lawmak-

ers to provide information, we encourage you to give us feedback at survey@tcog.info.

Deborah Fisher has been executive director of Tennessee Coalition for Open Government since 2013. Previously she spent 25 years in the news industry as a journalist. This blog was originally posted on the TCOG website Jan 15, 2021.

TPA Board of Directors Meeting & Concurrent TPA Business Session

Thursday, Feb. 18

10:00 a.m. Eastern/9:00 a.m. Central

via Zoom virtual meetings

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(Newsroom)
Feb. 26

Ideas Contest
(Advertising & Circulation)
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Social media is more social than a source of news

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Community newspaper publishers shouldn't worry that social media will force them down the road of last century's buggy whip factories.

Buggy whips were manufactured for just one purpose. There was little demand for them when automobiles replaced the horse-drawn buggy.

Community newspapers, however, serve many needs and provide their most essential service far better than any independent website or social media page.

Hometown publications are credible. All the information published in a hometown paper is carefully researched, written and edited by committed professionals who put reporting facts ahead of being popular influencers. Those newspaper reporters and editors are local community members who are easily accessible walking down the street, in the coffee shops, at Friday night's high school game and in church on Sunday. They interact with their readers every day and cannot afford to purposely make a misstatement or draw a wrong conclusion. Readers of the newspaper are fast to point out any errors, omissions or half-truths.

That accessibility is not always available with the blog writers and paid influencers pouring their words and undocumented ideas into the community. They often color their so-called news with personal opinion, misdirection or information favorable to their sponsors. Fortunately, many progressive, profitable, hometown publications operate in communi-

ties too small to have any serious social media information sites.

Still, in December's e-mail I suggested four reasons weekly newspaper might not survive if the larger metro publications fail. In this edition of "Get Real" I'd like to offer four different reasons why community newspapers and shoppers should and could exist through any number of future digital revolutions.

1. Hometown newspapers create community.

History, scripture and human experience have proved that man was never meant to live alone gazing at a computer screen. Life can be best enjoyed and effective when members of a community interact face-to-face visiting, working, relaxing, worshipping and achieving together as one body. Community newspapers encourage that face-to-face involvement by keeping readers updated on the important local happenings that are discussed each morning around the office water cooler. More notably, local newspapers promote interaction by drawing attention to the efforts of the local high school teams, sharing what will be new and exciting about an upcoming city celebration or perhaps through the announcement of the opening of a new business. Social media, with its multitude of competing messengers can't do those things. Only the local paper, lovingly nurtured and published, reaches a broad enough audience to accomplish such magic.

2. Community newspapers assure consistency.

It is difficult, if not impossible,

to retrieve a message once heard on the radio, seen on television or discovered on the internet. But finding something earlier read in the hometown paper is easy. Many homes keep their copy up to two weeks after it is published. School and public libraries keep file copies anywhere from a month to a full year. Most newspapers still archive copies in bound volumes that are made available to the public at no charge.

Got a question about a city motion, huge fire or big game 10 years ago? It isn't easy to obtain the information at the radio or television studio. It is possible to find it online, although it might require hours of searching. But if it was printed in the hometown paper, and just about everything that happens is, the details can quickly be found in a saved clipping in a desk or file drawer or by obtaining a photocopy from the newspaper.

3. Newspapers provide encouragement as well as criticism.

Newspapers don't just report the news, they also support ideas that are good for the community. They also question ones that seem to fall short. Those comments are published on the editorial pages, which often endorse and cheerlead wise decisions as well as question those that appear bad. It's those opinions and editorials that help drive community thought and consensus. While some single-idea blogs and websites work to split the town apart, the newspaper, of all media, is the only one committed to bringing all citizens to having one mind regarding the making of the best decision for the majority of the community.

4. Newspapers follow a story to its completion.

Unlike most other media which focuses on breaking news and hot topics, the community newspaper follows a story to the very end. Subscribers get the what, where, who and why from the newspaper, even if the final chapter doesn't happen for months. Radio, television and the internet sites don't do that. Their news jumps from hour to hour like a child's balloon in the wind. With the electronic media, breaking news often becomes old news before another hour passes.

So, what do those who still believe in the printed newspaper do to improve the current situation and to secure a positive future?

The truth is it is going to take a great deal of work. Overall, the publishing industry has let the naysayers shout their untruths for too long without making an adequate response. Television networks, most especially CBS, have boldly reported the decline of print numbers while hiding their huge loss of viewing numbers under a bushel basket. The newspaper industry lacks a national voice, like "60 Minutes," to shine a light on the traditional network viewer's deflection to a still growing number of cable channels.

Advertising on Facebook is limited by Facebook to as few as 25 percent of those who have "liked" that business.

Only newspapers can provide a certified list of what homes actually receive a client's message any specific day or week.

Still, sharing that message with the local community is not enough to save and grow the newspaper industry. The competition in local

communities has grown immensely since newspapers had an exclusive lock on local advertising in the 1950s. Publishers are going to have to invest more in their news, creative and advertising sales teams to succeed. No company has ever saved itself into success.

Advertising managers are going to have to create more fresh and unique promotions, packages and special sections to get their share of local advertising dollars. Salespeople are going to have to stop selling by sending out e-mail and get back on the street where big decisions are made, and it is possible to sense a shift in the local marketing direction before it happens.

Newspapers aren't dead and they never will be. There will always be proud grandmothers who appreciate clippings of their family to hang on the refrigerator. There will always be fans who want all the details of Friday's game. There will always be watchdogs who want to know what is happening at city hall and the schools in an organized, edited package.

It is true that newspapers can't compete with Google and Facebook in their bigger world. But it is also true Google and Facebook don't have the connections or influence of hometown papers in their market.

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had to adapt a mindset to approach the positive of what virtual learning provides.

"No negatives: that's the way you have to approach it," she said about daily self-encouragement. "This is the best for them."

She doesn't consider herself tech-savvy and was scared while learning to operate the online software and platforms to teach students virtually.

"I think we'll see a lot of

students want to go virtual now," Clarke said.

From behind a computer screen

Crum spends most of her day recording lessons after the optional live morning meeting.

"As far as teaching, that's really the only time I get to teach face-to-face."

She uses popsicle sticks labeled with their names to let them know when they can unmute themselves

to speak.

For the recorded lessons, she's learned that sometimes it takes an entire day to do them. There's been a time where she couldn't use a recorded lesson because a student joined the lesson and a time she never shared her screen so students couldn't see the work she'd been teaching with.

"Sometimes, you have to laugh," Crum said, laughing at the mistakes she's learned from.

There are also external challenges she and families must work through.

Most of Crum's students don't have devices yet, posing the greatest challenge for teaching.

The district is still waiting on delivery of about 7,300 Chrome-book computers.

Parents have allowed their children to use their phones or available devices to access the material and do their work, Crum said.

Crum also said educators are attempting to address that digital divide by providing paper packets until devices arrive. Students do the work that coincides with the

online material, then parents upload that work for Crum to review.

Despite the challenges faced, she wants students and her fellow teachers to keep going.

"We are all lifelong learners; we're never going to stop learning," Crum said. "Every single day, I learn new things and I'm right there with them as they learn new things, too."

"We're all trying to learn this together. That's what it's all for: our kids."

TPA MEMBER COVERAGE SHOWCASE III: The Daily Times, Maryville

'A destination area': In stressful 2020, law enforcement, volunteers fight drug abuse

TYLER WOMBLES
The Daily Times, Maryville
October 8, 2020

Ron Talbott knows what he's fighting for. He also knows what he's fighting against.

Talbott, who oversees the Fifth Judicial Drug Task Force, an anti-drug unit made up of law enforcement personnel from local agencies, is working to battle illegal drug use in Blount County. It's a nonstop job.

"We're trying to keep our noses to the ground and trying to stay abreast of the issue," Talbott told The Daily Times. "Because our biggest fear is if we ever let up or if we ever stop or slow down or limit it, then our community issues will become worse than what they actually are."

The task force, as well as local citizens, are fighting back against drug and substance abuse amid a year that has, for many people, been anything but easy. It's included the stressors of a pandemic, economic anxiety and other factors.

Numbers rising

In a September press release, BCSO Sheriff James Berrong said the office has already worked more overdoses and overdose deaths this year than the total number of cases in 2019. Deputies also have surpassed the total doses of overdose-reversing drug Narcan from last year.

"Overdoses and overdose deaths are up substantially in 2020," Berrong said in the release. "Our narcotics investigators are continually working to stay one step ahead of those funneling illicit drugs into our community, but the sheer amount of illegal substances, mainly heroin and methamphetamine, entering the United States and East Tennessee and the number of people dealing drugs continues to climb.

"It is a daunting task and frustrating for law enforcement. We will continue our fight to keep illegal drugs out of Blount County, but we need the help of our citizens," Berrong said.

The United States as a whole has seen such a trend, too.

In July, The Washington Post reported that suspected overdoses nationally rose 18% in March, 29% in April and 42% in May compared to 2019, citing the Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program, and The New York Times reported that deaths due to drugs have risen an average of 13% this year from 2019.

Locally, as of Sept. 30, BCSO had recorded 84 overdoses and 11 deaths, while the Maryville Police Department recorded 44 overdoses and four deaths, and the Alcoa Police Department marked 57 overdoses and five deaths, according to data provided by the task force to The Daily Times.

Those numbers could feature repeat offenders, which can contribute to a rise in numbers, Talbott said. By the time cases are prosecuted and adjudicated, suspects may be charged with other offenses during that gap.

Fighting back

Recent task force investigations have led to multiple arrests on charges involving heroin, a major overdose drug, and meth. Berrong and Maryville Police Chief Tony Crisp said in a press release that the task force is "placing an emphasis on" heroin distribution.

In September, James Edwin Suderth, 27, Dalton Street, Alcoa, was arrested on charges that included heroin possession, and Alexandria Spears Oliveria, 26, Banebury Lane, Alcoa, was arrested on charges including possession of both heroin and meth.

On Oct. 1, Charles Edward Harvey, 51, Payne Avenue, Alcoa, was arrested and charged with two counts of delivering Schedule II drugs after investigators allegedly



The Daily Times, Maryville, photos/Scott Keller

Maryville Police Chief Tony Crisp explains operations in the department's evidence room.

bought crystal meth from him on multiple occasions.

"What we have noticed is meth and heroin go hand in hand," said Lt. Ryan Rogers, task force assistant director. "Our heroin users are oftentimes users of methamphetamine also because heroin is a downer and they take methamphetamine in essence to bring themselves back up. So they go hand in hand.

"But . . . there has been an influx of heroin, not only in our community, but in our surrounding communities. It comes in from obviously out of state, but unfortunately, it's almost as if East Tennessee's become a destination area," Rogers said.

And it's not just law enforcement that is working to stop area substance abuse. Be Aware Blount — a volunteer antidrug coalition dedicated to reducing and preventing local drug abuse and youth alcohol and tobacco use — focuses

on the education aspect of prevention, while officers and deputies deal more with enforcement.

Among its programs, Be Aware Blount even partners with the task force for a biannual Drug Take-Back Day. This year's edition (was) set for Oct. 24 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The event usually results in about 700 pounds of prescription drugs collected, said Amanda Ingle-Lenski, grant coordinator at Be Aware Blount.

Virus affecting investigations

Ingle-Lenski and the coalition remains concerned about those in recovery who haven't had access to in-person recovery groups due to COVID-19. The coalition has tried to promote virtual experiences for those hoping to stay sober.

"We've been worried about how isolated people have been because they don't have the normal



Safety equipment including a Narcan nasal spray are shown in the evidence room. They are kept readily accessible to avoid and treat accidental and intentional exposure to drugs.

support systems around them," Ingle-Lenski said.

Virus restrictions have affected the task force, too. Talbott said it's been harder for investigators to actually get out and handle cases; they've also faced extra downtime due to scheduling changes, plus the extra headaches of illnesses.

The task force has worked to "stay on target," though, in dealing with citizen and community complaints and participating in joint investigations with outside agencies, including the FBI, DEA, TBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

The task force's mission, just as Be Aware Blount's, is normal in a year that's been anything but: focus on the most potent issues while working to battle local drug abuse overall.

"(Heroin and meth) are part of the whole pie," said Talbott, the task force head. "We do focus on all illegal substances, but yes, we do try to stay more focused on the ones that are most dangerous or we're having the most issues out of, and obviously those are methamphetamine and heroin."